

## Ep #80: Healing Isn't Linear



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Healing does not mean not having feelings. Growing and changing and healing and becoming your most intentional self does not mean never experiencing pain or heartache or irritation. It doesn't mean staying centered and grounded and living in good vibes only all the time because that's just not how the world works. Certainly not how brains work.

Instead, healing to me means learning and knowing and coming to believe that you, yes you, have the power to come back to center within yourself, for yourself, regardless of what happens. It starts with awareness and with understanding and accepting that healing isn't linear, and some days are just freaking lousy.

Ready to drop that painful story that you're not healing if you have human emotions? 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. Things are really exciting over here. Lots of big changes, things are going really well in the current cohort of my six-month masterclass and I just - my goodness, I wish you could see the big goofy smile on my face when I even think about the folks in the course right now.

I just am so wildly in love with each and every one of them and we have such a beautiful time. And we have so much fun. I think that's the thing people don't realize, that healing codependency, perfectionism, people pleasing can actually be super fun.

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And there is this special moment that happens during our live coaching calls when someone's like, "Then my boyfriend texted me and I was really - I didn't want to text him back but I worried that if I didn't text him back then he would break up with me and I had all these abandonment issues," and like, we're all like, yeah, been there.

And it's this really special moment of not feeling so alone. That's why I created a group program because one of the big things that happens in codependency and the things that come with it, perfectionism, people pleasing, externalizing your view of yourself, it's really lonely. It's really isolating, and it can feel like the only way to heal it and shift it and change it is to work on yourself and work on yourself and work on yourself all alone in a silo.

But that's not neuroscience based. That's not how brains and bodies and humans work. We are social creatures. We are pack animals. We need to co-regulate. We need to see others, be seen by others, connect. So that's what we do in the program and my goodness, it is just life-changing.

That phrase, "it gives me life" is so tired, so overused, but every single day when I interact with the folks in the program over in our private Slack group or I do one of our calls or our breathwork groups, it gives my life. I feel renewed and excited and just so grateful to be part of this healing journey with everyone and to see everyone beginning to shift these patterns of thinking that they've had for 20, 30, 40, 50 years, and it's just - my loves, it's so beautiful.

I'm actively obsessed with this class in the best meaning of that word and there are a few spots left for the cohort starting at the end of September, so do join us. [Victoriaalbina.com/masterclass](https://Victoriaalbina.com/masterclass). Would love, love, love to hop on a call with you and talk more about it.

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Okay, so something happened in the program the other day that led me to want to share this podcast episode with you. So in working on healing codependent thinking and the perfectionism that's so often a part of it, one of the gals in the class said that she was so upset with herself because her mom called and this gal, let's call her Rosario.

I'm recording this episode on my cousin Rosario's birthday. Happy birthday Rochi. So we'll call this client Rosario. She told her mom about this new job that she got that she's so excited about, and her mom was, per Rosario's report, less than supportive.

Her mom started asking if it was a good idea, if it was the right move, if this was a step forward, all these questions about it, when Rosario just really wanted something different from her mom. She wanted her mom to be supportive and hadn't communicated that directly.

And Rosario also shared that her mom's tone wasn't working for her, and we talk a lot about tone in the program because it's an important nervous system thing. And so sweet Rochi was so upset with herself because, and I do quote because I'm a very fast typer while my gals are talking, "I let myself get upset and I'm so upset actually about that because I was healing and learning to manage my mind and to not get all codependent with her and I totally didn't do that on the phone. I totally went into my own patterns and I'm so upset with myself."

My beautiful beloved nerds, I hear about this kind of experience so often. Of you, me, us, having what studies call human feelings. And then we have the feeling and we beat ourselves up for being the human with the feelings that you're working so hard to become.

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And I think that this framework of I'm so upset that I stepped back into a pattern that I have had for the last 30 years comes from this belief, this false story that when you're healed or healing or doing whatever spiritual, mental, or other work on yourself for your own growth, you should be impervious to human emotions.

And in this ironic turn of things, that framework, that story that you should not have your feels actually leads to so much unnecessary feels. Self-flagellation when it turns out that in fact, no number of green juices, amazing herbal potions, voyages with the grandmother plant, breathwork sessions, or daily future self or thought work practices you complete will leave you a person who doesn't have human emotions, human experiences on this complex planet in this fascinating time.

And so I wanted to dedicate a whole show to this because it's so important. What I support my clients in doing, what I think one of the most vital practices is is to learn to see your own mind. Not to judge your mind, not to criticize your thoughts and your feelings, but rather to be your own watcher, to raise your awareness of your habitual thoughts so you can decide if you want to keep those thoughts and the feelings they're creating, if they serve you and the collective wellness.

My darling, let this one sink in. Healing isn't linear. There's not a direct path to a blissful Zen state and then you're done. Everything in your life is 100% perfect 100% of the time. That's not how it works. And in my book, the goal of healing is not to never feel discomfort, to never feel lousy, to never be irritable or sad or angry or annoyed or to spin in self-doubt or feeling unworthy or less than.

The goal of healing work in my world is in the process and practice of seeing ourselves as we really are and feeling that little zap of sympathetic

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activation energy in your belly and honoring it. It's about a slow return to yourself, your own body, your communities.

It's in feeling your irritability starting to wind up like a clock and to notice it when it's a level one, before you get to 12 out of 10 and rip your partner's head off over something silly. It's about awareness, followed as we do, with acceptance. And finally, the most important action, coming back to ourselves with compassion, love, and care always.

It is not about embodying or working towards another perfectionist thought fantasy, about feeling 110% perfect and amazing and always awesome all the time. I mean, that's just not what being a human is. It's not how human brains and bodies work.

This work, the work I support my clients do, the work I do on myself each and every day, it's about feeling your feelings, but truly feeling them, recognizing where they live in your body and honoring them. Learning to say, "I think I'm getting a little upset right now, I'm going to take a break," or, "I'm feeling annoyed and I think it may be because I just need some alone time. I'll holler at you in an hour," or, "Babe, I'm feeling sad. Will you hold me?" versus stuffing it down.

It's about feeling it all, loving it all, sitting with the discomfort just a little more each time it arises and learning to accept that being human comes with suffering. Recognizing there is no yin without the yang, no light without the dark, no stepping into your brightest light without getting to know your shadow, no happy times if you don't let yourself feel the crappyness and suckyness and yuckers of life, which is totally not pleasant or comfortable, but is so necessary.

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It's so necessary to let yourself be real with it, to feel it all, sometimes little by little, but to work towards feeling it. Not stuffing it down or buffering against it. And for me overall, what this points to is this; there's no there to get to with this work. No goal, no end point, no marker that means you hit the healing jackpot and now everything will be sunshine and roses and puppies who never pee the floor.

My beauty, all puppies pee the floor. It's their job. They also eat your shoes and bite you with time razor teeth, but their sweet little paws smell like Fritos and they're so magical when they look at you with love. Yin, yang, light, shadow.

So too, you will continue to have human emotions. Things will feel terrible, things will suck, things will be hard and challenging, and that is human life. And the work as I see it is to not shoot the second arrow into your own tender heart, which in short means not to make yourself feel worse about a situation by telling yourself that you shouldn't feel bad about a situation, to layer on the blame, shame, and guilt, none of these things serve you.

And being upset that something is upsetting simply makes you more upset. For more on the Buddhist concept of the second arrow, tune in to episode 15. My beloved sweet kitten, the healing is in the acceptance of your feelings and your struggle.

And please note, acceptance doesn't mean to condone or to approve of anyone else's behaviors, of challenging situations, systemic oppression, or whatever else may be weighing on your tenderness, but rather to quit pushing against the life-ness of life because that is a healing act in and of itself.

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It is beautiful and vital to feel your feelings, to process them through your body, and yes, I'll do a whole show all about it, and to experience the range of human emotion, knowing and believing and trusting that your perfect body knows what to do with all of your feels given the opportunity.

And knowing and believing that it's in your own best interest to feel them all, instead of trying to leapfrog over them, to spiritually or emotionally bypass, which means trying to do anything you can to not feel them. Telling yourself that it's wrong or you're bad for feeling an emotion that is generally labeled as negative takes you out of feeling that emotion.

And here's the catch, here's the rub with this. Doing so is a kind of buffering, which means attempting to push a feeling aside instead of feeling it. But wait, how mind-blowing is that? Feeling bad about feeling bad is buffering against the original emotion you had.

Instead of feeling, for example, the irritation or anger you had about a conversation with your mom, you turn inward and get mad at yourself about getting upset at her, you're buffering against that original feeling. Fascinating, right? And my beauty, we have to remember what you don't feel you can't heal. Someone put that on a t-shirt and quick.

So our goal is never to push the feelings away but rather to let them all flow through. And yes, especially for folks with a trauma history, we need to titrate how much we feel, to take it in little by little, drop by drop, to feel challenging feels in small amounts, to not throw ourselves down a dark hole of depression, but rather to let the little things flow through and to get used to experiencing them and surviving. Not collapsing forever, as your brain may fear you will do.



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I know how it feels to worry that a feeling will kill you. I'm no stranger to that. But what I've learned is that no feeling itself will kill you. Many are super-duper challenging, no doubt. But with care, gentleness, love, and the right guidance and support, you can learn to feel all your feels and to stop fearing them and pushing them away.

My role model in doing this work is little kids. So a little kid will, I don't know, let's say hurt their finger. They'll smush it in some Legos and they'll run up to you and crawl in your lap and they're sobbing, and they're so upset. And if you hold them and give them tenderness and let them tell their story, let them really feel that upsetness, that sadness, that hurt, that hurt, hurt, hurt all through their bodies, they'll just sob and cry it out and tell you all about it.

And seemingly, all of a sudden, they're just done. It's just done. It's over. They've completed that stress activation cycle, which we talked about in episode five or six, one of the very early ones. And it's just done. They've processed the feeling, the hurt, the upset, the fear through their body and released it.

And a three-year-old or a four-year-old can do this because they don't yet have these stories in their mind about feeling being wrong or bad. Or the perfectionist fantasy, that story that feeling upset is evidence that they've failed as a person on a healing path. And little kids don't know how to buffer yet.

Instead, they just feel it all, let it flow, let the feelings take hold and process them through their bodies, sobbing and sobbing until they look at you and say, "I'm done." My beauties, it's funny, after 20 years in health and wellness, one of the most important pieces of advice I can give you is to really be more like a toddler.

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Let yourself feel it all, cry it out and see what that feels like on the other side. For me, it usually feels amazing. And my beauty, healing our wounds, managing our minds is about cultivating a deep belief that you can be like that toddler.

You can come back to yourself with love in learning a new way to come back to your grounding and your center, and you can learn to manage your mind around any and all circumstances so you can have peace in your heart. But also a grumpy afternoon of doubting yourself. A morning of being annoyed or angry. And that's okay. It means zero bad things about you. Promise.

To say it once more, getting rid of lousy feelings is not the goal because that would make you not human. The goal is to be more and more and more in touch with our humanity, our deep humanness, to learn how to navigate those moments where we can be radically honest and real and loving with the parts of us that are having foot-stompy feelings, who are in emotional childhood and blaming everyone and everything else for our feelings so we can give those parts of ourselves love and care, so we can eventually move on, but not until you've felt it all and gotten really real with yourself around it.

And then and only then, once you have felt it in your body do I recommend that you do your thought work around it to identify the story, the internal narrative, the habitual unintentional thought that is keeping you feeling however you're feeling and recognize your pain can be your greatest gift. It's an option. Nothing more, nothing less.

You can choose to use the painful, lousy, F-ed up situations and experiences in life as an opportunity to see yourself as a person who learns and grows from these experiences. Take note of my careful wording here.

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I'm not on that all bad things happen for a reason, just see the beauty in it, positive vibes only bandwagon.

No, mi amor. No. It's always a choice. All this work is. Babe, you can stay in the grump and the anger and all of it for as long as you want and need to, as long as you decide to. You always get to choose that, and no one should ever be telling you to just get over it because that is oppressive, it's rude, it's traumatic, it's stressful, I'm not here for it.

And my beauty, if righteous anger fuels you towards getting amazing things done then rock on with it. For me, these days, feeling the anger, processing it through my body and then deciding to shift from anger as motivation to self-love or love for community, love for vulnerable populations, love for the earth, whatever it is, that love as motivation has always been a more sustainable fuel for me in the long run.

But you always get to do you, my perfect one. You just get to be real about what your thoughts and your feelings are creating in your life and to love yourself throughout the way. The point here is this; the more you come back to yourself, the more often you're able to get into alignment with yourself, to support yourself, to right the boat when you start to tip over.

Every time you do that, you're opening up space in your heart for curiosity, to ask yourself why. Why am I thinking this? Why am I feeling this? What is happening in the truest deepest recesses of my heart? And to come back to yourself and your unending capacity to ground yourself in yourself. And just how strong you are to have survived and thrived through all you've been through.

To give yourself love and care and to ask for co-regulation, to ask for support from others, from the earth, from the plants and animals around

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you, even if it's through a Zoom screen these days. As a way to support your beautiful nervous system, to support your healing by coming back to you.

My beauty, it's not about not having the blip. It's about recognizing that life is so blip-filled and accepting that, moving with that. Not against it. Not fighting it, but rather embracing it and remembering how strong and powerful you are, and just how far you've come.

The other day a member of the family in my program, Overcoming Codependency shared this. She writes, "So I just got a really lovely and very polite nice job rejection email for one of the positions I was so excited about. For the first time in a really long time, I'm not making it mean anything about me. It just wasn't the right fit and someone else had the experience that they were seeking for that job. The end. I'm not sitting around sulking or freaking out. I'm bummed, but not distraught. What a welcome change."

And that, that is what I mean by coming back to your strong internal center. I'm bummed, but not distraught. I'm not making it mean anything about me. Have all the feelings about the thing totally, please, I implore thee to have the feelings as you are willing and able. And then to come back to yourself, to work it out through your body and come back to the stable center that is you.

Having your own back for you, accepting the slings and arrows of this life because they're going to keep coming. Have your own back and know in your heart that this, feeling the feels, coming back to yourself, accepting that whatever is happening is happening and coming to believe that you have the strength to support you through it all. This is you healing you.

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My beauties, I have so much more to say on this topic so make sure you're subscribed to the show so you don't miss a thing. I hope this episode has been helpful for you, supportive, and supports you in recognizing that you are growing, you are healing, you are on your path even when life gets challenging. Especially then.

I'm also so excited to tell you that there are a few spots remaining in the upcoming masterclass program that starts September 28th. If you've been listening to the show, you've been hearing all about it, so head on over to [victoriaalbina.com/masterclass](http://victoriaalbina.com/masterclass). Read all about it.

If it sounds like something you're interested in, if you're ready to overcome codependency, perfectionist, people pleasing, putting others ahead of yourself, if you're excited to learn how to communicate in a more loving way with yourself and the world, join us. It's such a blast.

Alright my beauties, let's take a nice deep breath in, long slow 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.

Thank you for listening to this week's episode of *Feminist Wellness*. If you like what you've heard, head to [VictoriaAlbina.com](http://VictoriaAlbina.com) to learn more.