



PROFILE

# Mallory Fuchs

From Working  
in a (Literal)  
Prison to  
Helping  
Women Out  
of (Virtual)  
Prison-Like  
Environments

BY ISABELLE WATTENBERG

**M**allory Fuchs is a Licensed Drug and Alcohol Counselor (LDAC) who spent four years working as a therapist at the all-male prison in Faribault. During that time, she realized it was a toxic environment – not because of the inmates, but because of some of the staff and the way they acted toward each other. She left, and now runs a personal coaching business where she helps women (and men) overcome harassment and more in the workplace and to become respected and heard.

### **What led you to work at the prison?**

My dad had worked at the same prison for about 15 years. Growing up and hearing his stories – crime and all of that - really intrigued me. So I (majored in) therapy (in college), but corrections was my minor. I really enjoyed the corrections world and decided to do therapy work at a prison.

Working with the guys, I worked a lot on addiction; I'm a licensed addiction counselor. We worked on criminal behavior; I ran a domestic violence group and I worked a lot on how to treat women, but I didn't (see it myself in the workplace). That was hard when our clients saw how male staff treated women staff. Overall, I really enjoyed the work that I did there. I felt a lot of times that population (inmates) is thrown to the wayside, but there's a lot of really beautiful souls in there who just made really poor choices. So it helped me grow personally and professionally; it opened my heart to see where people come from and gave me compassion. The therapy field is a little different from life coaching, it's given me a deeper compassion for people.

### **How long were you there?**

I was there for about four years.

### **What led to your departure?**

(I ended up going) through some of my own work harassment when a new male therapist came in. Our management didn't do anything about it and it kept escalating. It impacted my whole life, and I didn't want any other woman to feel like I felt at that time: alone and isolated. I wanted to be that support for other women, so that's what led to the personal coaching.

### **What are the goals you hope to achieve (or for those you help to achieve) through personal coaching?**

It's reaching any woman in any stage of life who needs support and encouragement and empowerment, but also wanting to teach women the power of self love and that they do have a voice is really important for me. I know, going through the sexual harassment, it very much feels like you are silenced. We forget we have that voice and should use it. And helping women gain the confidence they deserve so they can start designing the life they love.

### **What's the process you use in your coaching?**

I do a range of things. I have two groups a month; I provide education on certain topics, but (the clients) also get to meet other women who are on the same path to gain confidence. I also do one-on-one where clients come in and work on whatever they want. A lot of people think personal coaching is therapy, but it's not. The difference is that we focus on the here and now and

what's going to move the client forward.

In our group sessions, everyone's a little different. Women often don't take time for themselves; it's hard to get women to come to the groups because they're caretakers for other people. The other (issue) is not wanting to be judged, but you want to be liked; it's hard to stand up for yourself and be assertive. And often it comes down to that self-love, which I don't think is necessarily something we're taught how to do. (In the future) we'll be doing an online self-challenge: 21 days of creating a new habit.



### **In addition to your blog, how do you plan to reach people (e.g. events, partnering with organizations)?**

I have my Facebook group; that's where a lot of people hear about my work. Others hear by word of mouth. I also have my own space in downtown Faribault. But I am in the process of working with other women from different backgrounds to do speaking engagements and ladies' nights. My story's out there on my blog; that links with what I do.

In dealing with harassment, I had some coworkers that I really trusted, so I let them know (what was going on). I made sure I was never alone and I documented everything (that happened). I also went to my union. Unfortunately, they were really slow. And the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a good resource. I let my family know what was going on; they were a great support system as well.

I stress that we're not alone. Each person's story and their voice really truly matter.

### **Mallory's written work can be found at:**

- [www.facebook.com/gritandgracewithmallory](https://www.facebook.com/gritandgracewithmallory)
- [gritandgracewithmallory.wordpress.com](http://gritandgracewithmallory.wordpress.com)

She leads groups on the first and third Thursdays of every month, 6:30-7:30 p.m., and she will also work one-on-one with clients, based on their schedule.

*Isabelle Wattenberg is a social media and data analytics specialist for MSP Communications. She spends her spare moments listening to opera, reading Alice in Wonderland, and writing about Minnesota happenings.*