



life after divorce
COACHING

with Doreen Yaffa and Jeff Wilson

Ep. 121 – Tips before Divorce



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Good day to all the listeners out there. Today, we're going to be giving you some tips that you should think about before you go for divorce. So if you're ready, let's get started. Hello, Doreen. How are you? I'm good. I'm good. Good. That's great. Today, I'm really excited that we're going to do a little bit of an interview with you.

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And but first, I want to get a little bit more information about you and your background as being a family law attorney. Okay. Well, that's interesting that you're interviewing me, but it's such a pleasure. So I have been practicing law in Florida for over 29 years, and I'm board certified in marital and family law. And I would say that probably about 80%, maybe even a little bit higher than that of our cases throughout my entire career have been in the divorce area of the practice.

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Now, you said you were board certified. How important is that? And even what is it? Well, being board certified is basically when you have a certain amount of years that you've been practicing, you take a rather challenging exam specific to the area of marital and family law, and you have a certain amount of criteria, like you have to handle X amount of litigated cases that have specific issues, etc., etc..

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It goes before a board and there are a few of us in the state of Florida. It's awesome. It's rare, but I

think you said thank you. I think you said something about do you need to be or, you know, should should the listeners seek out a board certified marital family lawyer in their state? The answer is maybe it depends on the complexity of the case.

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If your case is rather simplistic or more on the average, as far as challenging and difficult, you probably don't need a board certified marital and family lawyer because think about also the cause. Board certified lawyers generally costs more than lawyers that are not board certified. So if you do have complex issues, I would highly suggest it. Right. Well, I'm going to assume that most of our listeners out there know that you're a family attorney.

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But I also I'm going to assume that they know you're also a life coach, That's what that's our business. Yes, that is our business together. Yeah. How does the life coaching affect your lawyering? Okay. One help the other. How does. yeah. I mean, I would I would assume that it would be a great combination, but I want to hear it from you.

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Well, the reason that I got into one of the reasons that I got into life coaching was because of my clients, because of what I do. Obviously, divorce is one of the most emotional, emotional and challenging things that anyone will ever experience. And it's it can be extremely debilitating and emotionally draining, etc., which our listeners are well aware of.

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So one of the things that was most important to me was not only to get them the best result legally under the law, but also to help them to move on to their better life, because there's the legal side of it. But there's also to me, the very important side of the emotional part of going through a divorce and basically recovering from it.

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Right. Recovering from divorce. So I bring that into my practice. And I think it's really important for the listeners out there to interview your lawyer to see what they're made of. You know, understand how many divorces they've handled, what percentage of their practice they work in the divorce arena. A Opposed to other family issues such as adoption or post judgment issues, those types of things.

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You want to find a lawyer that has a lot of experience in divorce, but also understand them emotionally. What is their what drives them as a lawyer? How many of their cases do they settle? How do they settle their cases? Because unfortunately, there are some lawyers out there that are not, as let me say, focused on the well-being emotionally of the client or more focused only on the legal issues.

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And I think it takes a balance. Well, I also think that a side benefit to the client is because you are a divorce coach, I mean a life coach. Yeah. And that life coaching, you're going to use it on yourself, which is going to make you a more level headed lawyer. I would think so. I mean, one of the things I do, which is kind of funny, is when I'm speaking with a client, not a life coaching client, but I'm

speaking with a divorce client, right?

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Many times I'll say to them, Well, let me go ahead and put my life coaching hat on versus my lawyer hat, because they're so intertwined. The emotions that go along with the divorce case as a divorce attorney that I see are present in almost every conversation, communication that I have or my team has with the client. There are emotions involved, even if it's just as simple as gathering records for us or completing what's known as a financial affidavit, which you think would be purely financial.

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Right. But there but the emotion of the divorce affects everything. So maybe I have a client who we've given them the list of records they have to provide to us by a certain date, which is mandated by statute in Florida or in the rules of court, but they don't seem to be able to get it accomplished. Right. We're constantly following up with them.

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And I may find that they just avoiding, which is an emotional issue. Right. Right. So I think it's very intertwined. And that's why I recommend to all of my divorcing clients that they seek assistance outside of me as a lawyer. Gotcha. Okay. Because lawyers are expensive. Right. You don't want to go to your lawyer and talk about emotional issues that you're having challenges with in your divorce or with your soon to be ex.

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Because when we're charging the rate that we're charging, you should be going to another expert that's better qualified, like a therapist or life coach to help with those issues. And so when you work with a therapist and or a life coach and you can work with them in combination therapies, generally going back and looking at issues backwards. Life coaching, looking at where you are today and staying focused on the future and the present and moving forward, which is a beautiful combination.

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When I have a client that works with a coach or therapist, it is very helpful to us legally. So when you put on your life coaching hat, you don't lower your rate? No, I don't lower my rate because we're talking legal. I know, right. Okay. So getting coach them without charging them, you know, So maybe I'll you know, we charge by the time involved.

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So if I'm having a conversation on the phone with a client and maybe you know, 20 minutes was discussing the legal issues and 10 minutes was discussing the coaching issues, and I always ask permission before I coach them, you know, like, let me put on my coaching hat. I have some thoughts. I don't charge for that. That's just part of the service.

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Well, let's talk about a client that comes in first day. They hire you. What are some of the tips that you're going to give them to get prepared for the journey through divorce? Well, I'd rather step back if we can. I'd rather talk about the things you should do. You said file. Well, they're coming into you. That's their first time to see you, and they're ready to hire you.

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Right? Okay, so the first thing is, I think you need to take a step back, right? Because you said they're ready to hire me, right? I think the first thing to do, tips from me would be do your research, find lawyers to interview, to have a consultation with, and don't just interview one. Okay. A lot of times you'll have a client client who will go and see a lawyer.

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It's a painful profit process because you're talking about divorce. Nobody wants to talk about divorce. And we know as coaches, our primitive brain will shut us down. We don't want to go there. It doesn't feel good. But I really strongly advise you to to interview probably at least two, if not three, lawyers before you make your selection, make sure that the lawyers are qualified.

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Ask the questions like I said, about qualifications. Yeah, well, we do it in medical issues and, you know, your car breaks down. You need a couple of different opinions. So why not do it in something this big of a decision in your life? Ask around. Look, asked for references. You know, do your do your research on each of the lawyers.

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And a lot of it, I think when dealing with a doctor or a lawyer or a therapist or a life coach, how do you vibe with each other? What is the personality blend? Do you feel comfortable with this person? Got a job because you could have three very similarly qualified lawyers and some things off just personality wise, and you'll pick up on that.

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So listen to your intuition while you're at the meeting. And like I said, ask questions. A lot of times in the interviews that I have, the consultations that I have, the clients don't ask me a lot of questions about my experience and all of the things that I mentioned earlier. I usually bring it up, but I think you have to be ready with your questions, right?

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So that's one of the first tips. The other no, I was just going to ask, is there a certain percentage or what do you think about if I'm a man seeking divorce, I want to hire a man or I want to hire a woman or a woman hiring a woman? You know what? I think those days are done.

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Unknown

Those days are done. Well, you know, nothing's completely done, right? Yeah, but I used to have I mean, I represent both men and women, and people sometimes ask me, just in general, do you handle more men or women? And I would say it's pretty even. It goes in spurts. You know, depending is cyclical. We might have more females or males at the time.

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But there's a number of host of reasons why one might choose a female or male. I think that's becoming, you know, with more gender equality, that's becoming less of a thing now, more about ability. It's about ability and how you get along with the person and how you vibe with them. Okay, so let's dive into some tips. So some of the other tips I would recommend is the educating yourself.

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We talked about the decision to get divorced. Make sure that you've made that decision as clearly as you can. Nobody's going to be likely 100% certain they want the divorce. They may think they are because of something that occurred. Let's say there was adultery. They're like, I'm getting divorced. That's why I'm getting divorced. I would suggest this is coaching not legal.

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I would suggest that if that is the reason that you think you're getting divorced is because let's just say there was infidelity. That is just the excuse that is being used. The reason at that time, it's probably been mounting for a while. So really dig in emotionally as to, you know, what it looks like for you. The next thing I would recommend is gather your documents.

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There are a list of documents that are required in every divorce, in every state that have to be exchanged with the other side. The lawyer's going to need and and as much as you can get those records in advance, even of of the first interview with the lawyers, put them together, you know, download them into a PDF file of file.

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However you best organize your records and bring your records with you. There are probably some records that your lawyer may want to see, such as tax returns are really important. A financial statement. If you happen to have one that's really important, something that might list out all of the assets in the liabilities, I would absolutely go ahead and prepare that.

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Unknown

And if you don't have information on that, like you don't know all of the assets and or liabilities, that's okay. That's okay. You may not have all the information, but list what you do now. Now, that may seem, you know, a financial statement like that may seem like this huge project. Is there something that you recommend that they can tackle it and make it a little bit easier?

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We do it. We like to use technology, so we do it through Dropbox. We share SharePoint, But however you best look, I've had people come in literally. I'll never forget I had a lady come in once with a laundry basket, you know, she couldn't find a box like a banker's box. She, she brought a laundry basket and just had dumped records in there and she was disheveled when she came in.

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She looked like she hadn't slept in a while. And I thought, yeah, this probably isn't a case that we'll be able to take because, you know, we we require a certain retainer. However, when I started pulling out the records, let's just say she was worth many millions, many millions. So organization is really important. Let me talk about some other tips.

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There's some things you want to do to protect yourself. Change passwords to your accounts. If your spouse has access to your accounts, you want to change those, protect yourself on that gathers sentimental and items that unfortunately, sometimes people in divorce do mean spirited

things. So if you have things that are very sentimental to you, such as heirlooms, jewelry, you know, memories, things like this, memorabilia, even collectibles and stuff, you might want to put things in a safe place.

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Some of the other things I think that are really important is to take care of yourself, right? Make sure that you're getting plenty of sleep, you're eating well, you're not overdrinking. Overusing other forms of, you know, drugs and things like this that you're keeping your body in its most healthy state possible because it's it's such an emotional time that it will have a toll on your body.

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So you want to stay ahead of that. I think that also working out and getting some type of relief physically, even if it's just gently, you know, going for a walk or wood or yoga, something like this, Keep your your body moving. Right. Well, I'm asking, you know, from from the point of view of thinking in my mind, going through a divorce right now, what about staying in the house?

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What do we do about staying in the house, staying together? What do we do about that? Yeah, well, I think you should speak with your lawyer first. Get a get an opinion from your lawyer on that, because it depends on the facts of the case. It depends if you have children, It depends if the house is going to be sold or not sold.

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It depends If you want the house. Generally, I would tell the person if they want the house, even pending the divorce, don't leave. It depends on if there's abuse, emotional or physical. Obviously protecting yourself first is key. Protecting the children first is key. So there is no right or wrong. It really depends on each families situation. Yeah, it really does.

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And it depends also financially what you can and cannot afford. Right? Right. But if you have the ability to separate while the divorce is occurring, the process is occurring, it may be the best emotionally that you give yourself physical space from your soon to be ex. Right. But don't do that without first speaking with your lawyer. Yeah. Okay.

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So what other community station tips? Maybe. Do you have something we can dive into that you think might help prepare for the emotional side of? Yeah, I think less is more. So when you're dealing with your ex and you're contemplating or even in the middle of divorce. And you know what all of these tips are helpful for post divorce work.

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If you have to go back to court to change your custody arrangement or to enforce a provision of your settlement agreement, these all are relevant to that as well. But emotionally, I think it's really important that you keep the conversation with your soon to be ex to what's necessary and pleasant. The emotions of poking the bear expression that we use and involving yourself in less than pleasant conversations.

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Fighting anger doesn't serve any purpose whatsoever. It is debilitating and hurtful. And in fact, keep in mind that especially in today's technology world, where we tend to message people by text, you know, messaging through various apps, emails, many times these things are used by the divorce attorneys in court. So be very careful what you put in writing. Be very careful when you leave a message like what you're saying.

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I want my clients to presume that what they're communicating will be discovered by the other side and maybe used. So always speak with that in mind. Another very important tip. Please keep the kids out of it. Don't involve the kids. I don't care if they're too or they're almost 18. Okay. Just keep them out of the divorce. They're already involved.

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They're already involved in the divorce process. Just by nature of what's occurring. They don't need to hear parents arguing. They don't need to be involved in conversations, overhearing conversations with your lawyer or with your friends about the divorce they don't want to hear, nor should they be hearing negative comments about the other parent. It is devastating to children on so many levels.

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More of that by your therapist. You can talk to therapist. Child therapists will give a nice insight on that. You know, that was those are actually one of my last questions was to talk about the children because they are a common denominator in the divorce and I think that your goals for the children may be a little bit similar.

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So is there any kind of tip you can give us as far as working through some tough emotions with the kids in mind? Well, I think the first thing is don't tell the children about the divorce or imply it in any way without being on the same page with your with the other parent. How how we're going to do this when we're going to do it, what's going to be said, how the delivery of the message will be done?

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Will it be done with the children all together? Will it be done separate because certain children have various emotional levels that you would talk to a younger child differently than you would talk to an older child? Or maybe you have a child that has some challenges in the way in which you approach that child will be different. Talk to your therapist, your expert therapist that deal with children related issues about how best to tell the children and then be on the same page If your spouse, if you're at the other parent, has already spoken to the children, then I would seek first to get advice from the therapist on how to deal with that before

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just taking it on yourself. Yeah. Yeah. Some great tips. If somebody wanted to ask a specific question, is there a way that they can get a hold of us? Well, certainly, certainly they can reach out to life after divorce coaching. I mean, I deal with family. I'm a Florida lawyer, right. So if you have a question on a Florida related divorce issue or any marital or family issue, like I said, we give complimentary consultations and I'm opening a second firm.

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But more about that later, that's going to be amazing. But you can certainly reach us at YAF, a family law group. It's in Boca Raton, Florida, and you can find us on our website, which is w w w dot Yaffa Family Law Group dot com. I wanted to make one other suggestion to our listeners. Find out about the different ways to get through the divorce in your state, the processes of a divorce.

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There's litigation in Florida. There's which is in all states there's collaboration where there's a group of team of professionals that come together through a collaborative process. There is the cooperative process where people generally have a lawyer, but they try to try to cooperate. Of course, there's mediation, there's these do it yourself sites, and soon there will be something called Split up, which is my new company, my new firm that we're going to be launching very, very soon, which is a combination of amazing technology.

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Do it yourself with a lawyer. So with actual legal advice, because one of the concerns that I have with the do it yourself platforms are trying to go it along alone without legal advice is that people make mistakes. They enter into agreements with their soon to be ex and they don't know the law and so they make mistakes that then they can't get out of.

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Unknown

They have a signed settlement agreement, a sign divorce decree. And that's a that can be devastating to their future. So split up is my new firm in which we will be offering the best of both worlds affordable divorce with a lawyer and but ask which processes your attorney general uses, utilizes, and know what those processes are and make decisions based on that.

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Well, thank you for all the great tips today. Yeah, I learned a lot. Okay, good. Yeah. You don't need a divorce. No, no, definitely not. As a matter of fact, we're getting ready to head out and celebrate our wedding anniversary. Yeah, well, for your anniversary was 14 years as of yesterday. Yesterday? 14 years. So thank you so much for the information.

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And thank you so much for being such a beautiful person and such a great wife. You're amazing. All right. Well, everybody out there have an amazing day and we'll talk to you next week by everyone.