

FOUNDER OF DIVORCE STRATEGIES NORTHWEST

LEAH HILL

When Leah Hill left her marriage of 17 years in late 2016, she didn't know how difficult the process would be. The mother of three described divorce as a "very lonely process," which entailed enormous attorney fees, months of waiting, and a general lack of guidance. "You're going through this very traumatic, emotional situation, and you are literally negotiating for your future life."

So, in January 2018, she founded Bellevue-based Divorce Strategies Northwest, which helps people navigate the process in a healthier and less expensive way. With a background as a trained victim advocate and certified parenting coach — and with two partners on board to help fill out the team — Hill has been able to build a service that is as supportive as it is innovative. Clients are able to meet with Hill and her business partners to ask questions, access information, think about post-divorce needs, understand the process, and create a strategy before ever seeking an attorney.

"When we provide them with a clearer picture of what the divorce process looks like, and that life on the other side of divorce doesn't have to have a traumatic ending but can be a new beginning, people feel much more empowered," Hill said. "They just need to be assured that it will be OK, their kids will survive, and they won't be destitute at the end."

We caught up with Hill to hear more about her business and her favorite spots on the Eastside. — ZOE BRANCH



FAVORITE PLACES

TO RELAX COVID has forced us to adapt and has brought so much into focus. Neighbors are our community! We have enjoyed impromptu happy hours, barbecues, and many walks to the beach. I especially love Meydenbauer Bay Park for a workout with a view.

FOR DINNER Taylor Shellfish in Lincoln 2 is my fave. My boys and I love Duke's.

TO BE INSPIRED Taking a class at Whisk on Main Street in Bellevue.



CURRENTLY LISTENING TO So many fantastic podcasts. My current favorites are For the Love Podcast with Jen Hatmaker, The School of Greatness with Lewis Howes, and The 10 Minute Entrepreneur with Sean Castrina.

BEST PROFESSIONAL ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED Always deliver more than expected.

INSPIRATION BOARD

CURRENTLY READING I always have a few books going ... I'm currently reading The Choice: Embrace the Possible, by Dr. Edith Eva Eger, and Grown & Flown by Lisa Heffernan.



MANTRA YOU LIVE BY Spend time with those who feed your energy, not consume it.

MANTRA FOR SUCCESS IN SMALL BUSINESS We are what we repeatedly do ... excellence is a habit.

HOBBIES I love the XGym, surprising a friend with a gift, and treasure hunting at Nordstrom Rack.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF IN THE WORK YOU HAVE DONE THROUGH THE BUSINESS SO FAR? I love that we work with clients who feel stuck ... sometimes for many years! We provide a lifeline of resources, support, and information. When a client says to me, "I thought I could never leave — you showed me a way out," that renews my passion.

Q&A

HOW DID YOU START DIVORCE STRATEGIES NORTHWEST? WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GOAL WITH IT? We started in the summer of 2017 and have never stopped growing and evolving. Our goal has remained to provide individuals and couples with resources, options, and support as they navigate the minefield of divorce.

HOW HAVE YOU PIVOTED DURING COVID TO CONTINUE HELPING CLIENTS? Our team has continued to work with clients throughout COVID, with more focused creativity than ever. Much of our work happens via Zoom and phone, but we have even met with clients on park benches and in their cars. We ensure that our clients have the support they need to make informed decisions. ■

TOP TO BOTTOM: PHOTO BY DANIEL WALLIUS; PHOTO BY JIMMY149 VIA FLICKR; COURTESY AMAZON