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With Your Host

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Here we are, but a few little minutes away from New Year's, and the potentially crushing weight of that silly tradition of New Year's resolutions, which let's be real, just don't work. Don't lead to real change in our lives, and particularly for my perfectionist thinkers out there, I see you.

The fantasy-level resolutions our brains love to concoct can actually set us back. They can be antithetical to the project of self-acceptance and self-love, which are my biggest goals in this human lifetime, and can keep us from taking courageous action for our dreams because we start in the wrong place.

And so we're going to dive in today to talk about goals, goal setting, where to start, and how to do it in a way that not only doesn't crush your sweet, tender soul, but can actually lead you to getting done what you want to get done towards your dreams. Curious? Ready to stop beating yourself up every New Years? Keep listening, 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. Before we dive in, I have an ask, a request. If you're enjoying the show, I'd be so grateful if you could take a moment to rate and review it, particularly on Apple Podcasts.

So the podcast world is a very strange one, and for folks to be able to find the show in the algorithm of search, it really, really helps if the show has a

large number of folks subscribed to it, downloading it, but especially rating and reviewing it.

So if you are turning to this show week after week for the kind of loving support that you want and need, I would be so grateful if you could just take moment to put some stars on it and just even write a few little words about what the show has meant to you, how it's helped you.

And if you've already done that, I'm so grateful. Thank you, thank you. I'd be super grateful if you could share it on the social media and tag me so I can say thank you. Let's get this podcast out to every human in the world who could use this support, this care. That's why I do the show, to be of service. So the more ears it gets to, the more better, right?

Okay my beauties, thank you. Let's dive in. Goals. I love talking about goals. It's mid-December when you're hearing this, well, when it goes live. I certainly don't know when you're hearing it. But it's mid-December when this is being published, so your mind may be doing that thing we've been socialized to do, where we take this totally arbitrary fact of one year ending and a new one beginning and the Gregorian calendar, and we look back on our year.

And some of us pause to celebrate our achievements and what we've learned, how we've grown, which was last week's theme here on *Feminist Wellness*. But the more popular move is to set ridiculous goals for ourselves in the coming year, most of which are completely ridiculous and we are incapable of achieving because at the end of the day, it turns out that we are in fact humans with 24 hours in a day.

New Year's resolutions are all about jumping to action. Like this national perfectionist thought fantasy takes over and we have thoughts like, I

haven't exercised since middle school gym class, but you know what sounds really loving and reasonable and awesome? To declare from every mountaintop that as of tomorrow, January 1st, I will exercise for an hour a day every single day without fail.

And the subconscious messaging beneath all of that says I will do it without fail because if I fail, I'm a terrible person, and it is normal, healthy, and righteous, morally superior in fact, to expect ridiculous superhuman things from myself because that's how I prove my worth. And if I don't, then I won't ever achieve anything ever if I'm not mean to me, and so I will be unkind to myself if I fail to meet this beyond ridiculous goal. Let's set some more.

And if starting a new exercise regime, and yes, I'm using the word regime on purpose here, isn't your preferred method for self-flagellation, well then, just sub in making massive overnight eating changes, stopping drinking overnight, reaching wild money goals, business goals, career or relationship goals, whatever your particular personal flavor of ridiculously large and unreachable perfectionist fantasy goals may be.

There is this pressure to declare that as of 12 midnight on New Year's Eve, you will be this radically different person with wildly different behavior overnight. But like, literally overnight.

Many of us do this on New Year's Eve, but we also do it throughout the year as well. And it's a theme for those of us who are on this path of "self-improvement," which of course is in air quotes because you, yes you, are already perfect and there is nothing about you to improve, while there may be thought and behavior patterns you'd like to shift.

And a major problem is that we've been taught that the way to make change is to start with our actions, but there are a lot of pitfalls when we jump to action because we don't have a steady foundation for all of that actioning. And so many of us set goals by declaring the action we'll take or the result that we'll achieve without pausing to make sure that our beliefs are aligned with that action.

And because we haven't taken that step, so often, we don't realize that we aren't actually all in on that outcome, that result, or goal. All in, meaning committing to it. And by committing, I mean really dedicating ourselves to doing whatever is necessary to meet that goal. Come hell or high water, you will keep moving. You will find another way through, another way forward, another way to get it done because you are committed. Mind, body, and spirit, you believe that you will make this goal, this outcome a reality in your life.

And most people believe that they've taken this step because they declared their intention to meet said goal. They have said I will do x, y, z, and if I don't, you can rest assured self, I'll beat you up for it. But when the intention is challenged, they drop that goal like a proverbial hot potato because they actually aren't committed to it in a real way, which is never shaming or blaming or judging. It's just a thing to notice.

Because if you don't actually believe in the goal, when you aren't truly committed, then something will get in your way, and that'll be the end of it. And that's why this step is absolutely vital, to begin by really, truly committing to yourself and the goal, to seeing it through all the way through.

That starts with your beliefs, in yourself, your capacities, your ability to stick with it regardless of what comes, including failing along the way. And you know how I feel about failing. Failing is my favorite.

I will of course quote Pema once more to say, "fail, fail again, fail better." Thank you, Pema Chodron. So beautiful. So I think of failing as evidence that you've tried, that you put yourself out there to do the thing. I think failure is beautiful.

So getting comfortable with failing is a process and it is a vital part of committing. And commitment is both a thought and a feeling. And so often, folks tell me that they're scared to do this work, they're scared to start down the pathway to overcoming codependency, perfectionism, and people pleasing, because they're scared that they will not commit. But the thing is and this is so important to recognize - commitment is a choice. It's a choice that you get to make for yourself.

And what we don't realize because we don't stop to see it is that we're already committed to so many things in our lives that we probably don't even see as commitments because so often for those of us with codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thought habits, those commitments are external to ourselves.

I commit to feeding my children, I commit to showing up to work, I commit to paying my bills. We don't realize that we've made these commitments within ourselves and we show up to do it every day, every week, every month. What we don't realize we get to and need to do is to commit just as deeply to ourselves, to our own lives as deeply as we commit to other people and the outcomes we want for them or that they have for us.

Like being present for that noon Zoom meeting with your boss every Monday with some semblance of a shirt on. So before your brain starts telling you that you don't know how to commit to yourself, recognize all the evidence you already have that you can commit when the focus is on someone or something else.

And I'll invite you to pause and to feel what that feels like in your body. That resolute feeling, that of course I show up to pick my kids or my friend or my partner up when I say I will, I said I would, so of course I do it. So that thought that's going on in your brain without you even realizing it creates the feeling of commitment in your body.

The belief, recognizing a belief is a thought you've thought over and over and over again, of course I'll show up. It's sort of like a duh feeling within your body because you made that external commitment and you've spent a lifetime showing up for other people.

Alright my beauty, so I'd like to invite you to do a short little meditation, a little visualization with me. So let's get into a nice cozy seat. If it feels safe for you to within your body, please do so. And if it doesn't feel safe or smart for you, trust that. Your body knows what you need.

Now, I'll invite you to take a deep breath with me, to close your beautiful eyes if that feels safe in your body, and if you're not driving. Now, I'll invite you to visualize yourself, in that moment when you do something to please someone else, to keep someone else pleased with you, when you come through on a small daily commitment to show up for other people.

Feel into it. Allow yourself to connect with the experience somatically in your body. That feeling of trusting that of course you'll show up for that

date, that meeting, that call, that bath or bedtime ritual with the kids, that Zoom birthday party for your mom.

Feel whatever resonates in your body when you experience that self-trust. Of course I'll show up for them. Notice your breath as you feel into it. No need to change it. Just notice it. And I want to invite you to recognize that that feeling that you experience when you show up for the people in your life, or work, for your life, that feeling is belief in you.

That vibration, that energy in your body is you believing in your goal of being a responsible, reliable partner, employee, boss, coach, parent, child, et cetera. And you have the capacity. You really do, to show up for your own life, your own wishes, dreams, desires, goals, with that literal same energy, that commitment, that belief that of course you'll come through because you committed.

Really allow yourself to feel that and explore for a moment. Get present to what comes up in your body as you hear me say that you are capable of showing up for you the way you show up for others. It takes a commitment to self and it takes a belief in yourself that I know you have within you and can build.

You can build your belief in believing in you. I know you can. Let that resonate in your body. See what emotions, energies may come up and just let it be. Without trying to manage or control it or change it. It's okay, my love.

This was a really emotional thing for me to realize in my life. That I didn't believe I could show up to change my life. But of course I believed that I would show up for everyone else's wants and needs, for their lives.

Maybe put a little hand on your heart if this feels tender for you. Let's take another breath in and out. Alright my beauty, let's seal this practice. Thank you for going there with me if you did. And if you didn't, that's fine. When you're ready, flutter open your beautiful eyes and allow yourself to come back to the room.

So my darling, I'll trust you to take care of yourself. If you're feeling activated in any way, or shut down after doing this visualization, I'll invite you to pause this episode and to go listen to the orienting exercise I have for you for free on my website at victoriaalbina.com and it's right on the homepage for you.

Put your email in, get that exercise, and you'll also get several other meditations, 100% for free to your inbox. Just confirm the request and take a moment before listening to the rest of this show to orient in your body your nervous system. Get into that place with yourself. That's the invitation.

And I'll just pause to say if you're not feeling activated or emotional about this, totally cool, totally fine. We all react and respond differently. I'm just being really sensitive and gentle here, A, number one, because it's my way.

And B, number two, because when I was writing this, a lot of emotion came up for me in reflecting back on my life and recognizing how much of my time and my energy I spent getting degrees to try to make someone else think I was valid or worthy or proud of me, how much time I spent trying to be someone and show up as someone I thought others wanted me to be, how much of my life I spent spinning in these codependent fixer - all these cycles.

And it brought up a lot of emotion for me to see that. So as I was doing this visualization, I thought that might come up for some of you as well and I

want to really honor that. Because that's what we do in this family, right? It's how we show up as feminists, to honor all the truth in our bodies.

So let's do a quick recap here. Setting a goal based on the results you'll create without pausing to align your thoughts and feelings, without pausing to make sure that you believe in yourself and your capacity to meet those goals, without pausing to make sure that you believe that you are worthy of doing whatever it is for you is setting yourself up for a fall. And I don't want that for you, my perfect tender little ravioli.

Our belief matters. When we believe in possibility, we believe in our innate capacity to show up for our lives and to see that which hasn't been accomplished yet, by allowing ourselves to see the path to it. The path to our future selves.

We get to see the work we get to do clearly and to trust that we know how to make our dreams come true. And to believe that you, yes you, are so worthy of the outcome you desire. You totally 110% deserve it. And many of us need to start there. By strengthening the belief that you, that we do deserve to meditate every day or do thought work every day or to live with less pain by eating some specific way, or to hit your career goals, your business goals, to set healthy boundaries, to speak your needs, whatever your goal is for your beautiful life.

Remember that belief sustains us when things are difficult, challenging. When our inner critic says you can't do this, you always fail, throw in the towel already. In that moment, belief pipes up to say nah, I committed to me, I'm going to figure this thing out and make it happen because I believe in myself and my goals.

Belief allows us to be creative, to see the barriers in technicolor, and not to fight against life on life's terms, but to accept that the barriers are there and to know that from belief, we can figure a way out. We can figure a way through. This step is not to be skipped, my love.

But most of us don't know to start with getting solid with our belief in ourselves. And here's what happens when you're setting goals without believing in them. When the going gets tough, when you don't immediately get the result you want overnight, when someone questions your goal or injects doubt into the situation, when there's a setback, your brain falters because it's primed to.

You're trying to force yourself to take action towards a goal you don't really believe you can achieve, and that, well, it just doesn't make sense. So you quit because of course you do. It's another duh, my beauty.

Nerd alert. When you don't meet your fantasy goal within seconds of setting it, your perfectionist brain starts yelling at you. You know, that part of you that thinks you should be able to do everything immediately, perfectly, without reproach, 100% critique-free, and you should not look like you broke a sweat doing it.

That part will tell you lies like of course you couldn't keep this exercise thing up, or of course you ate off plan, or of course you didn't meditate for 60 minutes every day. And as that perfectionist voice gets louder and louder in your mind, and so you go into sympathetic activation, into fight or flight with yourself, as you beat yourself up for not doing something you never actually believed you could do.

And once you've exhausted that nervous system response of beating yourself up, being mean to you, calling yourself names, once you've burned

through your adrenaline, norepinephrine, and cortisol, then your nervous system does what we call going down the polyvagal ladder, which if these are new words for you, no worries. We have talked a lot about this in detail in episodes 43, 48, and 61. And if you head on over to my Instagram, @victoriaalbinawellness, there's also some IG TV's about the nervous system.

So you've exhausted all that fight or flight energy, and when that's done, your body, exhausted, goes into dorsal immobilization or shutdown. And that's like playing possum. Deer in the headlights, frozen, stuck. And in that state, you feel disappointed, you feel sad, tired, depressed, like you just want to give up, like you're just done, and you can't believe you even tried to make change again. When will I learn, your brain says.

And through that process, you begin to believe in your capacity to make change even less, remembering a belief is a thought you've thought over and over again. So my love, what's the remedy here?

Well, it's simple enough. The way these things are on paper. Before you start creating your massive goals, start small and start with belief. When you focus not on the goal that's a mile away, but on believing that you can take the tiny daily steps to getting to there, and when you start with believing that you are worthy of this daily self-love and self-care to make your dreams come true, you are so much more likely to show up for it all, because you're committing to you, and to something reasonable and doable that your brain actually can believe in.

I come across this a lot with folks who want to join my six-month program, Overcoming Codependency, but don't believe that they will show up for themselves to do the work. And what I remind them is they don't need to commit emotionally to six months of showing up every day. You get to

commit to showing up day one, and day two, you get to commit to showing up day two.

And you get to do the same on day three. You get to focus on what is immediately in front of you and not overwhelming your brain with the story of the bigger story. It's just not honest to try to push yourself to go from zero to doing the big, huge thing for your own life, especially for those of us who grew up with the external focus, the other people focus that is at the root of codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thinking.

We aren't used to really focusing on ourselves, on believing in ourselves, and showing up for ourselves. And that's just what is. So we get to accept that and commit to doing this life differently by committing to the teeny tiny steps it takes to get to a massive goal.

And focusing today on that end goal of daily exercise, daily meditation, daily journaling, daily thought work, making a billion dollars in your business and pressuring and pushing yourself to get to there, versus committing to starting where you're at. Gosh, the former there, the focusing on the end goal, the pushing, the strive, it doesn't serve you. And there's no reason to put yourself through all that.

You just get to believe that you can do one small thing today towards that goal, and that's how we build trust in ourselves, which is what we - and when I say me, I mean those of us with these thought patterns of constantly seeking external validation, this is what we need most.

As a coach, it's my job to listen to the language we use to describe our lives because I believe it deeply shapes our experience of ourselves. And the science, the research certainly backs me up here. Your mindset determines your experience of your life.

Also side note, as an ESL kid, my ears are super attuned to language and word choice, so that's fun. But anyway, it's really interesting for me to look at our language around our goals when our beliefs aren't aligned with the outcome we claim to want.

We so often use language that undermines us and our potential success, and I hear my clients saying things all the time that evidences that they don't truly believe in their capacity to reach their goals.

Statements like, "I want to make \$100,000 in my business this year. We'll see what happens." "I'm going to try to exercise every day." "I guess we'll see if I sign 10 new clients this month." "Well, hopefully I can do thought work every day." "I mean, maybe I'll meditate every day for like, a half hour. Probably an hour. I'm going to say an hour." "I don't know if that's going to happen, but at least I'll try to journal when I wake up." "Well, if all goes to plan, well, if the stars align, well, god willing, well, I don't really know if I can, but I think it'll be really nice if..."

And all of these statements are a way of qualifying our desires and reminding ourselves that we don't truly believe in the thing we're setting out to do. We're giving ourselves this out. And it's a way to protect ourselves from the failure we think will mean we are failures.

Gosh, I think it would be really great if I met my goals... And it's in that ellipsis, it's in that... that we are saying I'm not committed here, I'm not in belief here. And my beauty, I will remind you time and time and time again that your brain, your body, your inner children, they love you.

And so they seek to protect you with this kind of language by keeping you or attempting to keep you from beating yourself up when real life doesn't

line up with your perfectionist thought fantasies about what a human should be able to accomplish.

And this too makes so much sense. If you grew up in any flavor of family awash in codependency, and remember, we define codependency as chronically putting other people's emotional wellness and needs ahead of our own, when we believe it is our job to manage other people's feelings and lives for them, to fix their lives, and we do so to our own detriment, well, when we grow up with this kind of thinking, whether there was substance use or abuse in the household or not, there is generally people pleasing that comes with it.

And so when those sorts of ways of thinking are our norm, we learn to be scared to fail, which makes sense. When our inner script tells us that disappointing other people, upsetting other people, making them sad or angry or heaven forbid, having someone think poorly of you or having someone else think you're a failure is something that we should really be worried about, because it means that we are not safe, when those are the scripts in your head, golly babe, this whole thing, not really wanting to believe in yourself or commit to yourself, your dreams, your goals, all makes sense.

And I share this to say you're not weird or wrong or bad if your brain is doing this somersault. You're doing what you were socialized and conditioned to do. What you learned as a smart survival strategy. To focus on everyone else, to commit to showing up for them, to believe you would because doing so has always been the most important thing.

And so you put you last. And now my love, you get to shift that. You get to begin to believe in you and your capacities and your dreams and you get to

practice starting right now, believing that you can take tiny little steps every day towards your goals. The goal that are for you and about you.

I'm not just talking about going to grad school here. Yes, going to grad school, but also that comes with external validation. That comes with people being like, oh wow, you're fancy. But what about the goals that no one else will see? Those quiet goals, the meditation, the movement, the eating, the things that are just for you.

For many of us, those are so much more challenging because they come with zero external validation. Interesting, right? So my beauty, I'll share this. It feels so different in my body when I take action from the energy of belief. Belief in myself and the possibility of reaching a massive goal by taking small kitten paw sized steps towards my goals, slowly building my trust in myself day by day as I experience myself more and more as someone who shows up for me.

As I practice believing that I have my own back in a profound way. When I recognize that belief creates resilience within us and allows us to keep showing up. So I choose to believe in the power of that belief. And my beauty, taking tiny steps towards your goal while being both patient and reminding yourself daily that you are learning to believe in yourself, your value, your worth, your capacity, meet your goals, is the only way I know to move forward without that heavy internal weight of self-judgment that comes from setting perfectionist thought fantasy goals instead of realistic ones that honor your humanity.

I'll invite you to pause, to break it down. You know I'm a nurse. I love being practical, so let's get practical. Name the small steps for getting to where you're going and commit to each one to get yourself there. So you don't get

from New York to Paris by snapping your fingers. I mean, the witches in the audience do, duh. But most of us, the mere mortals don't. Let's say that.

So let's think about it. What does it take to get from New York to Paris? Well, first you have to make the money to buy the flight. Then you pick the dates, you request the time off, you clear your schedule, you buy the flight, you research the neighborhoods and the restaurants and the museums, you book the tours, you make the reservations, you book the hotel room, you pack your bags, you call a cab, you schlep your bags, you go through TSA, and you're not even on the plane yet and there have been like, 473 steps.

But our brains forget all those little tiny steps when it's not something that feels challenging. When it's like, yay, I'm going on vacation, it's like, easy peasy, there I am. Meanwhile, changing our habitual patterns, our habitual ways of being, of showing up for ourselves or not showing up for ourselves and prioritizing showing up for everyone else can feel really challenging because it touches those deep tender core belief places.

And that's okay. You get to decide on the massive goal you have for your life and to commit to it, to believe in it, and to remember that there are small and vital daily steps you get to take to get to there. Starting with believing you are worthy of the outcome you desire. Believing you are capable of that outcome, and that you can apply minimum baseline thinking, episode 78, to get it done, one day, and one step, and one moment at a time.

Strengthening your belief at every chance, and being kind to yourself when you miss a day or a milestone or a marker because that too is normal and human and totally okay. Be loving, gentle, but firm, and get back to believing and doing.

And this is your homework, my sweet and beautiful love. I want you to look at how you've done resolutions, goal setting, before in the past. And I want to invite you again through the lens of self-love always, to look at whether you were in belief, whether you had actually for realsies committed to whatever outcome you wrote down on paper a year ago, two years ago, five years ago.

And I will invite you to do this year differently. If you want to set goals for yourself this New Year's or whenever you're listening to this, I'll invite you to walk through these steps, really focusing on building the belief that you are worthy of that goal and then believing that it is possible for you, committing to it in the deepest recesses of your mind, body, spirit.

My beauty, that belief in you is what will buoy you when the going gets tough. When you skip the morning practice because the cat got sick, or the car won't start, or life had other plans. When you have committed to you and to believing in you, a little setback doesn't mean you abandon the project and yourself.

That belief you've cultivated means you will dust yourself off and get back on track as soon as you are able. Committing and recommitting and recommitting to whatever path you've chosen to walk because you believe you are so capable of getting to there no matter what happens, no matter what haters or doubts or obstacles appear because when you truly believe that you deserve that outcome, you believe in yourself, you are beyond unstoppable.

I believe this about you, my love. And if you don't believe it yet, that's okay. You can borrow my belief in you as you build your own. You got this, sweet one. You've got this. And it's normal for self-doubt to come up, it's normal to have thoughts like I don't think I can do this. That's okay.

Meet them with love and begin to look at your life and see where you really do show up. You are so committed to paying that credit card on time, to putting two shoes on before you leave the house, to brushing your teeth at least fortnightly. You have evidence that you can commit, and you can create new evidence along the way.

My beauty, if you're looking for support to get you to there, to help you identify what you want and need, which can be so challenging when you're coming from codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thoughts, if you're like, Vic, I don't even know what goals I want to set because I don't know what I want in life, I'm here to support you.

If this whole concept makes you feel anxious, I'm here to support you. I want to invite you to take a moment to check out my six-month program. It's called The Feminist Wellness Guide to Overcoming Codependency and it's a beautiful six-month, high-touch, deep dive into the topics we talk about on this show.

Codependency, perfectionism, people pleasing, all the ways they keep us stuck energetically in our bodies, in our minds, in our lives, rolling around in feeling less than, unable to get to where we want to go to, unable to support ourselves emotionally, stuck in relationships that just don't work, and we shift all of that using the science and psychology-based thought work protocol I teach, and then going deeper using somatic practices to really go into the body, to see where the energy is stuck, where the vibrations are stuck.

And while that is woo, it's also science. So it's both because I believe that both matter, and I believe that you matter, my love. Head on over to victoriaalbina.com/masterclass to read more about it and apply for a call with me now.

The course is over half full. So if you are interested, if you've been listening for a while and you've heard me talk about it and you're like, what is that? You're not going to want to miss out on your chance to join us now.

Alright my beauties, let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart if that feels supportive or wherever your body may need a little contact. Put your little paw there, or don't, you're an adult. Let's take a nice slow deep breath in if that feels good, 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 beauty. I'll talk to you soon.

If you've been enjoying the show and learning a ton, it's time to apply it with my expert guidance so you can live life with intention, without the anxiety, overwhelm, and resentment, so you can get unstuck. You're not going to want to miss the opportunity to join my exclusive intimate group coaching program, so head on over to victoriaalbina.com/masterclass to grab your seat now. See you there. It's going to be a good one.