

## S2 Mini9: Life Coaching vs. Therapy. What's the Difference?

### That's A Hard No Transcript

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*Heather:* Welcome to That's a hard No the podcast about saying no and setting boundaries.

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*Sarah:* So you can become the authentic and empowered you that this world needs.

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*Heather:* Before we start, a quick reminder.

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*Sarah:* While I am a licensed professional clinical counselor, this podcast is in no way a replacement for one on one therapy with a mental health professional. If you notice the content in this podcast triggers some big feelings. Visit our website: [hardenopodcast.com](http://hardenopodcast.com) for mental health resources and other helpful links.

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*Heather:* In season two of that's a hard no. We're making it a priority to dig deeper into the process of finding and utilizing the help you may need. We want to take the time to discuss with our in-house expert, Sarah Saunders, what to expect from therapy and all of its intricacies.

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*Heather:* Hi Sarah.

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*Sarah:* Hi Heather.

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*Heather:* I love that we've decided to cover this topic. There are so many misconceptions about therapy versus life coaching and I think it's really important to know the difference between the two.

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*Sarah:* I couldn't agree more. Life coaching has become more and more popular. I feel like we're hearing about it a lot more.

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*Heather:* For sure.

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*Sarah:* It can really leave people feeling very confused about. You know the differences between the coaching and the therapy, and I have to speculate that if listeners, if you are listening to our podcast, you are on some sort of personal growth journey, wanting to learn and grow in some way, and so I thought specifically this would be important to address these differences and if you're not exactly sure whether you need a therapist or a life coach, this is definitely the episode for you to tune into. I also want to start by just, you know, sharing that there's benefits to both and that there is no one size fits all, and as we talk a lot in this podcast about how we all go through different seasons in different situations, and so both of them have been very beneficial in my own life and I hope that listeners you take

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away being able to, find which direction would be most helpful for you, whether it is the coaching, the life coaching path or the therapy or a mixture of both.

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*Heather:* Great!

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*Sarah:* And so just to kind of start out. You know, therapist therapy focuses on psychological disorders, helping people go from a-level of not functioning or under functioning to functioning, and so specifically, with anxiety and depression, people with very high anxiety may be avoiding certain things. They may not be able to live their life the way that they want. Same with depression, you know mood disorders, things like that. So there's a big psychological component to seeking therapy. Verses coaching. Someone is already highly functioning, but they want to kind of go the next level, and so therapy does a lot of depth work. It's the true psychotherapy. A lot of it is focused on unpacking past traumas to heal and change some of these self-destructive habits or things that are keeping them stuck, so that they can repair and improve relationships and really heal through and identify what they need to move forward. But that work can't necessarily happen until they really get to that root cause which oftentimes is unpacking the past. We're coaching life coaches focus on identifying the current problem so they meet the person where they're at and their primary focus is on actionable strategies to help them move forward. And so I will say that there are some really great life coaches out there that I've actually coordinated care with.

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*Heather:* Interesting.

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*Sarah:* That they were really trying to get them to a place in their business, that they wanted to really move forward, but they kept getting stuck and the reason was because there was trauma associated with that. So, although they wanted to move forward, they weren't able to unless they were able to kind of heal from some of those things that were keeping them stuck.

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*Heather:* It almost sounds like psychotherapy helps you process the past and then life coaching addresses challenges in the future and how to attack them basically or meet goals, future goals. I can see how they would connect and overlap.

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*Sarah:* Yes, and one of the most popular therapy approaches is CBT, which is cognitive behavioral therapy, and that has a little bit of overlap with coaching, and so there are some things that do make it a little bit murky. Know which one is coaching versus therapy. The biggest thing to keep in mind is that with therapy you are working with a trained professional that has a high level of education. Go back into our minisodes and listen to. You know that scope of mental health professionals, but you're working. Therapist works specifically with people that have diagnostic criteria right, and so they're really working on. You know identifying what it is that they're struggling with, being able to process. Like you

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had mentioned, you know a lot of things that are past and then being able, you know, to move forward, and so to kind of make this even a little bit more digestible. I want you to keep these four things in mind. You know, therapy focuses on recovering from past traumas, exploring the why in past relationships, business or personal that have been destructive. They help to work through depression or anxiety or psychological mental disorder that affects the ability to function at home or work, and therapists help to navigate those life circumstances, the different seasons that we're in, and then a life coach offers guidance by helping clients clarify and achieve personal and professional goals, create business plans, work to improve communication skills, achieve financial independence and security, achieve a work-life balance, start a new business or grow a current business.

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*Heather:* I think I need a life coach like i'm looking at that list and like check check, check, check check check like, yeah, and and in my past i've seen a therapist which has helped with all the things in your list. So I can definitely see how you could benefit from both types of professionals, how one could help you address the why's in process and understand your past behavior. But then that also gives you insight as you move forward, maybe with a coach to understand, you know how to get past those past behaviors or ways of thinking. That's really interesting.

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*Sarah:* And this is where it's also important that if you do find someone that you are doing your research to understand their background. Because I've also noticed in the therapy realm and with connections that I have, that there's a lot of people that have the foundation, the therapy foundations that are now switching to coaching or consulting, and so he again. There's a lot of overlap, but it's also important to make sure that if you are wanting to move forward with something but you're noticing that you just keep getting stuck, it is helpful to kind of meet with a therapist to process through those things. Then it's oftentimes like people or encourage people. This is just personal and clinical preference, but to start out with a therapist, you know to ensure that they're at a level that will allow to. You now proceed with the coaching. The other thing to keep in mind is that therapy psychotherapy is oftentimes more long term. It's more like scheduled and regimented where, for those of you that you know are on Instagram and social media a lot of times, coaching sign up for. You know this five series class that you would learn a lot of skills and concepts, but it's not necessarily this, you know long term.

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*Heather:* So that raises a question I have is that I see life coaches everywhere and, as I've joked with you before, it's you know I wrote them off as flim flam artists or con artists or like. How do you know someone's qualified? What's the degree you get like? So I guess I don't know if you have an answer for this, but like how do you know if someone's good life coach or how do you know they're not going to just waste your time and money?

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*Sarah:* Sure, and I think a lot of that just goes back to doing your research, to really you know there should be, and i'm not entirely sure I have to be honest what the exact certification is.

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But there's a lot of different training and certification that a person would have in order to provide you know whatever scope they are. I know there's a lot of business coaches, life coaches, wellness coaches, things like that right. So it's really just asking questions.

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*Heather:* Check the references.

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*Sarah:* Right.

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*Heather:* Yeah, yeah, do your research? Well, this is really helpful. I learned a lot. I like, I said I wrote off life coaches up till now and you've made me think it so.

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*Sarah:* Thanks Sarah. You're welcome and keep in mind that there's like I mentioned in the beginning, there's benefits to both, and it really just depends on the season and the circumstances.

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*Heather:* Great!

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*Sarah:* In our next episode we will go over Tips and tools to discussing your newly gained insight with friends and family as a result of going to this. Thanks so much for listening.

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*Heather:* Thanks guys.