

How NLP is Applied in Coaching for Breakup and Divorce



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I was devastated by my divorce, which hit me like a freight train. I didn't see it coming and, overnight, my whole world turned upside down. I not only lost my husband, but also the father to my son, my soulmate, my best friend and my business partner. I was broken, frightened and utterly overwhelmed.

At this point I had been coaching for over 15 years, so I knew I could turn this around. However, I had absolutely no idea where to start. I was at rock bottom and my future looked like a black hole of despair as everything I had planned for was no longer a viable option. I looked for advice and help but couldn't find anything specific to my situation. I tried therapy, which gave me some useful insights, but it didn't give me the plan, the clear direction or the inspiration I really needed.

So, I decided to create the tools I needed myself by combining my coaching skills with my own divorce experience

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to figure out how best to navigate the nightmare I was living. I began to test a variety of techniques to find what worked to help me with the many challenges I was facing, including heartbreak, betrayal, loss of identity, confusion and fear of the future.

I had my own coaching business for many years and trained as an NLP Master Practitioner in 2002. As a staunch NLP geek, I knew the tools would provide me with a way through. It was just a matter of finding the most effective way to combine them with my other coaching skills and personal experience.

The toolkit of techniques, strategies and practical tips I created is now helping

thousands of people all over the world. I have written two bestselling books, I host a podcast called *Heartbreak to Happiness* and I run a Breakup, Divorce and Domestic Abuse Coach training school to accredit people to coach in this fast-growing niche.

Some of the NLP tools are woven throughout my toolkit to help ensure the fast positive transformations that are often sticky for clients are more effective. This enables them to take back control and learn to help themselves cope better, as well as learning skills they can use whenever life throws them a curve ball.

Most people don't realise they can change how they feel. Most believe they



are feeling negative emotions because of what has been done to them and it is inevitable that they will feel overwhelmed and powerless to change that. Whilst this is a normal human response, and in many cases more than justified, the simple explanation that they can create the reality they want to live and that they have all the resources they need is often a real positive catalyst for lasting transformation.

Using NLP to heal after a breakup

With all clients we need to use rapport to build those instant connections and trusted relationships. We will be discussing difficult and intimate details, so this is a key foundation to establish to enable our clients to open up so we can best help them. Many clients are vulnerable and need a lot of support, so building rapport by matching body language, pacing and leading, linguistic awareness and future pacing are all essential coaching tools.

Every client is different and has their own map of the world. No relationship breakdown is the same, so we need to have behavioural flexibility to tailor our toolkit to the individual. Each person will have their own tolerance to stress and difficult situations, which impacts how we move forward with them. Then throw in the wide variety of breakup scenarios, from fizzling out over time to discovering affairs, and this gives you an idea of the range of different challenges you will have to navigate that all need different practical tips as well as coaching tools.

The key question to start all coaching sessions is "What would you like to achieve from this session?" This is because we need a well-formed outcome to aim for to provide focus for each client. We can add in many other outcomes as we go, but having a good understanding of our clients' expectations is vital from the start. It gives clear goals and shows the progress clients are making when results are delivered.

Because so much communication is nonverbal, we need to have a high sensory awareness of what is happening for our clients. This is important because what a client says and what their body language indicates do not always directly correspond with each other. Paying close attention to any incongruence between

communication and nonverbal signs will demonstrate a much deeper understanding of what is going on.

Many clients have negative triggers and conditioned responses to anything that reminds them of their ex. Anchoring and showing them how to replace old responses with new ones in a very specific way can really help to break their patterns. This small reset can often lead to huge positive steps forward for clients who have been stuck for a long time.

One of my favourite tools is what I called 'flip it', which you may be more familiar with as reframing. It involves asking clients to find the good in a situation, which gives them a way to refocus in a new direction. Often clients struggle with this to start, as they cannot see any positives. With guidance, they can reframe it in a way that shows them how they can start to take their power back, rather than giving it away, and this gives them a real boost to move forward.

Showing clients that their mind and body are part of the same system is often where many breakthroughs occur. Demonstrations are extremely impactful to explain how shifting your body language can impact how you feel in a heartbeat. Telling clients this is one thing but acting it out for them and getting them physically engaged will help to prove the power of this tool.

Simple encouragement from the start of a coaching session and setting the client's expectations that they

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will notice progress and start to shift how they feel in just one session is an empowering subliminal command tool. As they experience those lightbulb moments during the session (which is a goal for all my coaches in every session) and learn tools and techniques that enable them to take some control back over the rollercoaster of emotions is key to recognising these positive steps forward and highlighting their progress as they go. A recap at the end of each session covering the specific learnings that have helped them the most will also help to cement their awareness of progress, which is key for momentum and rebuilding confidence too.

NLP really is the 'user's manual for your mind' because it gives us insights into how our thinking and behaviour patterns can affect every aspect of our lives. It's powerful for clients and by sharing these NLP tools with them we enable them to take their own power back and cope better with any kind of breakup or divorce.

It is so empowering for clients and super rewarding for us to be part of the process. For me, being a coach is simply the best job in the world! ■

