WOMEN LEADERS ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK CHAPTER | NewYorkWomenLeaders.org | WomanLeaders.org

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Women Leaders Association Adds Deborah Donenfeld as New York Coaching Partner, Bringing a Coach Who Specializes in Starting Over in Midlife

The association's New York Coaching Partners roster grows to two, adding an ICF Professional Certified Coach who has coached since 2011 and moved into her niche after her own life was turned upside down

NEW YORK, September 24, 2026 — The Women Leaders Association, the largest publisher and events organization for women professionals with 43,000 members and more than 130 regional chapters, today announced Deborah Donenfeld, PCC, as the newest Coaching Partner of its New York chapter. The appointment gives the chapter's members a choice of two rigorously vetted coaches with complementary strengths.

Deborah Donenfeld
Coaching Partner,
New York Chapter

Coaching is one of the highest-impact investments a professional woman can make in her career, and one of the hardest to shop for. Titles are unregulated and quality varies enormously. Under Coaching Partners, the association does the screening on the member's behalf, vetting every coach for recognized certifications, verifiable experience, and excellent client reviews, so members can book a consultation with confidence.

Donenfeld is a life coach specializing in supporting people in midlife who are starting over. Owner of Photosynthesis Coaching, she has been coaching since 2011, and moved into this niche when her own life was turned upside down and she found herself navigating several big and painful changes all at once. She coaches individuals through the broad spectrum of change that life inevitably throws our way, and works with professionals to navigate hard conversations and other sticky communication situations. She coaches from the heart, and compassionately helps clients work their edge and move through tough changes with grace.

Her way of working traces back to something she noticed about herself long before she had a word for it. When she was younger, strangers would come up to her out of the blue and start telling her what they were going through, confiding their deepest secrets. She remembers sitting in a university library, discreetly looking around to see whether the person who had just sat down and begun pouring out their life story had mistaken her for someone else. She did not really mind. She liked that people felt they could trust her.

Today she coaches individuals and professionals in the realms of change and communication. She helps people navigate life when it feels like the rug has been pulled out from under them, and learn to choose trust over fear. And she works with professionals who want to communicate more authentically and effectively with clients, co-workers, bosses, and the people they manage.

Her path ran through an unusual second discipline. Donenfeld has been a working photographer since 1991, shooting children, portraits, and commercial work. The day she knew she wanted to be one, she was traveling through northern Pakistan, playing with young girls and photographing them, and they invited her home for tea. She met the mothers and aunts and sisters, and

despite having no shared language, they connected. The friend waiting outside told her he loved watching her photograph people because she was so visibly happy doing it.

That connection is not incidental to the coaching. The trust-building that draws out personality in a photography subject is the same thread that runs through her practice: understanding clients deeply, drawing out what is most authentic and important to them, helping them build self-awareness and communicate better, and identifying the actions that follow.

Alongside her coaching practice, Donenfeld has served since 2014 as Chief Communication Officer and Executive Assistant to the CEO at Francis Financial, where she provides performance coaching and communication consulting, helping employees remove obstacles to their best work and have hard conversations productively and compassionately. She is a Professional Certified Coach credentialed by the International Coaching Federation, holds a Coaching for Transformation certification from Leadership That Works, and earned her degree from Barnard College.

"I have helped people navigate life when it feels like the rug has been pulled out from under them, and learn how to choose trust over fear," said Donenfeld. "Connection and communication, whatever form they take, are the key. That is true whether someone is rebuilding after a major change or trying to have a difficult conversation at work without damaging the relationship. I am honored to bring that to the Women Leaders Association's New York members."

Donenfeld joins Susan Roti on the New York roster. Members can view her full profile, including her focus areas and credentials, or schedule a free 45-minute consultation through her page at https://NewYorkWomenLeaders.org/CoachDeborahDonenfeld

"Careers rarely come apart on a schedule. A layoff, a company sale, a health event, a divorce - our members deal with all of it, and the professional advice they get often skips straight past the part where everything is uncertain," said Lydia Price, 2026 Volunteer Chair of the Women Leaders Association. "Deborah's entire practice is built for that moment, and she pairs it with hard-nosed communication coaching. With two vetted coaches now in New York, our members can pick the right partner for what is actually in front of them."

The New York expansion is part of a national rollout extending Coaching Partners across the association's network of more than 130 chapters, pairing each city's members with coaches selected for that market.

Coaching Partners extends the association's mission of giving professional women both structural transparency and individual support. Research from Pew and others estimates that women still earn roughly 15 percent less than men on average, and the association's Glass Ceiling Score project scores most major U.S. employers on how fairly they promote women into management and executive roles. Coaching Partners adds the personal dimension: once a member sees the landscape clearly, a proven coach helps her move through it.

About Deborah Donenfeld

Deborah Donenfeld, PCC, is the owner of Photosynthesis Coaching (photosynthesiscoaching.com) in the New York City metropolitan area and a life coach specializing in supporting people in midlife who are starting over. She has been coaching since 2011. A Professional Certified Coach credentialed by the International Coaching Federation, she holds a Coaching for Transformation certification from Leadership That Works and a health coach certification from Health Yoga Life. She has served since 2014 as Chief Communication Officer and Executive Assistant to the CEO at Francis Financial, and has worked as a photographer since 1991, specializing in children, portraits, and commercial work. She holds a B.A. in French language and literature from Barnard College.

About the Women Leaders Association

The Women Leaders Association is a non-profit committed to the development and advancement of women in the corporate arena. With 43,000 members and more than 130 chapters in major cities, it is the largest publisher and events organization serving women professionals, producing conferences, leadership programs, original research, and daily publications for its members. We also celebrate the top 50 business women in each city, publish a Glass Ceiling Score ranking how well most employers advance women, and then recognize the best women's employers in each city from these rankings.

Events Near You: https://WomanLeaders.org/r/

Best Employers Near You: https://WomanLeaders.org/r/GlassCeiling

Visit the New York chapter: https://NewYorkWomenLeaders.org

Media Contact: Women Leaders Association, Service@WomanLeaders.org, https://WomanLeaders.org

Free New York Women Leaders Resources — available to all women in the New York metro area at no charge:

- News: https://NewYorkWomenLeaders.org/News
- Top 50 Women: https://NewYorkWomenLeaders.org/top-50.html
- Best Women Employers and Glass Ceiling Scores: https://NewYorkWomenLeaders.org/GlassCeiling

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