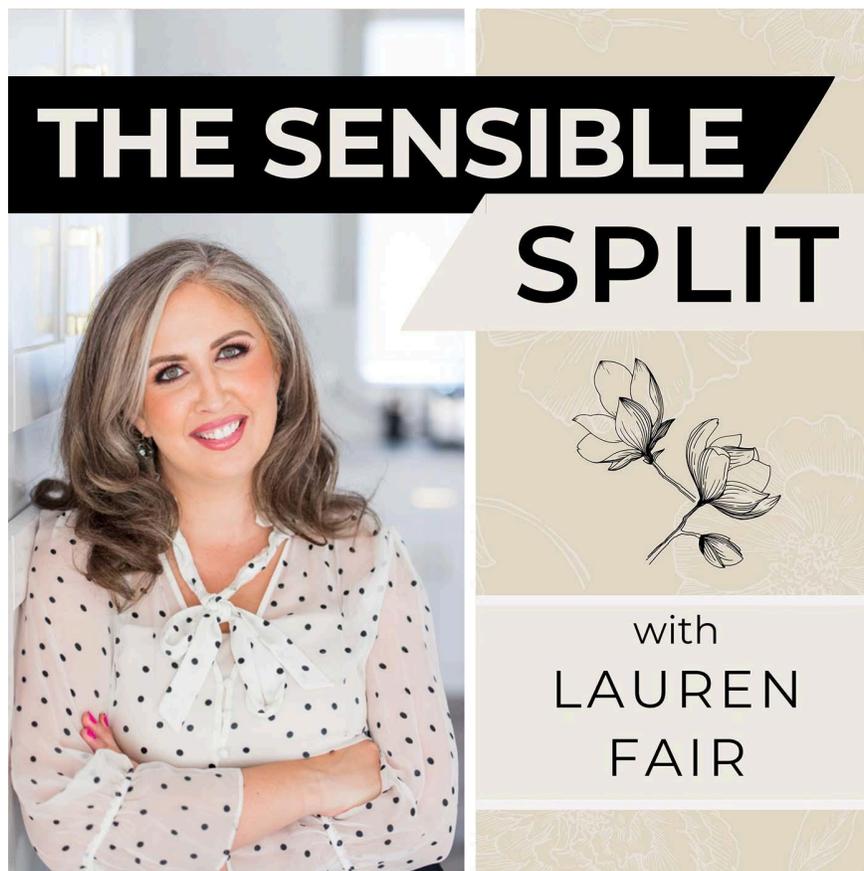


Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lauren Fair

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Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach

You're listening to *The Sensible Split* podcast, Episode 15. Today, I'm talking about how to choose the right divorce coach for you.

The Sensible Split is a podcast for smart but overwhelmed women in search of a roadmap to a successful separation and divorce. If you are looking for guidance in navigating the practical, legal, and emotional aspects of divorce with confidence, this is the show for you. Here's your host, Master Certified Life and Divorce Coach, Divorce Attorney, and Mediator, Lauren Fair.

Welcome back to the podcast. How are you? It's officially summer. School's out. My son just finished the third grade, and my daughter just finished kindergarten. I am excited about some travel we have coming up. We're actually going to be heading back east to Pennsylvania, or is it back to the Midwest? That could be a subject of a whole other podcast episode. Is Pennsylvania in the east or the Midwest? I have strong beliefs on this matter.

But anyway, we're going to Pennsylvania, where I'm from, so my kids and I can spend time with my family there. We've been going every summer for a few years now, and my kids love it. I hope your summer is off to a good start as well, and that you have some fun plans in the works.

For today's topic, I want to talk to you about how to determine who is the right divorce coach for you. Someone asked me recently how she should choose a divorce coach, and it got me thinking some of you may be wondering the same thing. I decided to create this episode to help provide you a framework for making that decision.

I'm going to give you my top three factors to consider when looking for the right coach for you, and walk you through each part so that you can make the best hiring decision that you can in your search for a divorce coach.

The first thing you want to make sure you are doing in your search for a divorce coach is to find a professional divorce coach who provides the type of support you're looking for, at the stage of the divorce process you are in. Not all divorce coaches have the same qualifications, and not all divorce coaches provide the same services.

Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach

So first, I want you to evaluate, this is pretty easy, what stage am I in? Am I in the pre-divorce stage? Am I in the “I’m going through the divorce process” stage? Or am I in the post-divorce stage? Once you identify what stage you’re in, then you need to identify what type of support you want in that stage of the process.

For example, in the pre-divorce stage, are you looking for help with deciding whether to stay or go? How to plan a smart exit from the marriage, or something else?

If you are in the process of going through divorce, are you looking for support in learning about your divorce process options? And whether or how to hire an attorney? Are you looking for support in confidently handling mediation? Are you looking for support in decreasing your reactivity to your spouse? Are you looking for support in navigating co-parenting? Are you looking for support in managing and reducing conflict?

If you’re post-divorce, are you looking for support in dating, in re-entering the workforce, in loving your life again? What is it specifically that you want out of the coaching?

Think in specifics about, “What exactly am I looking to address through coaching?” It can be more than one of those things? That’s okay, too. But it’s important to think about, ideally, what would you be getting from the coaching relationship?

And then, consider, “Does the coach I’m considering help specifically with that thing,” or those things? What education and experience do they have in those specific areas?

I want to call to your attention here that, and this is an important point, there is a significant difference between a life coach who coaches people who are getting divorced, and a professional certified divorce coach. I happen to have training and experience in both of these worlds. And I feel confident in my ability to speak to the fact that there is in fact quite a difference. Okay?

Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach

Quality life coaches can be great in helping you do things like set and execute on goals, increase your self-awareness, make significant changes in your life, things like that. Divorce coaches, on the other hand, are specifically trained to help educate people on the divorce process, successfully engage in that process, make decisions with an understanding of the legal process landscape, help manage expectations, and manage and reduce conflict.

So, the divorce coaching process is specifically an alternative dispute resolution method. And that differs significantly from a life coach who just focuses on helping people who are experiencing divorce. If you want support during the actual divorce process, in any way that focuses on navigating the process, successfully engaging in the divorce legal process, or managing conflict, this is work best suited to a divorce coach.

If you are in the pre-divorce stage, and you are looking to create a plan to make a smart exit, that is also best suited to a divorce coach. If you're in the decision-making stay-or-go stage, I think there's room for both life and divorce coaching at this point. Life coaching that helps you look at your relationship with your spouse and with yourself, what you want for yourself in your future, what you can do now to possibly affect some change in the marital relationship, etc.

And then, there is the divorce coach aspect of it. The focus is more on an eyes-wide-open approach to the stay-or-go decision. Which, to me, means understanding what divorce would look like if you were to proceed down that path, to help you best evaluate both the “stay” and “go” paths.

If you are in the post-divorce stage, and you are looking to love life again, get help with dating, things like that, that can be in the realm of life coaching. But if you're looking for help in managing conflict with your co-parent, dealing with post judgment divorce proceedings, things like that, then you want a trained divorce coach.

And a lot of divorce coaches who also coach on the things that I'm sharing, could also be properly handled by a life coach. But it's important to understand those things that really should be best handled through a divorce coaching process, with someone who was a professional divorce coach.

Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach

As opposed to a life coach that would support you more in, I would say, some of the transitional issues that are associated with divorce, that are forward focused. Looking at things like what you want your life to be like after the divorce, and dating and things like that. As opposed to if you want help in any relation whatsoever to the actual legal process. It's really important to have somebody who is specifically trained in that.

And when I say trained divorce coach, what I mean is you want to find a *professional* divorce coach. So, what is that? And how do I know if this person is one? Someone who has formal training in divorce coaching is what you want to be looking for.

My personal opinion is that Divorce Coaches Academy currently has the best divorce coaching certification. But there are other programs out there. Not all divorce coaching programs are created equally. You definitely don't want somebody that's gone through a five-hour divorce coaching program, or something that's like a weekend and it's done, right?

There's also the CDC (Certified Divorce Coach) program, and that's another example of a longer-term better-quality program. But again, my personal opinion is Divorce Coaches Academy has probably, at the time of this recording, the best curriculum out there.

But you want someone who has had meaningful, formal training specifically in divorce coaching, which is an alternative dispute resolution method that is actually recognized by the American Bar Association.

Personal experience going through a divorce alone, without formal education and training in this area, is not a professional qualification to coach others through their own divorces. Okay? I've been divorced myself, and while that gives me empathy for what my clients are going through, it in and of itself is not a professional qualification to coach others on their divorces. So, it's really critical that the person that you're working with actually have formal, quality training on what it is to be a professional divorce coach.

Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach

In some, for this first piece of the framework, you want to identify: Where are you in the divorce process? What do you want out of the coaching? Find a professional coach, with education and training, to help with those specific things that you want help on.

Okay, the second part of the framework is just paying attention to how you feel when you consult with them. You're going to be sharing very personal information with them over the course of the relationship. You need to feel like you can do that. You don't want to people please or hold back in your relationship with your coach. So, you need to feel safe sharing key parts of your story and your struggles.

You need to be able to say what's on your mind. You want to be comfortable talking to them, to a certain degree. However, it's okay if your personalities or respective dispositions are different. What I mean by that is, even if you feel a little, maybe intimidated a bit by your coach, if you think that's what you need, that's okay. But you want to make sure that you have a coach that is aligned with your values, that they believe in your goals and what you're trying to accomplish in your divorce, and you feel safe sharing important details with them.

Okay, so the third part of the framework is determining whether the way in which the coach delivers services meets your needs. What you want to be thinking about here is: How do they deliver their services? Some coaches, you may be able to determine this from their website. Others, you won't know that until you get on the consult call and you talk with them. But you want to find out during the consultation, if you haven't in advance, how do they deliver their services?

For example, do they meet in person? Do they meet over Zoom? Do they meet over the telephone? Do they have a one-to-one coaching practice? Meaning, you meet privately one on one with the coach? Or do they do group coaching only, where you would be in sessions with other people?

Do they have an online course with video modules for you to watch? Do they offer written coaching? Is it some combination of these options? Do they offer

Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach

support between sessions? And if so, in what way? Is that over email? Is it over text message? Is it the opportunity for a quick five-minute call?

It's not that you have to have a coach who does any one of these particular things. It's not necessarily better that they have all those things, right? You just want to be really clear on what is your expectation of what you're getting, in terms of services, and the frequency or availability of communication with a coach. Are your expectations in alignment with what they offer in that regard?

What I'm not saying, is you need to have somebody who does all of the things we just talked about. But you want to just be clear on what it is that they're offering, versus what is your expectation about what you're going to get from them?

So, what are the options for working with them? Do you meet with them once a week? Do you meet with them bi-weekly? Do you meet with them monthly? Do you get to choose the frequency of when you meet with them? What is their pricing, and does that fit with your budget?

Divorce coaching for people going through the process is often pretty individualized, in my experience, and done on a largely one-to-one basis. But again, that depends on what you want out of the coaching. There's a big difference between receiving coaching on, for example, developing a settlement offer for your divorce based on your specific financial picture, versus getting coaching on challenges re-entering the dating scene.

The former is probably done better in a one-to-one setting. And the latter could be done in a group setting, for example. You can actually learn a lot from seeing others get coached, so don't discount group coaching as an option. But you have to assess whether that's what you want, and whether that makes sense for what you want out of the coaching.

Ask yourself this question: If I have the type of support I was hoping for when I scheduled a consultation with a divorce coach, what would that entail? I want to give you a tip here. Be open minded and willing to consider being flexible, if the

Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach

details of how the coach delivers services differs from what you expected in terms of method of delivery of services or pricing. Okay?

You want to be clear on what I would ideally like. But if you clearly click with a coach, and you feel like that coach can really help you, and the way in which they deliver the services and their pricing is a little different than what you expected, be open minded and willing to consider whether that coach would still be a match for you.

If you really like them, and you want to consider getting coaching from them, consider that there may be other ways of getting coached than you initially imagined.

Alright, so those are the top three factors that I would be thinking about in hiring a divorce coach. For you to further refine what will be important for you in choosing a divorce coach, I will leave you with a question to ponder. What would you need to know in order to be certain this is the person into whom you'd like to invest your resources to help you through this process?

Set some criteria for yourself at the outset to help you objectively assess whether you found the right coach for you. How will you know when you have? I hope that what I've covered in today's episode will help you start to generate that list of criteria for yourself. But if you have a developed set of criteria, it will be easier for you to know when you've found the right coach for you.

Alright, that's what I have for you today. I hope this helps you in your divorce coach selection process. If you can get this choice right it will set you up for success in the series of important decisions to come as you navigate your divorce. Have a great couple of weeks. Bye, for now.

If you've enjoyed today's show and don't want to worry about missing an episode, you can follow the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. And if you haven't already, I would really appreciate it if you could share the podcast with others who you think could benefit from it, and leave a rating and review to let me know what you think. I would love your honest feedback so I can create an awesome podcast that is helpful to you.

Ep #15: Your Guide to Choosing the Right Divorce Coach

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