

Ep #49: Being Okay with Being Wrong



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Who amongst us likes to be told that we're wrong? If you're nodding along going, "Yeah, I love being wrong," then you, my love, are in the minority of humans. And yet, when we're working to improve our lives, to put an end to painful patterns like codependent thinking, self-doubt, anxiety, and to work towards living an intentional life filled with confidence, compassion, and radical self-love, recognizing when your thinking doesn't serve you, where it may be leading you down the wrong path for you is a vital first step.

It is so important to learn to get comfortable with being wrong. Keep listening, my love, it's going to be a good one.

You're listening to Feminist Wellness, the only podcast that combines functional medicine, life coaching, and feminism to teach smart women how to reclaim their power and restore their health! Here's your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine Expert, Herbalist and Life Coach, Victoria Albina.

Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. We are fighting a little cold here over at my house so I am all hopped up on vitamin C and zinc and elderberry and all the goodies to keep the cold at bay. I am very excited because we are going to Tulum, Mexico in two weeks just for a couple days, and I'm so excited to sit in the hot sun and play in the ocean. It's going to be amazing.

And I used to work in that part of the world doing public health work, which was so amazing. I worked with indigenous communities, small little villages in Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba. It was a blast. We were building composting toilets, greywater recycling systems, organic gardens, so it was about sustainable food sources, food insecurity, sustainable, healthy, and safe

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sanitary conditions because it is unfortunately not safe for little girls in particularly to go outside to pee in the middle of the night unattended.

Plus not in the Yucatan, but we were also working in Michoacan on the other side of Mexico. There's like, scorpions and stuff you don't want to meet at 3am. But yeah, it was super amazing and I always love going back, so that's going to be a blast.

And as you can probably hear, my voice is a little - I don't know how you say it in English. Está tomado. Like, it's a little - I've got a cold, y'all. So please, do bear with me. And we're going to talk about something that's really exciting and a topic that comes up for me an awful lot, which is being willing to be wrong.

And I can hear you, I can hear you out there cringing at my little self-avowed, type A, go-getter, perfectionist darlings. I hear you. And I hear you because I am you. And this whole idea of being okay with being wrong, it has been so challenging for me, and like everything I talk about, so useful. Like, life-changingly useful in a thousand ways.

And one of the biggest parts of it being useful has been to begin to recognize when a thought or belief is steering me wrong or is based in an old story, someone else's thinking, and to not equate having a wrong thought with being a wrong person, which is what I was doing for so much of my life, which led me to be defensive and to really push away the concept, the very thought that I could in fact be wrong, instead of holding space, stepping into acceptance and just being like, oh okay, cool, I was wrong.

And so when you're doing the work that we do, my love, to release your childhood and societal programming, to stop indulging in feelings like overwhelm or stress, to stop doubting yourself or holding onto codependent

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thinking and its snarky little cousin, resentment, then recognizing when your habitual unintentional thinking is not serving you, that's so vital.

And when you're willing to be wrong, all of that work becomes so much easier. Because when you're willing to be wrong, you get to see your thought errors, your fixation on old ideas with self-love and compassion and so much kindness. And then change is possible. You're opening the door to an alternate understanding of the world. One in which you can believe in yourself, be confident, speak to yourself and others kindly. A world in which you are the emotional adult who takes responsibility for their feelings, regardless of what others do and say.

Being willing to be wrong is so liberating. And it's taken the sting out of someone telling me I'm wrong. So it's amazing for me to pause and to say this out loud, it no longer hurts or upsets me the way it once did. And I mean, most of the time, right? Your gal is human, right?

But now I'm like, oh, I'm wrong? Tell me about it. How do you think I'm wrong on this one? Let me hear you and let me learn. And I'm not taking it personally because I recognize now that hearing that I'm wrong, being willing to be wrong is a growth opportunity. Like being willing to fail.

And someone taking the energy, the time to tell me about it is a gift. I don't have to agree with them, but I get to choose to listen with an open heart and an open mind. And yeah, to be super real, I did not love this concept at first. I have always loved to be right. I was such a know-it-all for so long and insisted in so many situations and settings that I was right, particularly my 20s.

Often, I was doing so and I had no clue what I was talking about. And this thought habit of clinging to the notion that I was right, that I had it figured out, that she was bad and I was good, that he was wrong and I, therefore,

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was supremely right, kept me from growing, from seeing where I could learn something. How freaking humbling, my love? So humbling, really.

And I actually noticed it this morning. Someone emailed to get on my schedule for next week and I looked at my calendar and my brain said to me, "Next week is a hot mess," and because I coach myself every day, I was able to catch my mind and to lovingly let it know that it was wrong. That it was not, in fact, correct that next week is a hot mess, that that's not a fact.

It's not a hot mess. It's a week. It's a measure of time and life and my brain was wrong to offer me that thought. So here, we're talking about both the little things and the big. The little wrongs of putting exhausting adjectives on people, places, and things, and the bigger wrong stories like that you're broken, that you're unfixable, unlovable, beholden to other people's whims and decisions, that you have to put other people ahead of yourself, et cetera.

And as much as I didn't - sometimes don't - like this concept that my thoughts, my beliefs could be wrong, it's been so transformative to work my way to the other side, which I could only do with the help of a trained coach because this is what coaching does. A good coach isn't there to give advice or to tell you what to do next. A good coach's job, my job is to show you your own mind and to help you see which thoughts serve you and which thoughts keep you stuck.

My coach does this for me. Shout-out to Lauren. And I do it for my coaching clients on the daily because we all need someone else sometimes to show us our minds. It's like we're horses who are wearing blinders. That sweet animal can't see the whole world. Just what is right in front of its face.

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And as humans, we can have all sorts of blinders on. Barriers to seeing our own worlds and their complexity, especially when we think we've got it all figured out and are blind to seeing that our thoughts are just that. Thoughts and not facts. Not circumstances, which we define as court-admissible facts that 100% of humans would agree on. Our thoughts are not even reality sometimes.

And starting to see where we're stuck in a thought that doesn't serve us, when we're wrong in our assumptions or beliefs, remembering that a belief is just a thought that you've thought on repeat, this whole process can be so painful, so vulnerable-making. Your brain will not like it and that's okay. It's okay for realization to be painful, my love.

You can't change what you can't see, which is why we always start with awareness, with starting to see your own mind in action. The knee-jerk reactions you repeat again and again, to be your own watcher, which I detailed in episode two, to start to bring awareness to when you're believing something just because you've always believed it.

If this work is new to you, then your job right now is to sit with it. Awareness, acceptance, and then action. Sit with it without jumping to try to change it. To sit with the discomfort of recognizing you've been running a false program in your mind, that you believed your family's lies, societies lies, your brain's loving lies because remember, all those lies your brain tells you started as a protective mechanism at some point.

It was adaptive at one point, it's maladaptive now. And if those words are new to you, I talk all about it in episode 19. So sitting with that discomfort, that is the edge of growth. And yes, it's painful and my darling, that's okay. And it's okay that you have these thoughts, these beliefs because it's what is. That's what happened, what got programmed and you cannot change the past.

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And if you're willing to accept that you are where you are with the thoughts you've always had and to feel the squirmy discomfort of it, the shame or regret that may come up, that's when you open up the space for healing. It starts by peeling away those layers of false cognition, false emotional protection, which is what our stories are, like peeling the layers of an onion.

And I want to say it so clearly. This part can leave you feeling like a raw nerve. Totally unprotected, demyelinated in nerd speak. And that's why I provide resources for you to ground yourself, settle your nervous system as you do this work. So if you're feeling activated now or at any point in this episode, please pause. Take some deep breaths, take a walk, drink some water, attend to yourself. Let your inner child know it's okay. There's no drama here, there's no stress. Just new awareness.

And do head over to the show notes on my website to download my free meditations and exercises. There are several there that can serve you when your nervous system is activated. A grounding exercise, an orienting exercise, a body scan, and something called stress-activation resolution. I'd start with orienting if your body feels activated. Try one, try them all, but make sure you're paying attention to your somatic system, your perfect human body. It's sending you important signals, my darling.

And while this work is absolutely uncomfortable and challenging, I want to invite you to look at the things in your life that may not be working, and to ask yourself what discomfort you are in on the daily by staying in your old patterns, by not being willing to be wrong. Maybe your friendships, your work or romantic relationships, or your relationship with your family of origin are challenging.

Maybe you feel like, ugh, in your spirit every time your mother texts because you know there'll be a subtle criticism there that historically makes you feel bad about yourself. Or you cringe every time your boss emails

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because you jump to the thought that you've done something wrong and you're about to get called on it, or even fired.

Maybe you continue to say yes when you really want to say no, and then find yourself resentful or angry. Sure, angry at the other person on the surface but deep down, angry at yourself. Or maybe you judge yourself or others harshly, or even subtly. What they wear, say, do, or don't do, what you wear, say, do, or don't do. Maybe you judge your body, your job, your everything or anything through the lens of a perfectionist story, which is inherently wrong thinking because my darling, what on earth is perfection other than what you already are?

Whatever your thought habits that don't serve you, that keep you in worry or judgment or anxiety, trust and believe that staying in them for a lifetime is far less comfortable than looking at them head on now with a skilled guide. Trust me because I've done it and do it every day, and the changes in my relationships with myself and the world have been absolutely mind-blowing.

I want to go back to what we talked about last week. Your driving why. So the reason why we write our thoughts down on the daily, examine them, question them, work on them, the reason why we feel our feels and learn to experience them all is because this is the work of true self-discovery and profound self-love. The work of coming to see in technicolor, just how strong resilient, capable of change, healing, and growth you are, when you can see your patterns laid out in front of you and to experience joy in all its glory, when you're willing to experience all of the feels and to accept them all as more information.

That is, when you are unwilling to feel one feel, you are telling your brain, your body, your spirit you are unwilling to feel feels. So while it sucks in the middle to be real, to recognize where you're wrong, to be willing to do that

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and to feel everything associated, it is so amazing. Once you realize that the only things holding you back are your stories, both your cognitive conscious ones and the ones written in your body, in your nervous system by your lived experience, your trauma, your history.

And once you can get really real with yourself, then you can live into your fullest capacity, into the fullest expression of your highest self and wow, that is so amazing, my darling. Such an empowering place to live from, being radically honest with and about yourself.

And if you are committed to doing this rewiring work, this nervous system level work to change your relationship to your beliefs, this work to change your relationship with yourself and the world around you, then it behooves you to be willing to see and admit and take ownership of the ways that you are and have been wrong about yourself and the world, instead of clinging to the idea that in order to be safe, you need to be right. Because that will block your growth and your joy each and every time.

So my dear nerdlet, let's get geeky here. In psychological terms, fixation is when you get stuck mentally on the first or initial explanation of something and dismiss anything that doesn't support that initial explanation. This is different from the way fixation is used in psychoanalytic circles like the Freudian concept of oral fixation, et cetera. So we're not talking about that.

We're talking about when you hear a story and decide it must be the right story and don't question it. You just keep rolling with it as a way to explain yourself, the world, other people. That initial explanation may be correct, but when it's wrong, it is only with hindsight that we can see that we held onto or fixated on that belief for longer than serves us.

So that belief had the echoes in our lives that beliefs have in that it feels real when you're thinking it. And thinking it triggers the think-feel-act cycle.

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Your thoughts create your feelings, you take action because of your feelings, and bada bing, you get the results you get as always because physics.

And these fixation errors are like a snowball rolling downhill. They get bigger and bigger and are more likely to cause damage when it lands because your brain will write off any evidence, which my fellow nerds call anomalous evidence - I love the word anomalous - that may disprove your initial hypothesis.

That is, if you think you're not lovable or that people don't appreciate you, you will continue to gather evidence to prove it. That date ghosted me, she didn't call me back, my boss doesn't recognize my work, all because I'm not lovable. And you will be less able to see the people who do appreciate and honor you. The people who think you're awesome and tell you all about it.

You may likely not even see the ways you might think of yourself with love and kindness. And it may feel really challenging to think about yourself or show yourself compassion. Or if you have a story knee-jerk reaction to other people that sounds like people are just awful, then you'll see all the awfulness and will miss out on seeing the kindness, the generosity, the love.

Sweet one, it's a choice to bring compassion to a situation and it's a choice I know you're capable of making. And meanwhile, it's important to remember that our brains do this. They fixate on a thought we have decided to believe and wave off any information to the contrary until we intervene on our own behalf.

And all brains do this. It's what brains do. It's a psychological reflex to try to prove ourselves right and to not believe we're wrong. And to change these

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stories in your head requires courageous action and a desire to live life in a different and likely, more joyful way.

And one of my driving reasons for doing this work of seeing where I am in wrong thinking is because I want to live an easy, peaceful life, filled with unconditional love and compassion for myself and all the world. I bring this up because we've been talking about driving whys and I think it's important thing, and also because it's almost February, which means it's almost Valentine's Day, which means that the world will temporarily turn its lens towards love, and I'm always down for more love in the world. Always and forever. Not just in February.

And this coming month, each episode of the podcast will be focused on love and how to bring more of it into your life and into the world. And in order to make a change such as to bring more love into your world on all levels, we always start with looking at the obstacles that can get in our way. If your goal, like mine, is to live a life full of beautiful love, then looking at where you could be stuck in wrong thinking and judgment is a smart place to start.

And it's funny where we find examples of wrong thinking in our brains. I grew up with this constant refrain, this kind of life lesson that was passed off as like a joke, kind of, that goes, "You can't trust anyone." It sounds better in Spanish, as all things do. No se puede confiar en nadie. And while this saying has never sat well with me, when I started to look at the think-feel-act cycle in my life, I started to see all the ways that I was acting out that thought of not trusting anyone.

A thought that was given to me as a guiding belief without even realizing it. That thought was causing me a lot of pain and was keeping me from building all sorts of loving relationships. Looking at the thought and

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realizing that it doesn't serve me, that it's a wrong way for me to look at the world has helped me to find ways to trust more.

Knowing that regardless of any other person's behavior, I can choose how it affects me, the story I tell about it. That is, what hurts about trusting about someone and having them do something that breaks that trust, what hurts is the story you then tell about yourself. "I was an idiot to trust them. I can't believe I trusted him and he betrayed me."

And while, yeah, of course, feel the pain of it absolutely, but to then globalize and make someone else's behavior mean something about you, oh my love, pause. Pause before you do that. That is shooting the second arrow right into your own heart. And if you don't know what the second arrow is, when this one's done, go listen to episode 15 all about it.

My love, shooting that second arrow, that's a thought choice. And I would posit that choice doesn't serve you. Instead, you can see all the information that you get about other people and their behavior, their tendencies, their choices as more information. Nothing to judge, nothing that means anything about you. Just more information. Neutral.

For example, if you shared something deep with someone and they weren't able to show up for you in the way you would have liked, that's more information about them. And more information about you and what you want to know and understand about someone before you share information or access to your heart.

You don't have to make it mean anything negative about you or them. It's just what is. You with me here, my darling? In this example, no se puede confiar en nadie is a thought that you don't have to believe. And I've come to see that that thought was wrong for me to believe. And in doing so, I

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have come to live with more peace, more love, and yes, more trust in my heart.

And when you learn to see your automatic thoughts, to question them, and begin to get skillful in managing your mind and showing your brain that you can think something different than what you've always thought, when you seek new and different understanding and evidence on purpose for your own good, you'll start to see the thought errors you were previously running on repeat in your mind.

And that process of seeing the beliefs that were holding you back will begin to be your new normal, and you'll start to see the neutral or even positive reframe of any situation without even working on it. Your brain will start to do it on its own because neuroscience. Because your brain is magnificent, changeable, plastic.

You can believe new things. It just takes some practice and dedication. And it also takes this willingness to see that your brain wants you to keep believing what you've always believed because when you feel self-righteous, you get a touch of that delicious brain-body chemical called dopamine.

And I talk a lot about dopamine, particularly in the setting of buffering, which let's be real, holding onto an old negative thought is a form of buffering. Our brains and bodies love dopamine. It feels amazing. It's your brain's way of rewarding you for thinking you are right because if your old belief hasn't killed you yet, then it's the safest bet. And your loving brain body just wants to keep you safe and alive and not eaten by a lion, a tiger, a bear.

And to nerd once again, there's this funny paradox with brains. Feeling self-righteous feels really good for a second, right? It gives you that false hit of

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dopamine, of satisfaction, while of course, keeping you stuck. And this takes us back to nerd town to talk just for just a moment about the motivational triad.

So, our bodies are biased towards three things. Seeking pleasure, avoiding pain, and biological efficiency. So even if a thought feels bad, like the thought you can't trust anyone, everyone's a jerk, I'll never succeed at this, it's satisfying to keep thinking it because it is efficient to do so. So your brain wants to encourage you to keep having that old thought versus spending energy, which is a very expensive thing on the cellular level, to come up with and believe a new thought.

Isn't that amazing? Brains, I tell you, so fascinating. So let's remember back to cave human days. If you're working so hard to survive the world, to hunt and gather, build fires, make crude weapons from sticks and stones, you had to be singular of mind and focus. And mental distractions for things like thinking about your thoughts and doing that meta work, well now, that could leave you dead, which would leave the villagers one less worker, one less hunter, effectively compromised.

So your brain evolved to prioritize survival over everything else. And believing the thoughts you already have programmed takes less energy than doing all this thought work. I mean, short-term that is, of course. Because long-term, believing thoughts that don't serve you like that you'll never change, you'll never heal, everyone's horrible, they're so much more painful than doing the work to change them.

But it's challenging to get your brain to actually believe that, which is why we do our thought work every single day, my darling. Because your brain may revert to its old stories, unless you remind yourself of the new ones on the daily until they get rewired as your new intentional conscious truths.

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Being right once kept you safe. And even now, when it may be leading you to feel chronically unhappy or dissatisfied with life, which I was for so long, those stories, that feeling of being right in your beliefs can feel right, when it's just not. When you believe your painful stories around the world, you will find more evidence to back them up, which long-term leads to a life full of repeating the same harmful thought, feeling, action patterns.

And remember, your thoughts matter because they lead you to feel a certain way and to have a nervous system response that aligns with that feeling. And your feelings drive your actions. So everything you do in life is to support your original thought about a situation. This is why folks get stuck in habits. Because your brain is sticking to the easy path its always known.

And you may think you see the world clearly, but you're wearing blinders, my darling, and you're just seeking evidence for the belief you're currently thinking. So if you're thinking that you're stressed and have too much to do, you'll feel overwhelmed, which may lead you to the action of ruminating, spinning in indecision about what to do next, complaining about your stress, all of which will lead you to feel more stressed and will leave you with just as much to do on your to-do list. More evidence for your original thought.

Meanwhile, if you look at your to-do list and realize your original thought, "I'm stress and this is so too much," is wrong, you recognize that's not a fact, this is too much, that's not a fact, and you recognize that that thought doesn't serve you, then you can get strategic and can begin to take courageous action to get what you need to get done with self-love energy, and not overwhelm energy. See the difference there?

So this is it, babe. This is the work. To coach yourself daily so you can start to see your own thought errors, to be willing to be wrong and to be so

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gentle and loving with yourself while you do so. Always gentle, always compassionate, always self-loving. Always. That's how we do.

And once you find a thought, a belief that doesn't serve you, that hurts you or keeps you from loving fully, living your best and more intentional life, then you get to start to do the work to shift that thought, which starts with getting clear on how the old thought made you feel, the action it was leading you to take, and the outcome it produced in your life.

And then you get to decide how you'd prefer to feel and to choose a thought that leads you to feel that new way. And then you get to practice it daily. I recommend writing it out, and I love future self planning, which we discussed way back in episode nine. Take a listen to that one, as a way to make your new thought concrete.

You had to practice your old thought a lot to make it a belief and so you get to practice this new one just as much until your brain agrees to add it to the mixtape of your life. And I want to end where we began by saying being willing to be wrong is so liberating. It's really taken the sting out of someone telling me I'm wrong. It's just been so helpful.

And eventually, with practice and a dedication to being willing to be wrong, you can take the sting out of it for yourself, and eventually, it just doesn't hurt like it did when you equated being wrong about something to being a wrong person, to being bad or messed up or a failure, which is something you're also learning to embrace, right, my love?

Unless you're looking at your default harmful thoughts, they will continue to hurt you and to keep you from the radical self-love and self-compassion that I'm all about. So you get to get grounded in your body, to orient to your environment, to support your beautiful nervous system, and to start doing

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this work. Write it all down. Take a look at your long-held beliefs with a compassionately critical eye.

Head on over to my website to download my free meditations, the grounding, orienting, and stress-activation exercises. Be kind to you. Be loving. And start to get comfortable - let's start with willing. Willing to accept that you may have wrong thoughts and that's okay, so you can take action to think different thoughts on purpose because you're worth it, my love.

You are your own best medicine and this is the work of emotional alchemy. Thanks for listening, my darling. Please, if you've been enjoying the show, I would be so honored and delighted if you would head on over to iTunes or wherever you get your podcasts, subscribe, rate, and review the show. Those reviews, well, they mean a big deal to me because it's so nice to hear from you.

And they're a big deal for the show because as you know, my driving why is to get all of this information for free to humans who need it the world over. And the way iTunes work, unless a show has lots of subscribers, ratings, and reviews, it just languishes away in the charts. And so it doesn't come up on search and people can't find it.

So if you don't mind, if you have two little seconds to hit that five-star review please, and yeah, leave a little review. Tell me if you like the show. I'd love to hear from you. Alright my darlings, let's take a deep breath in and out. Feel your body, wherever you're sitting, wherever you're standing. Feel the weight of you in your chair, your feet on the floor. Feel Mother Earth holding you up. Feel the air on your skin. Another deep breath in and out.

Remember, you are safe, you are held, you are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my darling. I'll see you next week.

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Thank you for listening to this week's episode of *Feminist Wellness*. If you like what you've heard, head to VictoriaAlbina.com to learn more