

Ep #122: Unlocking Codependency with Kylie McBeath



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine Expert, and Life Coach, Victoria Albina. I'll show you how to get unstuck, drop the anxiety, perfectionism, and codependency so you can live from your beautiful heart. Welcome my love, let's get started.

Hello, hello my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. This week, I am beyond delighted to share a conversation I had with the remarkable and amazing Kylie McBeath on her podcast Zura Health. We dove deep into a topic close to both of our hearts; how to unhook from codependent thinking. And we had so much fun while we talked about some seriously serious topics.

Kylie is a gem and our mutual passion for helping humans improve their wellness on all planes – mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, energetic – really shines through. I'm so grateful for the opportunity and privileged to have these conversations. And it's so sweet to be able to share them here with you all.

I also want to be sure that you know about the free meditation suite I offer, as a wee gift for a perfect you, and it's just a few clicks away. If you head over to victoriaalbina.com, you can find those meditations right there on the homepage for you and they will download right into your email inbox.

I also want to let you know that I am setting the dates for the next cohort of my six-month mind-body program Anchored: Overcoming Codependency. This science and woo-based program dives into the cognitive behavioral thought work protocol I teach as well as the somatic or bodily practices that have changed my life and my clients' lives in so many ways.

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As a functional medicine-trained nurse practitioner and life coach and having been sick for, you know, like casually the first 30 years of my life, which I also get into with Kylie, I know how vital the mind-body connection is to our growth, our healing, our sense of self, and for being able to really have our own backs, to feel deeply and powerfully embodied. And that's what you learn when you join us for Anchored. So, you can learn more at victoriaalbina.com/anchored and can apply now for the next group.

Or, if you're ready to join us, you can join us today. We already have, I think, three people in the next group without a start date. So, if you've been hearing about it and thinking about it, now is the time to get anchored in you, to shift out of those perfectionist, codependent people-pleasing thought habits, to stop fantasizing about how great your life will be when other people change, to start feeling your emotions in your body instead of living from the neck up, to give yourself the gift of having a whole set of tools in your toolbox, both the cognitive ones to help you think about situations differently, to get neutral, to recognize the thoughts that are creating your feelings, so you can start to identify, "Is this really my thought or is this just how I learned to think? How I was socialized and conditioned in the patriarchy, in my cultures, in my family of origin to think? Or is this really how I think about me?"

And I have found, in my own life, it's really challenging. It's been really challenging in the past to know that difference without having a protocol, an algorithm. I mean, we're nerds, right, my nerds? I love to have, yeah, an algorithm to help me figure out what's mine, what's not mine, what thoughts do I want to keep, what thoughts do I want to shift out of?

And that's also where the somatic practices come in because when a thought is just such a profound part of your identity, your habitual story about yourself and the world, oftentimes the brain will really resist shifting,

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which of course it does, that makes so much sense. And that's when we can bring the somatics in.

We can get in touch with our bodies and can start to move the energy within our bodies so that we can open up more space cognitively, mentally, to be able to connect in with a new thought. It's a truly remarkable program but a remarkable process that has been just so life-changing. And I'll be sharing some testimonials and some experiences and stories from folks who've been in Anchored with me coming soon on my Instagram over at @victoriaalbinawellness, so make sure you check that out. And yeah, if you're ready to start moving towards your dreams in a real way, to really have your own back, now's the time, my beauty.

Okay, my love, without further ado, because you know I could talk on and on about how much I love somatics and cognitive work and moving out of our codependent thinking, I present to you my conversation with the outstandingly brilliant and phenomenal Kylie McBeath. It's going to be a good one.

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Kylie: Hello, everyone. I'm excited to drop into this conversation with Victoria Albina. Did I get that correct?

Victoria: Sure did.

Kylie: I should have asked on that last name. It's a really beautiful one, "But don't F it up, Ky, don't F it up..." So, I'm glad my pronunciation skills were working in my favor today. Welcome to the show.

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Victoria: Thank you so much for having me. I'm delighted to be here.

Kylie: So, you know the drill.

Victoria: I sure do.

Kylie: You know the podcast drill, you know what's up.

Victoria: I do.

Kylie: Alright, so many questions. But a little bit about how you got into the world of all this, like what catalyzed your path?

Victoria: Yeah, so it started on a cloudy Wednesday in 1979... Okay, great, this is a 400-hour episode right?

Kylie: Yep.

Victoria: Okay, cool, cool, cool, cool. Yeah, so my story is one of many of us in the health and wellness world. I was sick as a frigging dog from infancy until I took my health into my own hands. I had wicked bad IBS, which to translate for West Coast listeners is hella bad IBS. I just want to be respectful, okay...

Kylie: Yeah, we get a lot of West Coast...

Victoria: Well, you don't want them to be sitting there going, "What is wicked?" It's hella. Same thing. So, Kylie, I was so sick. I was so sick for so long. Really bad digestive issues, which understanding the microbiome, when your tummy is upset, your mind will follow. So, I had really

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intermittent, chronic depression, anxiety, a lot of experiences of stress, overwhelm, this really intense feeling like I was stuck in life and there was no way out, there was no way forward.

And so, that early suffering, that early stress, early trauma led me to a life in healthcare and wellness and seeking to heal myself and heal others at the same time. Through that process, I got into the world of holistic medicine, which had always been my bent on life, and studied and practiced functional medicine.

I had a private practice in occupied Lenape territory in New York City, and through that practice came to understand that so often what's presenting as a physiologic issue is just the symptomology showing us that there's something way deeper down inside, that our digestion slows down when we are putting others ahead of ourselves, when we are talking trash to ourselves, when we're unkind to ourselves, when we're people pleasing, being perfectionists, rolling around in codependent thinking.

And so, for me, the final frontier of healing my body was to heal my mind and then to heal that link between the two, that true mind-body connection. And so, that's what I do now, is offer that kind of support to show other humans – and I like working with humans socialized as women, humans who are women now, whatever that means, however you define that for yourself, because that's my experience, right? And I love helping women to see how their habitual survival patterns from childhood have kept them surviving, which is beautiful, but now keep us feeling stuck.

Kylie: Ooh, hands up if you resonate with that at all...

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Victoria: Just casual though, right? It's a casual topic. Just casual topics here. Your show's pretty casual, so...

Kylie: It's just basics so...

Victoria: Um, I don't listen to your show and cry often, whatever, get out of here. Okay, wait, I totally do.

Kylie: Thank you for sharing. I resonate deeply with the being sick and always thinking, if something's wrong with you, it's your fault.

Victoria: Yep, it's all in your head.

Kylie: It's all in your head, you should do this, you should buy this. Oh my gosh, so I love what you said there about actually stepping into self-ownership around your health journey and taking health into your own hands and self-governance around, "Okay, nobody else is giving me answers that are supporting me in actually feeling better. So, I better do this myself."

Victoria: Yeah, well it's stepping into that get-to. So, I lived from so many have-tos for so long. I have to be a good girl, I have to get these grades, I have to perform this way, I have to try to fit in. I don't fit in. I have to fix my gut. I am broken. I have to fix this.

And those have-tos were driving that internal story that I'm broken and need fixing and that's just serious BS. And I get to now step into that choice and that desire and that want to live with intention and live with joy.

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Kylie: We're so deserving of that. It reminds me of this story I heard from one of my mentors who is in a lot of movement spaces about the fish in the lake analogy. Have you heard this one?

Victoria: Oh yes, but do share it. It's a good one.

Kylie: Yeah, it's like we're all swimming around in this lake and there are a few fish floating dead on top and we're like, "Okay, what's wrong with the fish? We'll take a look, we'll examine the fish. But if all of the fish are floating belly-up..." I love your visuals. I wish everyone could see Victoria's faces as I'm telling this. It's so good. Then it's time to look at the lake. But in our culture, we're still focused on the fish instead of looking at the water we're swimming in, which is so flipping poisonous.

I mean, you know, as a holistic nurse practitioner who studied in functional nutrition and medicine, it's like, whoa, how did we get so far and so disconnected from all of the things that do make us well? And the gut's a loud one when it comes to like, "Hey, you better listen."

Victoria: Sure is.

Kylie: You know, because it's so uncomfortable.

Victoria: Yeah, I mean I was bloated for like 30 years. And because of the way our viscera works, when you're bloated, you feel irritable because it's sending you into that sympathetic activation. It's telling you, something's not right here. And so, then I was irritable, so then I'd pick fights with the people I loved, and then that would reify that story that I was less than, that I was a fuck up, that everything about me was wrong, which would lead me

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to be more irritable, which would lead me to pick fights and then beat myself up for it.

And then of course, that would slow down the migrating motor complex that moves the small intestine, so of course, the bacteria buildup, more bloating, rinse and repeat.

Kylie: Rinse and repeat. I was diagnosed with SIBO two and a half, three years ago, the migrating motor complex, and they were talking about it being the body attacks itself...

Victoria: Oh, like autoimmune?

Kylie: Yeah, there you go. I was reading an article and it's like autoimmune and it's like, no, there's other issues there. And I remember going to an acupuncturist and she's like, "The small intestine has to do with like family systems..." And I was like, oh jeez, no, I will not look at this...

Victoria: Anything but that.

Kylie: Exactly. So, what supported you in, obviously, all of the flags are there, "Something's wrong, I need to do something." Where did you go next? Because it sounds like this is not an overnight process, clearly.

Victoria: You know, it's this funny thing and I want to be sort of thoughtful in how I say this, but I also just want to be frank because it is my way. I got tired of my own BS. I got tired of picking the fights with myself and then looking for someone to validate it. I got tired of my own perfectionism. I got tired of people pleasing. And I got tired of being really bloated. And my inner nerd was like, "There must be a way to science this." So I did.

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I started learning and I was really lucky in that I found a really, really, really good functional medicine clinician who did the right test, found the bugs, helped me to murder the bugs. But again, that was only half the battle. And PS, it's whatever, but it's so funny how quick militarized language comes out of our mouth. I just heard myself say battle and was like, "Duh, socialization, you jerk." But it was half of the journey, was the physiology.

Kylie: Yeah, so important that foundational layer to actually support the body...

Victoria: Yeah, right, and I needed to do all of that, you know, basic physiology, getting the pipes flowing again, getting my gut moving in the right way. And you've had SIBO, you know, right? It's such a bear.

But I think part of it was like, diagnoses are a fascinating double-edged sword because it can both be this – I'll speak for myself. I have both used it as a crutch to not do my own work, "Oh I'm sick. I'm out of spoons..." And I'm only talking about myself. I'm not casting aspersions on anyone in this world. I did that. And that was a survival mechanism and it served its good and it was adaptive at the time. And then I hit a point where it was maladaptive. It didn't serve me any longer to sort of rest on that diagnosis as an excuse, which is what I was doing.

And a diagnosis, a piece of paper that says, "You have blastocystis hominis in your large intestine and you have Methanobrevibacter smithii in your small intestine..." these words helped me to be like, "Oh, it's not just me," right?

Because there was some part of me that's like, "Vic, are you just being whiney? You're so smart and you're so strong..." like I'm built like a

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wombat. I'm short and thick, "You're a strong little animal. Can't you just push through this one." But those are some fierce beasts to have growing in your tummers, you know?

Kylie: Yeah, they knock you out.

Victoria: Oh, they sure do. And I just got sick of being knocked out.

Kylie: Yeah, for sure. I find that for me in my journey with SIBO and IBS and all of the digestive you name it, I had it situation...

Victoria: Now you're bragging...

Kylie: Not all of them, thank god. No, what's interesting is what you're saying here and why I love the lens in which you're presenting this material is it's so multidimensional and layered. You're like, bringing in that this is potentially a very young part of who we are that's grasping and staying in situations or identities or relationships or patterns that are keeping us stuck, or sick if you will.

Victoria: And stagnant. Because SIBO, so many gut disorders, it's about stagnancy throughout our digestion. And I see that same stagnancy mirrored in our mental wellness, in the stories we repeat and repeat, "Oh that story huts, let me tell it again, let me tell it again, let me tell it again," because it's the only story I know. And because I haven't bene taught," because our educational system, like, how many types of triangle can you name? I can name them all. But I never learned to recognize how my thoughts create my feelings. I never learned that I could step in to say this feels like crap and I am cocreating it with my socialization, my conditioning.

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And I'm going to hit the stop button here. I'm going to hit pause and I'm going to hit the stop and reset and pick a new thought about this completely neutral circumstance in life. So, let's stay with this example of digestive concerns.

So, it's one thing to have the digestive upset, the digestive concerns, and it's another thing to tell the story, "This is terrible. This is horrible. This is the worst. I'm so worried." That fixes nothing. And because it sends you into that sympathetic overdrive where your body is flooded with adrenaline, norepinephrine, and cortisol, it created this really potentially devastating feedback loop with your adrenals that keeps you jacked up on your own story and your own neurochemistry, and that slows your migrating motor complex.

So, I'm not saying that wasn't sick as a dog and I'm not saying it was great, I'm not ever in like positive vibes all night, every suffering is a teacher. But also, every suffering is potentially a teacher if you want it to be. And I think that part's so important, right?

Kylie: I'm just really stuck on the stagnancy piece, do you know what I mean? Because it's like, it's so comfortable there... And so then it comes back to, what gets in the way of really pushing through these blockages? Or maybe that's the incorrect word. I think like some of these patterns that we can't see out of because it's the only one we've ever been living inside of...

Victoria: The water we're swimming in. Well, I think several things happen. Codependency, people pleasing often come with perfectionism. It is a stress response, a trauma response, a wildly appropriate response to what so many of us went through in childhood.

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Because if you look perfect on the outside, well, then when the lions come to attack the village, the adults are going to grab you. You're the perfect child. Why would they not save you from the lions? You're no trouble. You do all these chores. You're so helpful around the hut, right? It's genius. And it keeps us from seeing the, frankly, reality. Perfectionist thinking keeps us believing we are the sum of our production, A, number one. B, number two, if you're not producing, you're failing. And that's a very bad dangerous thing, which it was in cave human times and it likely was in your childhood, so we honor that.

C, number three, it is not okay to ask for help, to be needy, to have wants, to have needs, to need support, because D, number four, you're supposed to be able to do every fucking thing on earth by yourself perfectly the first time even though it is the first time and you're not supposed to talk about what you accomplished because being celebrated means that eyes are on you. And attention is so dangerous, so scary, because if they're looking at you, they're going to see the flaw, they're going to recognize you're worthless, and then the lions come and they're like, "Won't you just stay behind? Just a little tribute here for the lions. Then they won't chase us.." right?

Kylie: You're just summing up my whole life story, so it's cute, but, like wow. This perfectionism piece has been one that had to blow my actual world up in order to climb out of that perfection identity of like I need to be perfect. So, when we suppress all of the other parts of ourselves that are very human, very real very acceptable and worthy, because we've been conditioned in our environments culturally and potentially in our family systems, that we have to prepress vital parts of who we are. I'm telling you what, those parts without attention or time take right over. It's not coming through the body, it's coming through some other...

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Victoria: Yeah, I mean, it's like, if you've ever met a toddler they're like, "Excuse me..." and you ignore them. So, what do they do, "Excuse me..."? And they're like, "Excuse me..." They're just going to get louder and louder and louder. So too with our, "Listen to me..."

So, for me, what was a little indigestion turned into massive GI symptoms. Because I didn't have the tools and it didn't feel safe to pay attention to myself. It didn't feel safe. I needed to keep my eyes out on the dangerous world.

Kylie: Okay, kind of staying in the hyper vigilance, like constantly scanning to manage the external environment to make sure that you are safe.

Victoria: Right, which makes you believe that you have some kind of control over other people, places, and things.

Kylie: But don't we?

Victoria: Oh golly, if only. Because I have some ideas about how we should run this everything.

Kylie: Are you running next? I hope so. Victoria 2024.

Victoria: Oh goodness, no, I'm going to stay in my little life coaching lane, I like it over here. But thanks.

Kylie: Our loss. This work specifically, we're talking about for me, and I'd be curious about your unhooking from it all and getting the digestive system moving and healing your own nervous system was finding a secure attachment through other, you know, so that my nervous system could

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even feel what it felt like to be in relationship with a secure resource nervous system. I didn't even know what that meant. Any time anybody was calm or something, I'd go into full activation because I'm like, "Am I missing something?" it didn't feel safe.

So, for me, it was somatic experiencing therapy. And I'm curious, for you, because I see breathwork as a modality that you so beautifully offer this world, which thank you for that, I love breathwork. What was your doorway into looking at some of these core patterns and nervous system responses?

Victoria: Yeah, honestly it was friends. It was getting to San Francisco in my late 20s to nurse practitioner school at the University of California San Francisco and for the first time that I recognized, because I don't want to say the first time in my life, but the first time I recognized I could really see the people in front of me and the work that they were doing.

And San Francisco a decade ago was a different animal than what it is now. And I was surrounded by people who were doing their work, who were going to the redwoods and meditating and journeying and doing yoga and breathwork and really tapping in and really checking in.

And I had just been in a relationship with a – I used to date small, angry alcoholics. It was kind of my thing. And I had just been in one of those. And yeah, it was such a stark contrast to what I had been recently experiencing that it blew my world apart to see folks talking, like really talking about their feelings.

And maybe it was the shift, you know, I had spent most of my life in the puritanical New England, then this shift to a California way of thinking and

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people just being really open about what was going on for them. So, what I'm pointing to is coregulating. People put out their hand and offered to coregulate with me. And that was mind-blowing, earth-shaking, which you shouldn't say about California. But it was. And offered me the chance to take their hand and follow them to do really weird stuff that helped me to open my eyes and my mind and connect with different ways of being than what I had known in my childhood, in my immigrant family. I went to weirdo college, I went to Oberlin, but I think I just wasn't ready for it. But it was all priming me. It was like priming the pump if you will.

So, yeah, it was loving, kind people. I talk a lot about how when we heal ourselves, we help heal the world. It's how I end every episode of the *Feminist Wellness* podcast. And I choose to say that every week because it was these beautiful people who were doing all of this deep work on themselves, modeling that as a possibility, the kind of work they were redoing on self and in community for the collective, in collective was beyond my wildest imagination.

So, their healing work opened the door for me and is what led me to be here talking with you a decade later, running a six-month program to help folks to overcome codependency. It was a wild gift. Oh yeah, we can talk about my program. Oh my god, it's so much fun.

Kylie: Yeah, well, now that you're here. And I've heard this word come out, so I feel like we're supposed to talk about it. How are you defining codependency?

Victoria: well, Kylie, thanks for asking...

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Kylie: You know, there's so much on this topic. So I'm like, everybody might have a little flair of their own, but I'm curious because I love the way you express and define.

Victoria: Thank you. So, I see codependency – or I actually really like to talk about it as codependent thinking, because I truly believe it's a set of thought habits. It's not that someone is codependent, because again, going back to the labels, it can end up being really limiting. When folks are like, "Oh, I'm just type-A." And I'm like, "Really? Or are you anxious and traumatized?"

Kylie: Underneath that...

Victoria: Right, yeah. You can chill out. We can teach you how. So, codependent thinking for me in my own lived experience is about putting other people's wants, needs, and emotional state above your own. And believing that your emotional state is profoundly dependent on the emotional state of the people around you.

And that's not just partnership, family, friends. It can be people on the bus. Like, "Oh, he's not okay. I need to get involved. I need to make sure that stranger on the bus is okay." Not in like a beautiful humanitarian way, but really in a like my energy, my emotional wellness, my state of being depends on my making sure that everyone else is okay. It's pretty fucking exhausting. It really is an awful lot. It's an awful lot and it makes us feel like we're being so altruistic, right, and like we're really taking care of the community.

But it is at its core, and truly, very selfish. While actually not attending to yourself, it's manipulative in that way, you know. It is wildly too conscious. I

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don't think anyone's like, "Okay, I'm going to do this nice thing for him and then he's going to think well of me and that will help me because I think poorly about me and then that will validate my sense of self." No one's out here doing that. It's just how we learn to survive.

And I think that part's super important. Once again, these patters, these habits, these ways of thinking and being and acting in the world comes from childhood, adolescence, in our 20s, but they are survival habits. And so, in my world, in the coaching work I do, we honor them we celebrate them.

Kylie: When shame is removed out of the classroom and we're just like, "Okay, let's just start naming this and validate it as it is..." and I love that in your containers, you're creating a lot of safety around this process of unhooking from codependent thought patterns.

Victoria: Yeah, well I think we need to because they're born of feeling unsafe. They're born of this fear that we are unworthy and we need to chronically, habitually, constantly prove our worth to the world, but really to ourselves because in this core place, we don't believe it.

And so, without an active conscious attention to psychological and physiologic safety, I don't think this work can proceed in any sort of real way without it being a bunch of emotional and spiritual bypassing BS.

Kylie: Totally agree with you. So happy to hear you say that. A meme isn't going to solve this. To really unhook and create an internal sense of safety or felt sense of safety, that takes not only work, but it takes a community, coregulation, like you've previously mentioned. It's imperative.

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Victoria: Yeah, and one of the things that happens in codependent thinking is that we believe that we are an island and we need to do everything alone. And so, it comes with all this isolation, which once again makes sense, because if anyone sees your weakness, they will leave you to die cold and alone on the mountaintop.

So, we shield ourselves. We shield ourselves from feeling our pain, our hurt, our sorrow, and we push it away to not let anyone else see it, less they think less of us, and abandon us. Going back to your question about attachment and that query of what is that link towards healing, that sort of first hook on the ladder. And I think you nailed it; safe, secure attachment with another loving person, place, thing, animal, tree, spirit, concept, a resource.

Kylie: A resource, for sure. So, when you're walking people in your program back to this – I don't know, would you say interdependency? Both in a relationship, not at the cost of self, but having an identity of who you are, what your desires are, what your needs are, your wants, all of that, what does the pathway look like, just for the listeners who are like, "I want. I need."

Victoria: You can have more. Yeah, interdependence is always my jam. I think in the US, we are taught this rugged individualism, this Horatio Alger's pull yourself up from the bootstraps total BS, and it's such garbage. We are pack animals. We need each other as mammals. Because science, we need each other.

And so, we start by building this safe container and building this safer community. It's like safe sex that way. It's only safer. We do our fucking best.

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And so, we build this safer community, built on love, mutual respect, and a promise to each stay in our own lane, which is so challenging, but not to should on each other and not to tell each other what to do. And honestly, it's fascinating, each step of setting up this community, each time I run the program feels like, "Okay, if that's all you got for six months, that's enough." Do you know what I mean?

Experiencing a Slack community where people aren't shoulding on each other, like, "Oh, okay, that's life-changing." So, we do really focus on this concept of interdependence in which if we take a dyad, if we take a couple, each partner in that couple, the goal is independent, autonomous, takes care of their own needs, and then also asks for their needs to be met by the other with a true, deep, profound understanding and belief that that person will take care of their own needs. That person is an independent, autonomous, self-loving being taking care of their own needs.

And so, if you say, "Hey, babe, can you listen to this story? Hey babe, can you support me around this? Can you take the garbage out? Can you be by my side? Let's create mutuality from being two autonomous beings, versus being two enmeshed beings? And so, I can trust that you are taking care of you enough that I can ask you to take care of me without the stories of guilt, shame, oh I'm a burden, oh she's going to say yes because she feels bad, oh he's going to get angry if I ask, they aren't going to like it that I want them to do this."

We can drop all that BS, all that garbage, right? Because we trust each other's wholeness and autonomy. And so, the work in this program is to build that within ourselves, to see it in the collective that we build for these six months, and then to build those bedrock foundational skills. How do we do direct communication? I didn't know for like 30 years. How do we ask for what we need? Well shit, I didn't know what I needed.

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Kylie: Totally.

Victoria: Great, so what is intuition? How do I tap into it? How do I know? What does the body know? So, we do a lot of somatics and we do cognitive work because it's important to work both vagus nerve up, body up, and cognition vagus nerve down into the body. 20% of our thoughts are created by our feelings. Let's attend to that 20% as best we can.

So, I teach a protocol called the thought work protocol. It's based in cognitive behavioral theory, positive psychology, and it's a way to look at life and recognize that things are not, circumstances in life are not inherently good or bad – there's a caveat – until we put human thought on it. And it's not until you say this is good or this is bad that you have that felt experience, that emotional experience of it being exhausting, terrible, frustrating, disappointing, or amazing, incredible, glorious, delightful.

Without that initial cognition, it is neither. It is simply a neutral experience. The caveat here is discrimination, prejudice, racism. This is not said enough in the coaching world. Those things are not neutral, to me. They are not something I see as neutral circumstances. They are problems. They must be dealt with. I am not coaching around how they are okay because they're just not in my world. And if someone wants that kind of coaching, there's plenty of it available. But not from me. I'm not your gal.

Kylie: I'm not your gal, you know why...

Victoria: No, I know you're not. I know.

Kylie: That sounds like an incredible way to support people and coming back into the container of themselves, giving them the tools and the

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resources to be able to even understand what's happening in the internal world. That's a vulnerable journey in and of itself.

Victoria: Sure is, yeah.

Kylie: It's like, I've never met this person because I've been so focused on everybody else and being who culture, family wanted me to be, you know, how can I be 30 years old and not know who I am? That's such a vulnerable point in time...

Victoria: Yeah, and what the thought work helps us to see is within that, which of your habitual everyday all the time thoughts are simply taught to you? Like put on a flashcard and handed to you? And we believe our own thoughts because most of us were never taught that we any other option and we believe that our beliefs are real because we believe them. But it's simply neuroplasticity. We've thought them again and again and again and there's so many things in this life that we do label good or bad without pausing. So, death, is that good or bad, Kylie?

Kylie: I mean, I'm neutral in death. Death is probably one of those that I spend a lot of my time thinking about. Because I think our culture, we need to get better acquainted with death in a big way.

Victoria: Oh for sure.

Kylie: We have a lot of fear of death and resistance to death. And I think it keeps us from living.

Victoria: I could not agree more. Well, the example I was going for, if I may – so if we were to go to any old mall in anywhere USA and say, “IS death

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bad?" I think 9.9 out of 10 people would be like, "But of course." And in my life, death meant I lost people and bunnies I loved. Death was a bad thing. And then I got offered the opportunity to work hospice and let me tell you, my thoughts on death changed real quick.

I was like, "Oh, John in four, I hope he dies tonight. He's suffering bad." Right?

Kylie: It really shifts when you're in that type of environment, for sure.

Victoria: Yeah, and we can bring that framework to anything. We can recognize, I only think this is bad because I always only thought it was bad.

Kylie: Yeah, talk about self-awareness. Talk about having enough capacity to sit and examine what types of judgments am I placing on this or that? I mean, neutrality is such a beautiful place to be.

Victoria: Yeah, well it's so empowering.

Kylie: It's so liberating.

Victoria: So liberating because you get yourself to neutral and then you can build the skill and the muscle of trusting yourself to choose a path from neutral.

Kylie: That's it.

Victoria: That's the name of our band. It's going to be so good. I play zero instruments. It's going to be amazing.

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Kylie: Same.

Victoria: This is the best band ever... Right, but choosing our path from neutral. Because when you're choosing from knee-jerk habitual unintentional, what are you actually choosing? Let's look at the word choice there. Are you making a choice?

Kylie: Not in my eyes.

Victoria: Nor in mine.

Kylie: Yeah, choice is such an interesting topic of conversation, especially when we haven't necessarily been given the tools of understanding around how thoughts are formed and beliefs are formed and neuroplasticity and how we even learn and are socialized and conditioning. Like, where was that in our school?

Victoria: Yeah, I don't know.

Kylie: I was so angry when I figured that out, that 95% of my operating system was operating out of unconscious. I was like, I'm sorry, don't you think you should tell somebody that? "Hey, you're not really in control here. All the stuff that you stuffed down and hid away in your body and in your unconscious mind is actually... so, you better slow down."

Victoria: Yeah, that should be part of kindergarten, right? But like actually for real. Wash your hands. Don't hit people without consent. Naps are important. You are operating on a conditioned belief system.

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Kylie: I feel like we're in such a time right now, Victoria, and I'd be curious about your perspective here. I feel like we are finally stepping into emotional maturity, like we're growing out of childhood adaptive strategies, now like initiating through adolescence and into adulthood.

Victoria: Oh, what's the we there?

Kylie: Well, I'm projecting onto populations, but I think that we've been emotionally and psychologically operating from very young parts of ourselves because we've been operating out of what feels like a lot of self-preservation and survival energy. And it's like, how can we even operate with more agency if we can't even regulate our own nervous systems and have the capacity to think?

Victoria: I mean, I couldn't agree more. Is the we there like America?

Kylie: I mean, yeah, that feels accurate. Sure.

Victoria: The US of America, as a South American. Yeah, I mean, I don't know where we're going but I know some of the things we need, which yes, is a collective lesson on nervous system regulation. I mean, on so many levels, folks are so dysregulated. I mean, fascism thrives in a population that is dysregulated because one is knee-jerk because that's what the system is capable of and requires. So, that makes sense. A population that is dysregulated is also much easier to control than one that is collectively coregulated. So, I hear you on that one, for sure.

Kylie: You took it down a different alley. Had to... Like, we're here. We're at an interesting time...

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Victoria: We are. I'm down for a lot of dark alleys. Let's hold hands though because, you know, we're small. One of the things that's been actually in my actual literal dreams frequently in the last month or so has been about how we are our own medicine, like the medicine, you seek the medicine I sought for years at 1000 ports of call, at different functional medicine docs, at naturopaths, at the acupuncturist, at the massage place, at the ayahuasca, at the new date, at the let's get drunk, at the let's get sober, at the one and on and on, all of that was helpful in its ways, except for – no, the let's get drunk was helpful in its way at the time.

Yeah, all roads led back to Rome, you know what I mean? Like it all kept back to my insistence. And this is so – I mean, this is the patriarchy in motion. Some knower outside of me knew what I needed. I just had to find the right knower, the right guru, the right whitecoat, the right whatever to tell me how to heal. And what I got to learn along the way over the last 41 years is that it was all within me. It was all within my nervous system, my body, my ancestral wisdom.

And that I am the plants and they are me. I am you and you are me. Not in some creepy white-washing we are all one kind of apolitical BS way, but in a cellular way, that we need each other. I guess I'm coming back to interdependence, aren't I? That got to learn how to stand in my own autonomy on my own two feet to learn what I want, what I need, when I want it. You can't provide it? Great. I can provide it for myself and I can coregulate with someone who can.

I can coregulate with the stars and the moon and the sky and the trees and the dog. To the cat, I am allergic. But I can stand on my own two feet, which scared the effing F out of me because I didn't believe it. I didn't know it to be true, or possible, certainly unlikely, statistically unlikely for sure.

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Kylie: And here you are.

Victoria: Here I am. It's been quite a journey, these last 41 years, let me tell you what.

Kylie: I bet. I hope you're writing a book. I don't know your journey, but I'm like, I want to know. Oh you are? Amazing.

Victoria: I am. It's a secret. Darn. I am, I'm really excited about it. It's going to take a hot minute but, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kylie: Assimilation takes time...

Victoria: Mittens, please, de-assimilating has taken many a year too, let me tell you what. Letting that freak flag fly has taken quite a minute. But here we are, being weird.

Kylie: Yeah, I appreciate how you show up in your being, in your presence, in your essence, giving us all permission to be who we are.

Victoria: What is that Janice Joplin quote, "Be yourself, everyone else is taken." Lord only knows if she actually said that. I haven't checked for video footage. But yeah. I spent so long trying to be everyone else. It just never worked out.

Kylie: Yeah, it doesn't feel good either in the body. Being invisible is not fun. Alright, Victoria, I've loved this.

Victoria: This has been such a delight. You are so fantastic.

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Kylie: You are so fun. You're like a beam of joy.

Victoria: Why thank you.

Kylie: You're welcome. And for those who want more of this goodness that you're offering on this planet, where do they find you?

Victoria: Yeah, so on the Instagram @victoriaalbinawellness, my website is victoriaalbina.com. If you head on over to the homepage, there's a place right there on the front of the page where you can put your name and email and you can get a suite of meditations delivered right to your email inbox with just a few clicks. Those are free because I love you and I want to support you in attending to your beautiful self, should you so choose. My six-month masterclass is called The Feminist Wellness Guide to Overcoming Codependency.

You can learn more at victoriaalbina.com/masterclass. Try to keep those URLs simple or I will totally forget them. So, that's /masterclass. My podcast is called *Feminist Wellness*. It's on all the things, the Apple, the Stitcher, the Spotify, blah, blah, blah.

Kylie: Beautiful, thank you.

Victoria: Thank you. It's been such a pleasure. And I want to remind your listeners, if you're enjoying this show, please do subscribe, rate, and review, particularly on Apple Podcasts. This is such a great show. I love listening to it. First-time caller, long-time listener. It's a great show and, when you subscribe, you really, really, really support Kylie in getting her amazing work out to the world, so go do it.

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Kylie: Thanks, Victoria.

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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.