

Ep #3: Feeling Stuck? Three Kick-Ass Tips That Help While Considering Divorce



Full Episode Transcript

Welcome to The Stay or Go Podcast where we're changing the dialogue around divorce so that no woman ever stays in her marriage out of fear. Get ready to dispel myths, learn life changing tools and build a solid foundation in yourself from which to make your decision. And now your host, me, Britta Jo.

All right y'all. I wish you could see my view right now. I am sitting in my office and it is such a beautifully sunny day outside. I've got this just gorgeous view of my front yard with all my trees and then Jake is snuggled up behind my computer.

I love this cat guys. He has my heart first and always. Don't tell my boyfriend or my kids. So I've got him here. He's like my emotional support animal whenever I'm working or recording or on my computer and I just love it.

Anyways, here we are third episode, getting back into the podcast. After I recorded the episode that I did yesterday (I'll be releasing these whenever I release them so you may not get to hear this episode for a week after that one gets released) and I finished kind of updating you guys on what this last year has been like, the next thought was *Okay, where do we begin this amazing journey together?*

And what just kind of flowed out of me was this episode and I'm really excited about it because this has got some of my favorite things. Just some of the foundational things that you should know straight out the gate in working with me and some of the concepts that I teach my clients in our first few sessions. So let's jump into it.

Some as you know from the title, we're going to be talking about these three things that I want you to do right now, especially if you've been considering divorce for a while and you're feeling really stuck.

Feeling stuck is probably the number one thing that I hear from most of you when I talk to you on mini-sessions. Either you've been considering it for years and years and you're just too afraid to move and that's where a lot of your stuck feelings are coming from, OR something big has recently happened in the marriage but it's so overwhelming and out of your normal routine that you just feel paralyzed by the newness of all of it.

Either way, regardless of which one it is for you or even something in between, every single one of these things I'm going to share with you today will help. So I highly recommend doing all of them, but even if you pick just one, that will work.

The first tip I have for you is to **invest in yourself first and always** because your most powerful asset is a healthy you.

I know as I'm saying this a lot of you are gonna be like *well yeah, of course*, but if you actually stop and look at where you are spending your time and your energy,

I'm gonna bet it is not on you first and always. Why this is such a big deal is because when you're not taking care of yourself first, your cup is perpetually empty.

I'm pretty sure a lot of this comes from our patriarchal conditioning that most women pick up (I do believe it's changing, thank God), but a lot of us are raised with this idea of women as being the caretakers, right? We're the ones that are there for everybody, that mother and nurture and get shit done, and don't leave stuff on the table. So, if we have this idea that that's who we're going to be, what I've noticed when I meet a lot of you is you are stuck in this spin of really beating up on yourself about how bad of a mom you are right now, or how you're not showing up the best that you could be. And I just want to pause for a second and break this down for you.

So many of you think that the problem is you and you're very focused on the thoughts, *I'm broken. There's something wrong with me. Why can't I do this?* But when you've been in a shitty marriage where there is no love or no connection, or you don't feel seen or heard, or there's no communication, maybe you're living in separate bedrooms, maybe you're in the same room but your spouse is constantly – I'm thinking of clients that I've had before where your spouse is constantly pressuring you to have sex with them, even though you don't feel emotionally connected - you just feel like you're empty... and then you multiply that by five to 20 years?! Ladies! Of course you're not going to be at your best right now.

So personally, I was literally the worst mom I have ever been in my life right towards the end of my marriage. And why was that? It was because I had not been taking care of myself. You cannot take care of others if you are not taking care of yourself.

So the very first lesson, if there's nothing else you take from me and you never listen to this podcast again, I want this to stick with you; You have to invest in yourself first and always. You cannot be there for others when you are not there for yourself.

If you are not currently doing that, how you turn it around is you start putting *you* first and it can be very, very small. This might look like just leaning into little things that start connecting you more deeply to yourself.

I can think of a client who, for her it was taking time in the evenings to sit out on her porch and just watch the sunset and breathe deep. For me when I was going through this process of coming back to myself, I used a lot of music, listening to one of my favorite meditation leaders, Sara Blondin. Oh my god, I would wake up early in the mornings before everybody was awake and I would just sit outside and listen to her meditations with my feet in the grass. For me it was a lot of, her and nature... I did a lot of reading. I was looking for authors that were saying things that resonated with me. Lately it's been more of dancing, learning how to move my body. Yoga is something that can connect you into that physical piece because a lot of you are also disconnected from your bodies. I did a lot of quality time with trusted and supportive friends.

Something that I encourage in my clients (I have a client right now who's doing this, she just started a new job and is going back to school while she's considering divorce) is trying things that interest you that you've probably let fall off your plate. I took a glass fusing class when I was considering divorce and I ended up going back to a community college and taking one course there. Just opening up your brain to like, *Oh, yeah, that's right. I'm a human that has interests and things that I'm passionate about too. My whole reality is not to just be here, raising kids, and supporting my husband.*

I also ended up spending hours and hours with my friend Kelly discussing life and we would read books together and talk about those things. I invested in myself by getting babysitters so that I could go and do things alone away from my kids and away from my husband.

Why this is so important is because, even though you guys know I am very pro-divorce done under the right situation and done under really good circumstances (which I believe the circumstances are you, you, you, you), it's important that you realize that you're the key because divorce is not a panacea that magically makes everything better in your life. What makes divorce good, is what you *do before, during, and after it* that makes that decision so life changing.

There's a book that I love. I've talked about it a lot on Instagram. It's called "For Better Or For Worse," and I'll link it in the show notes, by E Mavis. Hetherington.

In it she talks about how there are very different outcomes for people coming out of divorce. She lists specifically what makes it different for each person and she talks about it being based off of a combination of risk and protective factors. I highly recommend getting the book and reading it, especially if you're considering divorce because it provides such a beautiful, different perspective on how divorce does not always have to be the “atomic bomb where everybody's laid waste” afterwards that I think I grew up with and many of you told me you did as well.

There's just so much fear around divorce. But she talks about it being based off of these risk and protective factors and what I would offer after reading her book and watching all of the work I've done with my clients and myself, is that the most protective factor going into a divorce is knowing how your brain works and how to use it for you instead of against you.

So that's what so much of the stuff we're going to be talking about on the podcast will be; learning these tools of what the brain is doing. Because so many of us have these supercomputers in our heads that we haven't even read the manual on. We're just hitting random buttons and hoping shit works out.

But your brain is what filters *everything*. What got me hooked on coaching was going through my divorce with my friend Kelly who was becoming a coach at that time. She coached me while I went through my divorce and I could see for the first time in my life (because I understood now how the brain works) how my emotions affected how I would show up. How my thoughts were the things that were activating those emotions in my body. It was like taking back the steering wheel of my life. Instead of being derailed by my emotions, I learned how to start fueling myself with positive emotions to move into my future.

So you have to start with you. And that's the beautiful unintended gift really of still being in the space of considering, it's that you have some time to really invest in yourself. If your cup is completely empty, start refilling it now.

Tip number two; I want you to **start noticing what authors, coaches, or friends you feel drawn to and start listening to what they're telling you and then spend more time around them.**

I know there's some quote, and I can't think of it at the minute, but it's something about how the people you surround yourself with are the influence that's going to start pushing your life in that same direction.

I'm going to just drop this in here; As a coach, I know that your thoughts are what gets you your results, so I often tell my clients, if you're talking to somebody and they're giving you advice but they don't have the life you want, do not listen to them, because all they're sharing with you is their thoughts. And guess what? Those thoughts are what got them *their* results, so unless you want their marriage, don't listen to their thoughts. Because if you take on the thoughts they have, you'll get the same results.

This is a big deal for a lot of you because I always have clients who have well-meaning friends, or mothers, or sisters who are sharing lots and lots of thoughts with them and sometimes those thoughts are really crappy.

And I'm always like, *No, stop, don't listen to them!* So I want you to start noticing and taking responsibility for who you're allowing into your energetic space, what thoughts they're sharing with you, and if those thoughts are getting them results that you would want in your life as well.

Now, what I want you to focus on the most when you're thinking about these authors, or coaches, or friends is how do you feel when you're around them? Because how you feel when you think certain things or you hear certain things, is the most beautiful barometer for figuring out what your truth is.

This is such a big deal for all of you right now because you're trying to figure out if you want to stay married or not right? And part of you deeply knows, nobody else has got that truth for you. And they don't, I swear to you, nobody else knows the right choice for you. Only you do. So then the goal is not to go find people who can tell you your truth. Your goal is to be able to get really grounded in yourself so you can *feel* your truth.

I like to think of this as the hot and cold game. Do you remember playing that as a kid where they tell you, *You're getting warmer. You're getting, ohhhhh you're getting colder, you're getting colder.* When you're reading a book and you're starting to feel more grounded, more excited, more steady, more open, even if it's

just a teensy bit, *that* is you getting closer to your truth. I've noticed my clients have this experience a lot with the book "Untamed" by Glennon Doyle. I can hear some of you squealing right now as I mention it, but that's a book that a lot of women, when they're reading it, it has this effect of *This resonates in my body. This feels good. What she's saying makes sense to me. I feel some part of my soul saying yes. That feels true.*

This is going to be a reality shift for a lot of you because some of you have been raised in similar situations to what I was raised in, i.e. very structured cultures or religions that tell you there is a right or wrong, a true or false. But as I have gone through my own life and as I've become a coach and learned how the brain works, you realize everyone's truth is different.

There are very few things in the world that we can establish as truth with a capital T where everybody would agree on it and it can be proven without any shadow of a doubt.

When you can accept that everybody's truth is going to be different, you can start taking responsibility for your own truth. And one thing I have definitely learned and I'm going to emphasize again to you guys, is that nobody knows what your truth is or what the right choice is going to be for you or anyone else. Because the only person who can know that, is the person who's spent every single second or every single minute of every single day in that one life.

So if anyone, and I really do mean anyone, like I'm talking to your best friend, your spouse, your mother, your preacher, especially if they're trying to tell you it's "*What God wants for you,*" if any of them are trying to tell you what your truth is or what decision you should make when you're considering divorce AND it *does not feel good to you*, you have my permission to tell them to *FUCK OFF*. Okay? No one else knows better than you what the right choice is for you.

Along with tip number one where you're starting to fill your cup and really lean into what you enjoy that fills you up, this second piece is like gathering around those voices, those people who support your truth. Whether they be authors, or coaches, or friends, I want you reading more of what they have to say.

If they're a coach or a therapist, go work with them. If they're a friend, spend time with them. These are the people that are going to be your tribe while you go through this and they will help you to keep building that strength in your own truth. An extension of that is then that filling of your cup that gives you that bravery to be able to ultimately figure out your decision and then also act on it.

Okay, last tip, tip number three. I want you guys to **play the long game**. Do not just focus on the pros and cons of the short term when you're considering divorce.

Here's what I mean by this. Often divorce is very scary for the brain and that's strictly because it requires *new* things of you. Especially if you've been married for a significant amount of time, this is going to be a big change up in your life, and the brain does not like change. Because of that, it will over value what you already know (what's already happening in your marriage) just on the basis of *Well, we know this and we've already experienced it so it must be 'safer' than the unknown.*

Knowing that that's just the baseline setting for your brain, it may seem like there are a lot more cons to leaving, or that it's somehow safer to stay if you're not thinking about the long term. This is because we often underestimate the abuse or the unhealthy behavior that our children are witnessing in the marriage merely because we've just become desensitized to it.

But I do not want you to make the mistake of thinking that somehow your kids are not picking up on that because you and your kids are absolutely still feeling what's happening in that marriage energetically, all the time. So even though it might seem like *Oh, this big event of divorce is going to be so traumatic*, that may just be because you're undervaluing the trauma that's currently happening in your relationship every day. I want you taking the big picture perspective.

This is how I want you to think about this. A marriage is not a sprint that you endure for 400 meters, okay, a marriage is a marathon. That is 26.2 miles. Those of you that have actually run one (I do not. I hate running. I wouldn't run a marathon even if you paid me lots of money, I still wouldn't do it) that is a really long distance. To put in perspective, a marathon is 26.2 miles and that is 42,164 meters. I just told you a sprint is only 400 meters. So a marathon is 105 of those sprint distances.

What I see is a lot of you are treating yourselves in your marriage, like you're just here for a sprint. I mean, you can get away with some poor eating and sleep if you're only sprinting for eight seconds. And I'm not talking Olympics here right? I'm thinking like maybe high school sport, but eight seconds versus running nonstop for two to four hours? You guys know there's just a different level of care that you have to give to your body to be able to give that much over that long of a period of time.

So the question I want you guys asking yourself is, *Do I still want to be in this marriage 10 or 15 years from now?* And you can even shorten that. For some of you it might be more helpful to be like, *Do I even want to be in this marriage for one more year? Five more years?*

And if not, if your answer is no, then ask, *Why am I staying?* This question is the most beautiful opening to finding so many of the beliefs that are blocking you, because when you realize *I don't want to stay* and then you ask yourself, *Well, then why am I?*, you're gonna come up with all these answers.

Some of the ones I've heard are *Well, I stay because I don't want the kids to be ruined. Or I stay because I'm worried about what people will think. I'm scared I won't have enough money. Divorce isn't what God wants for me.* The list goes on and on and on. I want you to write down why you are staying and bingo, these are the beliefs that are limiting you and keeping you stuck.

These now become the roadmap, the areas that you want to start working through and a great place to start questioning and asking, *Do I want to keep these beliefs? These beliefs that I wouldn't have enough money or divorce is evil or my kids will be ruined?*

So I've got a few questions for you that will help you start questioning. I want you to think of each of those thoughts I was listing previously as a physical object. These questions I'm going to give you are going to allow you to start breaking it down, pulling it apart, kind of dissecting it and looking at *Where did I get this? Do I really believe it?*

Those questions are, *Is this really true?* For example, *This idea that my kids will be ruined? Is that really true?* And then you ask, *How do I know that it's true? Where*

did I get this idea that it's true? Then you can ask yourself, *Is there anyone else in the world who's done it before me and turned out differently?*

For example, with this belief, *My kids will be ruined*. Is there anyone else in the world who's gotten divorced and their kids have turned out fine? Or the, *I'm scared I won't have enough money* example. Okay, well, *Is there anyone else in the world that has gotten divorced and started out kind of where I'm at and ended up doing better or having enough money or being able to provide for themselves?* And if the answer is, *I don't know*, go start looking for those people. Those are the people that are probably going to have written the books or started the podcasts that you can start listening to for inspiration.

And the final question I want you to ask yourself is *How does it feel when I believe this?*

We'll get into this deeper hopefully in another episode in the podcast, but when you believe, *I don't want to get divorced because my kids will be ruined*, how do you feel when you think it?

I'm gonna go out on a limb here, but you probably feel pretty stuck, because you've unknowingly put yourself in a mental double bind, right? You don't want to stay in your marriage, but you're afraid if you go, you'll ruin your kids. So that belief is actually the very thing that keeps you stuck. The idea that *If I get divorced, it'll ruin my kids*. How you get yourself unstuck is by changing that belief. By realizing no, if you get divorced, it doesn't mean your kids are going to be ruined. Which don't worry, we'll have a podcast episode on that in the very near future as well.

All right, babes, that's what I've got for you today. Those three tips. I'm gonna go over them one more time, and I promise if you do even just one of these three tips this week, you will start seeing shifts in how you feel.

The first one is, invest in yourself first always. Your most powerful asset is a healthy you.

The second one is, notice what authors, coaches, and friends you feel drawn to. Listen to what they're telling you and then spend more time around them.

And three is, play the long game, don't just focus on the pros and cons of the short term.

Till next time. Love you babes.