

Ep #6 Why I Am a Stay or Go Coach Rather Than a Divorce Coach



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.

We are five episodes into the podcast now, and if some of you are starting to think, wait a second, she said she's a stay or go coach, and all these episodes just seem to be about going, don't worry, my friends, this episode is for you.

Um, little peek into what it's like for me podcasting. I am nontraditional in my podcast recording style in that I don't have topics laid out in a three month ahead kind of calendar that I then follow. I found what works best for me is I tend to have episodes spontaneously just show up. It's like I will just get this really excited idea and I'll start writing an outline that just pours out of me.

And then I hit record. And there it is. The topics that show up will often feel very divinely inspired for me by the universe. And I love that because it almost feels like I'm connected into you guys and hopefully giving you stuff that is hitting right here, right now, when I looked back over these first five episodes, it was kind of neat for me to realize that these first five episodes are very strongly on the go end, and I do think that's because the majority of you that are going to find me typically are very well practiced at staying already. And I think the universe probably knew that for these first episodes, you might need a dose of some new thoughts around going to shake you up.

But, like all things in life, I could feel this balance coming back towards the end of that last episode. Last episode where I was like, okay, it's time to talk a little bit more about the staying piece and this possibility that your answer may not be going. So with that in mind, the episode today is going to focus on three of the biggest reasons why I decided to coach women specifically in that and the first one is that it really came out of me being at a point in my life when I started coaching where I had just gotten out of going through the process of divorce.

Like, everything was still so fresh. I think I had just like seven or eight months before this, finalized my divorce. So, my struggle was still very fresh. I still knew exactly what it felt like to be horribly confused, to feel insanely trapped, to feel terrified. At times I can still bring that feeling back up in my body.

It's just this like. And just crushing everything just feels like it's being squeezed shut in my body. And I remembered how when I was in that space, I really did not like when people would try to tell me the choice I should make. It would actually just create more pressure for me. Or if they were speaking to me about it, but they were making it obvious, like there's a clear choice here.

You know what the answer is. That's mainly because for me at the time I really needed to just be able to exist in this in between space for the moment. Now, not forever, of course, I don't want you considering divorce for your entire life. Ideally, that's why I'm here is to help you through that process.

But this is a really unique space and time. And I just needed a neutral party to support me while I was taking the time to find my own answer. And when someone tells you what to do as an adult, I really think, and obviously there are different ways that people do this, but you can tell when at its heart, it really means that they think they know better than you.

And I felt this a lot at the time when I was considering divorce, coming out of a very patriarchal culture, a culture where women are heavily infantilized. And people were used to telling me

what to do. People were used to me wanting their advice. And It really violates in a lot of ways when people come to you and just, here's your answer.

It violates your right as an adult to get to make your own decisions. And I've identified now that that feeling is like super yucky for me. In fact it's one of the like biggest indicators when I'm dating someone is if I'm sharing my ideas or what I'm excited about and they feel like they need to let me know.

You know what it is when someone needs to let you know I'm like mm hmm. Nope. I really bristle against that so, at the time the people that helped me the most were my best friend Kelly and my therapist because they could stay neutral and by neutral I mean They're able to not feel like when they're talking to you, that they have so much skin in the game that they need you to do something for them.

Now, you're probably going to feel this often with parents, when you have parents who have a lot of opinions around your divorce. It's often because they feel like they've got skin in the game. I wanted someone who could help me get clear for me, not because they had ulterior motives or things that they needed me to do to make them safe.

Um, so the first thing they did is they were able to stay really neutral and then they kept directing me back to trusting myself and they gave me the time and the space to come to that decision for myself. They didn't need me to hurry up and make a decision to make them feel better. They also didn't need me to make a specific decision that would make their lives easier.

And that felt so good because a part of me deeply knew that the only person in the end who really knew the answer was me. And thank God I understood the importance of that because guess what? I'm the one who is going to be 100 percent responsible for that decision. No matter what anybody else told me, it was all going to fall on me and I wanted to be able to be grounded enough, strong enough, really powerful enough in myself to carry the responsibility of that decision once I made it.

But this is kind of tricky though, because a lot of us, when we are in this position, we want someone else to tell us the answer. And why do we do this? Because when we do, when we get the answer from someone else, we are able to put the responsibility for that decision. Well, my coach told me to do it, my therapist, like this book I read and it's such a seductive idea.

I totally get it. Like in the short term, it does seem just because of the way we've been trained. Most of us as women, like a good idea to let someone outside of us, protect us, take care of us, tell us what to do. But long term. This fucks you over big time, especially considering divorce, because this act of letting someone else make the decision for you increases your belief.

It just validates your belief that others outside of you ultimately know better and that you can't trust yourself or make decisions for you. And it's really an act of giving your power away to the external. And I really want to advocate for taking a second to realize, yes, this feels like a very

seductive choice, but this experience of considering divorce for so many of us is this incredible growing up moment.

It can be a huge shedding of the patriarchal infantilizing I mentioned earlier and stepping up into sovereign womanhood. Therefore, it does not need to be rushed into a quick decision just to make someone else happy or to get away from discomfort. You know, someone who's telling you, just stay in your marriage it's fine. But rather, we can use this in the most beautiful ways to get the most out of this incredible moment of growth in your life. And I truly believe that you deserve to give yourself and those you love this intentional and balanced amount of time. I include balanced because we're not going to stay here forever, but we are going to take it at our own pace to set ourselves up for the best choice and future possible.

So, with that in mind, the second thing that I wanted to talk about was that in all of my personal work. Me, my journey. And then what I've seen with my clients is when I go try to just fix something externally without doing the internal work first, I always end up having to do that eventually quick fixes on the outside, usually just end up being, more work in the future. And what I, how this ties in is I would say going and getting a divorce just to get away from the discomfort of figuring it out. It will solve some things for you, especially if, especially. And I will, I have a big caveat coming up later that's going to tie into this more, but I will caveat that with if you are in a marriage where you are experiencing emotional abuse, manipulation, physical abuse, narcissistic abuse, external changes help tremendously.

But there's this key piece of realizing that making this external choice, it's going to solve some things for you, but these things you're wanting most this self empowerment, this self love, this connection, this ability to go out into the world and make your The future you most want possible, just getting a divorce will not give that to you because getting divorced is just taking an action.

And one of the most important things I learned as a coach that I am obsessed with is how important your thoughts and your feelings are rather than just taking action. Um, this is why when we, you know, set resolutions and we say, Oh, I'm going to go work out all the time at the beginning of the new year and it never happens, it's really hard to go take action if you don't have belief fueling it and your beliefs are made up of your thoughts.

Creating feelings that push you towards action. You know, the reality is there are plenty of women who get divorced and really thrive afterwards. And there are plenty of women who get divorced and do not have better lives after they both got divorced. So, what's the difference? It's the beliefs they had.

About themselves, about the world, about what they were gonna accomplish going through that divorce and coming out of it. This also ties back into, one of the episodes we had previously where I talked about taking that furniture from the house with you. The house is your brain. If you take your brain with you and you don't clear out all the furniture, you are gonna end up doing patterns over.

Okay, so here's where I do wanna pause and drop deeper into that caveat that I mentioned earlier, which is. This is very different. I want you to think of it as totally, totally different world, like different planet. If you are in a marriage with someone who is emotionally abusive, verbally abusive, physically abusive, and especially if they have narcissistic personality disorder traits.

And here is why I watched this with myself. Once again, see it very consistently in my clients. I actually do have. Quite a good amount of people who come to me who are in marriages where, um, although it's very difficult to get a diagnosis on narcissistic personality disorder, there are behaviors and patterns, especially manipulative patterns that you'll see that make it easier to kind of identify someone who at least is on that spectrum.

But it is really Like really fucking hard to heal and get a foundation in yourself while dealing with narcissistic abuse in your marriage. It just takes so much energy to manage the narcissist that you really can't get your head above water. In my own marriage, you know, I, my, my husband definitely had narcissistic personality traits from his own childhood, which I'll have to do another episode of the future about how, typically the relationship dynamics you grow up with, with your parents are going to be reflected in your own marriage later. So of course, I had a narcissistic mother and have a more codependent personality. So, it made a lot, it makes a lot of sense that I went and married someone with a more narcissistic personality to fit that codependency in me.

But what I found is it was just. Now that I've done personal work post divorce, I look back and I realize how incredibly hard it was to do my own work while simultaneously having to deal with all the input happening in my marriage. And what that led to is, like I said, I couldn't get my head above water.

I was, all my energy was going towards just treading. Like we were, I was not able to get to land. And I've seen how since then, once that weight was dropped of so much energy, having to go to the fights and the figuring outs and the communicating and the just going round and round and round in the crazy room in my marriage, I've been able to make so much more progress now because that energy can be directed towards me.

And in instances where I get into coaching with a woman and I realize, okay, we're definitely dealing with someone that's probably on the narcissistic spectrum in these instances, I take a different approach and that approach is heavy education upfront about narcissism and then strategic and efficient movement towards Getting them out because often once we do get them out of the marriage, what we see shockingly is dramatic improvement in, in, you know, a reduction in their depression, a reduction in their feeling crazy, a reduction in them hating themselves, a reduction in feeling exhausted and drained all the time.

Because depending on the amount of narcissistic abuse in the relationship, that can take An insane toll. And most of you don't even realize it because if you're like me, I'd been with a

narcissist my entire life. I had been with my mother up until the age of 19. And then I got one semester away at college.

And, or, you know, one year of school at college and then got married to my husband. So right back in with another narcissistic personality. Why that helps so dramatically is because you finally have the space, the time, hell, just the energy to actually do the thought and feeling work because you are done with having to put all of your energy towards handling the trash fires that are constantly erupting everywhere when you're in a marriage with a narcissist.

So, keep that in mind as you're listening, you know, to that second piece that I just shared with you. You've got to make sure, you know, if there is any kind of manipulative abuse, narcissistic abuse, obviously physical abuse, you're going to know I think it's the mental and the verbal that's a little bit trickier for women to notice, but it is absolutely as insidious and damaging.

Okay, the third and final reason that I decided to focus on women specifically considering divorce, and this is like, The part where it gets really yummy for me is that I think this period of time where you're in the decision process can be one of the most magical and opportunistic times for personal change and when you do that personal change, it can sometimes open previously inaccessible parts of your partner.

So let me explain what I mean. When you're considering divorce, you are in one of the most heightened moments of your life, and that can make you more open to thinking outside the box, considering different ideas and really questioning. Okay. Everything I thought I knew about life is not working. I'm really struggling.

Um, what the fuck is wrong? So, you're open, okay? And this just, this just seems to be a natural part of being human, which is that sometimes we don't change or open to different ideas until we are in a lot of pain. And that pain, if we'll let it, can be pure magic because it can catalyze us for the growth.

Right now, wherever you're at in Constrained Divorce, you are a very specific version of you and if I come in and I teach you these new tools, what I've seen, especially with the tools in coaching, because when you learn how your brain works, it opens up a whole new world of possibilities of how you want to think, how you want to feel, what you want to believe.

When we throw in these new tools, you start becoming a different person. Maybe this is a person who now asks for what she wants. Maybe this is a person who doesn't people please as much. So, you possibly start making changes that you've never made before. Start showing up in ways you never have before.

Well, voila, the equation has changed. What was previously this version of you has now changed, and if you think of it as like a chemical reaction, if we're in high school in our chemistry lab, we're now using a different element in this chemical reaction. So, if we now combine this new element with the old element, we have a, we have a chance to get something different.

There's an opportunity to see what's possible with your partner. And I want to use a specific example that I have from one of my clients. When we first started working together, she presented with just. Just, a ton of resentment towards her husband. She's one of the few people who, when I first started coaching her, I was like, I'm pretty sure she's out the door.

She's, she really felt like she was a mother to him, having to take care of him and just done, done with it. So we did a lot of coaching in the beginning around her. Being first, really honest with herself about what she did want to do or didn't want to do, which involved a lot of releasing like shame and guilt.

She was shitting on herself, hardcore. And then once we had that piece in, it was stopping the people pleasing with him, letting herself feel uncomfortable saying no, and pulling back on the lying to others, which is what we do when we're people pleasing so that they'll like you, like letting other people be disappointed in her.

And. And what we found is her husband was actually really surprised. I was even shocked at how little he knew that she didn't like doing all those things she'd been doing and had built up this resentment. And I think, you know, if I think back, I even remember the coaching call that we had where things kind of turned the corner for her.

She was at some park and I remember her being like, I think I wanna keep trying things out. I think I want to stay. And I was like, wow, because she'd been pretty set when she first started on leaving. It was a great example to me of how the roles can change and you get to see if your partner is open to evolving as well and creating a new marriage with you.

And in their case, ultimately, they did when we finished our coaching together. She had decided that she wanted to stay married and beautifully enough, she just reached out to me in April of 2022 to let me know that she was still communicating her wants and needs way better that she was, instead of doing what she thinks she should do, she was being honest.

And I especially loved his part where she was like, I now cook, you know, he now cooks 50 percent of the time. And if he doesn't want to cook and I don't want to cook, we just decide to go out. And she also mentioned that she just doesn't do laundry anymore because she'd communicated with him. That is not her thing.

She does not enjoy it. And I, I love that. I love that for them. So the takeaways I most want you to have coming out of this episode, I guess, first off, I want to say that, yes, on this podcast, you are probably going to hear me end up talking more about going because it's the flavor of my own personal journey.

And because I know that culturally, I know there aren't enough voices out there that are advocating for a reality where you can leave if you want to and thrive afterwards. But with that in mind, it's really important to me to remind you of what I think is the most important

foundational piece of my podcast, which is that, yes, I'm going to share a lot of ideas with you, but ultimately your truth is the only part that matters because when it comes to your individual choice, I am very solidly neither pro stay or pro go.

What I am is pro you making a choice that your soul knowing confirms, even if it's just to you, is best. And guess how you do that? You do that by sifting through the thoughts and ideas around you, the things I'm going to share with you, the things you're hearing other coaches talk about, and feeling what truly resonates as truth.

What calls to you, what inspires you, that is your truth compass inside. And for some of you, that may feel like opening up with more vulnerability in your marriage. And if that's the case, go do that. If it feels like leaning into taking more time to yourself, and maybe reading a book, like *The Wizard of Oz and Other Narcissists*, do that.

By the way, one of my favorite books. Um, whatever it is. That feels like the next step for you, do it. You can trust yourself. All right, y'all. One thing I want to be adding to my podcast at the end because another piece I've realized is really important is just conveying how much I love y'all. Because often when we're at this point in our lives, it can feel very lonely.

So I'm going to start closing my episodes by just reminding you that I see you, I love you, and you're not alone in this.