

Ep #138: Healing the Spirit of Perfectionism with Alea Lovely



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

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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. I am delighted to be sharing a recent conversation I had on Alea Lovely's show, which is called *Spiritual Shit*. It's a great show and we had such a lovely conversation.

It was just one of those talks, you know when you meet someone and you just - it's just flowing. We kept connecting and it was so beautiful and we talked about some really deep stuff, about perfectionism and healing and self-worth and self-love, and the deepest, deepest expressions of self-love.

And it was such a beautiful conversation that I wanted to share it all with you over here on *Feminist Wellness*. Check it out. I hope you enjoy it. And if you're enjoying *Feminist Wellness*, I would be beyond delighted if you could head on over to Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your show, subscribe, follow, leave a rating and a review.

The reason I ask for that is because the way these systems work, the more ratings and reviews a show has, the easier it is for other people to find it through the search. And I do this show as a way to give back because I am so grateful for all the knowledge, the privilege I've had to learn all this stuff, and I'm so excited to be sharing it with you all.

So the more you rate and review, the more people find it, and the more this free resources gets into other people's ears. So thank you very much for

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taking a moment to do that. Hope you're having a beautiful week and I will be back next week to talk to you all once more.

Alea: Today we have the lovely Victoria Albina who is just a powerhouse in feminist wellness and codependency and how perfectionism fucks your life. So we're going to get into a little bit about that and some other things. Say hey to everybody.

Victoria: Hey. So delighted to be here.

Alea: Thanks for being here. Before we get into all the juicy stuff that you have and the things that you're able to offer so many people around the world, can you tell people a little bit about yourself and your background and how you got into this space in the first place?

Victoria: Yeah, absolutely. So my name is Victoria Albina. I am a holistic nurse practitioner, life coach, breathwork meditation facilitator. I use she/her pronouns and I live on occupied unseated Lenape territory in New York State. I came to this work as many of us did from being wicked sick myself.

So I was physically sick, I mean what's the difference between physically, mentally, and spiritually sick, right? There's all that intersection. I was really physically sick the first 30-35 years of my life with terrible digestive symptoms and the mental health concerns that come when your microbiome is completely F'ed.

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So intermittent depression, anxiety, a lot of struggles. And it was in working to heal myself that I really got passionate about helping others to heal their physical body. It was soon on that journey that I realized that that was only a small portion of the work that I needed to do, and then saw that reflected back in my patients.

So we would murder off whatever bad bacteria was causing them crises, bringing the good bacteria, heal their nutrition, et cetera, but symptoms lingered and symptoms came back. And so often it was that mind-body-spirit connection that really needed to be attended to, which is what led me to study somatics and to study the mind and to become a life coach and to bring in the breathwork that all together helps support folks to release really problematic thoughts that keep us from attending to ourselves and loving ourselves, like codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thinking.

Alea: So can you talk to us a little bit about what somatics are? Because I'm super interested in that. I know that somatic therapy and somatic healing has brought together very much the mental health aspect with the - I wouldn't say spiritual necessarily, but more psychological aspects of rewiring the brain to stop triggering us into old patterns via some neuroplasticity or something like that. So can you talk to us about what that is and how you got into that?

Victoria: Yeah. You're saying all my favorite nerd words. So somatics, home of the body, right? So recognizing that the body does know what's up and the body holds onto all the stressors, all the traumas, all the incongruencies in energy, the misattunements of our lives. All of these things live within our physiology.

So again, from my own story, I had a parasite, blastocystis hominis. It needed to die. And when I was really stressed out, I got heartburn. Sure,

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we can go down the physiologic path and we can talk about stomach acid, but that's a different topic.

The soma, my body remembered stressors and trauma from the past and when I felt stressed in my adult life, all of that came to the fore, causing that physiologic reaction. I've also come to understand how many tensions in our bodies are from our lived experience.

So for example, if as a kid you were misattuned with your parental figures, meaning you had a need that they were not capable of meeting, or unwilling to meet, unable to meet for whatever reason, maybe you wanted to either fight or flight. That sympathetic nervous system. You wanted to get the hell out of there but you were six. Where are you going to go? Or you wanted to fight, but you're going to punch a grownup? That's not happening.

So that all gets stored in our physiology, in our cells, in our bodies, and also in our spirit. And so when that fight or flight is held within us, it wants to complete. It wants to satisfy that energetic need. And so for an example, in the folks I work with who are working to overcome their codependent thinking, I often see a lot of TMJ, a lot of jaw pain, and a lot of hip pain, which is often that fight or flight.

In the hips, that flight wanting to come out, that jaw, when you think about a boxer, the vagus nerve runs through your jaw, it's one of the most important nerves in the body in my opinion. The 10th and the longest cranial nerve. And if you're hit in the jaw, it's a technical knockout. You're out.

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And so the body armors against that. We hold tension in the body to protect the vagus nerve very fiercely. So that clenching of the jaw was all that little you could do to protect yourself, knowing that you were small and you had no other options because small.

And so you hold that tension in your soma, that tightness in the jaw, as a way to armor to attempt to protect the physiology but also the emotional tenderness. So fast forward 20, 30, 40, 50 more years later, we still have those holding patterns within our physiology until we recognize them, bring them attention and love, ask them what they need, learn from them, and give to them.

Alea: So somatic therapy is a way in which we are integrating that trauma that we experienced on that side with our physical body and our now present memory or present awareness.

Victoria: Exactly.

Alea: Wow. So this is not even the direction that we talked about going. I'm so fascinated with this already because it is a type of therapy, right? Or is it a type of hypnosis or something?

Victoria: Oh no, no hypnosis. It's a therapeutic modalities. I'm not a therapist and I just want to be clear for our listeners, I don't claim to be an expert in all somatic practices. It's just something that I bring into my work as a nurse practitioner and a coach. It's the natural intersection of my training, my skills, and my 20 years experience.

But yeah, it's a therapeutic modality that helps us to see where things are stuck and things are keeping us in those same thought loops and the same

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physiologic experience that can lead us really just to feel like crap, to put it elegantly.

Alea: A lot of our lives we live in those thought loops and thought loops are a really important one I talk to my clients and a lot of people we've had on the show, and how we kind of - I call the paradigms or narratives or stories that we tell ourselves. And we get in these thought loops of like, our trauma and our identity and what we think and how it defines it.

And we find ourselves in situations where we're always saying, "Why does this always happen to me? Why does this always happen like this?" Or whatever. Not necessarily aware of those cycles that we're kind of going in or have been ingratiated in as a result of some of our childhood, inner child healing that needs to happen.

Now, you speak a lot about inner child healing. And for people who maybe this is their first show that they're listening to, what is inner child healing and why is it so important?

Victoria: Yeah, so the concept of the inner child is an understanding, again, this is reflected in somatic work, that every childhood experience that we have imprints on us and it stays with us. So it's a personification of that experience within us because doing so allows our naturally creative human minds to get into conversation with those parts.

And so it's an understanding that each of us has protector parts, we have this beautiful gift of resistance within us, we have defenders, we have jokers, we have peacekeepers, we have this entire family within us whose, A, number one, only goal is to keep us alive.

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And so the more we can get in touch with our inner children, our inner family, our inner village, the more we can understand their motivations, their intentions, their goals for us. And when we can get into conversation, well, then adult us is in conversation versus having an eight-year-old driving the bus.

And so, so much of my work is really based on praising the crap out of these little kiddos. When I was doing my breathwork facilitator training, there was always this conversation about resistance is a bad thing, and I'm just so not down with that. I think our resistance is one of our greatest gifts ever because it's an inner part saying I'm scared.

And so we can run rough shot over that, but I don't think that's healing. I think that's really problematic and creates an internal stress that is not helpful and leads us to need more healing support down the road. I don't want to say re-traumatizing because I'm not sure it's always to that level, but it's of that ilk.

So instead, what I teach my clients to do is to recognize when those inner children are like, "You want to meditate? That's very dangerous. If you're still with your eyes closed you will get eaten by lions." And to say, you know what kid, that makes a lot of sense. I can see why that's wicked scary for you. Okay, but listen, adult me is in charge right now so you get to go play with the other kids and to trust me. I know other adults might not have been trustworthy but I've got our back.

Alea: Right. That's something that's interesting to talk in to, the resistance point. Because we talk a lot about resistance on the show but more in the sense of manifest, energetic resistance. Not like false resistance. But resistance as a survival, a way of survival, a way to defend the body. And to pay attention to and integrate whatever those things are.

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Now, on our topic of codependency, we've spoken about that for sure and that is something that loads of us struggle with. And I do think that it deeply does come from - when we look at a cultural standpoint of especially anybody who identifies as feminine and how society has portrayed feminine and how we're supposed to be.

Men as well, but I do think that I hear a lot more about women struggling with that as far as the ways in which their value is being ascertained or validated by someone else loving them, or feeling like that's the only way that they feel of value. Can you define what codependency is and what are the main characteristics to identify that within oneself?

Victoria: Yeah, I think you summed it up really well. So I'll add, I really think about codependency as when - or codependent thinking, because I don't like to talk about it as a label so much as a habit because it's completely changeable.

So codependent thinking is marked by believing that other people's thoughts, feelings, lived experienced, emotional state, wellness, lunch, everyone else's everything is to be attended to before yours. So it's that chronic habit of putting other people before you and then internalizing how you perceive them and making it mean something about you and your worth.

Oh, he's unhappy, I'm unhappy. She's upset, I need to be upset with her. They don't like the way this is going, I need to shift the way I'm showing up to try to make them happy even if it's not what makes me happy and brings me pleasure and joy or peace and calm. I need to sort of chameleon myself to take care of others and keep their everything ahead of my own for my own internal safety, because that's where it comes from.

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Alea: How does that normally develop?

Victoria: So I think you're very right on with the piece about socialization. I think humans that are socialized as women and anyone living as a woman experiences this story very strongly. And obviously that's a generalization. But to continue to generalize, we are taught to always put the men in the family ahead of ourselves, put the family ahead of ourselves, put children ahead of ourselves. Put everything in the world ahead of our own desires.

And so I think it manifests from having that modeled in childhood. From the psychological literature, the term codependency originally comes from the addiction world and was used to talk about the wives of alcoholic men. I really expand on that because I find that it's often not the case.

One doesn't have to grow up in a household with addiction or alcoholism. But in a household where folks are codependent and are modeling that, are modeling putting everyone else's everything ahead of their own. And so how does it manifest?

I often see it as perfectionism and perfectionist thinking, people pleasing, really again that shapeshifting and trying to be everything to everyone. I often see it - it's fascinating, as judgment of self. Like a deep, deep judgment of self as always being a letdown, always being behind the curve, never doing enough, perfectionism, which can come with a really harsh judgment of others.

An interesting place I'll see this showing up is with codependent thinking, we spend so much of our time and our energy and our emotional bandwidth doing and doing and doing and doing for others. And so we

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judge others who don't do the same. We spend our time attempting to mind read.

And I don't mean actual psychic powers. That is a different conversation. That's totally legit. I mean, trying to anticipate needs with this energy of it'll keep me safe if I anticipate their needs, which again, in childhood may have literally been the truth. And we then get really angry, upset, disappointed, frustrated when other people don't read our minds and don't do for us what we never asked them to do. Because we've spent a lifetime doing for others what they never asked us to do.

So it ends up with this really tricky energetic dynamic between folks where we are expecting other people to play these roles in our lives that are just not loving or kind for anyone involved, to put it gently.

Alea: There's an interesting concept; someone came out and said that empaths tend to have the highest levels of codependency, but not because they're necessarily born empaths but because empathicness can actually be developed out of having to anticipate someone's needs to be safe.

I thought that was really interesting because I myself identify as a born empath, of being already sensitive coming out, but then I tried to think about that and I thought about the processes in all the conversations I've had with other people who've been empathic and how that is kind of the number one thing that a lot of us struggle with as far as what it is - because we can't feel good unless the people around us are feeling good.

From an energetic standpoint, but also from that mental or psychological standpoint as well. And thinking, not even to my past and being like, wow, growing up super religious and growing up with parents that were pretty

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strict and I had to anticipate their needs to make sure I didn't get in trouble, or that I was going to be okay, or being the oldest child and having to take care of three other children as well and trying to throttle between my mom and the kids.

That, to me, makes a lot of sense. So in order to be loved and to be essentially someone who is highly anticipating someone else's - whatever they need, you have to be kind of perfect. At least you think you do in order to earn love. So can you expand a little bit on that? The perfectionism myth and how it fucks up your life?

Victoria: I want to start by saying three cheers for little you. Yay, those little humans kept you safe. What genius, tiny, tiny peoples. At six and eight and 12 and 14 to be able to read the room energetically and otherwise, and to stay one step ahead. I'm so glad they showed up for you that way. That's beautiful.

Alea: I like that. Yeah.

Victoria: It's nice, right? Because I think part of the perfectionist myth and part of codependent thinking is this chronic beating ourselves up for what's already done and beating ourselves up for what we're doing now and just going ahead and beating ourselves up for what we might do next week, why not?

And so when we pause and we celebrate that inner genius, it really opens that door to breaking through perfectionism. Because we can see that what we may label as currently maladaptive, it doesn't support us now as adults was genius back then.

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And so that creates - it's like the crack where the light comes in. That whatever we're doing now with best effort may be genius for future self. So that allows us to consider that maybe, just possibly, we can be a little less fucking harsh with ourselves.

And perfectionism, that perfectionist habit teaches us not to celebrate ourselves. And if we think back to little you, could she pause to celebrate herself? Or did she have to do the next thing and the next thing and the next thing and the next thing?

So as adults, when we pause and we celebrate little us, last week us, today us, go ahead and celebrate future us because I'm sure that human's going to do a great job, again, we start to break it open just a little bit. To circle back to talking about being an empath, so I think the one thing for me in my experience of the difference between being an empath, one can be an empath and have it be a wild and amazing gift, and one can have the gift of empathy as a survival skill and have it be problematic when we don't have healthy boundaries.

And I mean that on all levels. I mean your energetic boundaries and your psychological boundaries, your financial boundaries, your time boundaries, all of it. So it's one thing to say I feel his energy, he's mad. That human there, disappointed, and to recognize it, to feel it in that loving, connecting way.

And then for me, it's not mine. I give it back. I push it out. I picture my energetic orb around me and it's a thing, living on Lenape territory in New York City for so long, I set an energetic protective orb around myself every single day when we're leaving the house.

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And so I push that gently out of my orb because it's not mine. I don't want it. I don't need it. It doesn't serve me to take it on. And so for me, that's my empathetic child meeting my adult self. For her it was brilliant, it was amazing, it was protective to take it all in, make it mean something about me.

Again, perfectionism: I have already F'ed up, I was born F'ed up, everything I do is F'ed up. Because if I believe that, I can stay one step ahead of danger. It's like I talk about this because I'm really F'ing silly. T-rex consciousness.

So think back to Jurassic Park. If you're not moving, the T-rex can't see you. So if you live in a household of T-rex, if you stay very still, which can look like getting the straight As, getting the gold star, getting the lead in the play, doing sport words, whatever it is, making the dinner before parents get home, pouring the drink before someone gets home, the T-rex won't see you, it won't eat your face.

How fucking genius is that shit, right? That's some magic fucking shit right there, and that is perfectionism. That is that line of thinking. If I stay at least 20,000 million steps ahead, my boss the T-rex, my partner the T-rex, my mom the T-rex, my dad the T-rex, all these T-rex, they will not see me. They will only see the perfection in front of them and I get to live another day.

Alea: So how does one step outside of that and find themselves in a position of power? And not in a place where they're trying to be hidden?

Victoria: Slowly. Very, very slowly, which has been a challenge in that I work with so many New Yorkers who are like, "Okay listen, can we get this

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done for Tuesday? I'm looking at Tuesday, I'm dropping the codependency, Tuesday afternoon for the perfectionism. People pleasing, we can wait until Tuesday evening. Yes, it's Monday morning, can we get going?" Any freaking time. Let me know.

Alea: Love it. For myself, I can speak to for a long time having that particular type of complex and then something happening around my 30s, having a partner who was a T-rex, having a father who was a T-rex, having those kinds of situations.

At some point in my 30s, 31 or something, I was like, you know what, I don't give a fuck. Something kind of twisting. And yes, it was still slowly. There was still a two-year marker where I can start to see where I was like, I'm going to try this, I'm going to say something back. Fight for myself.

But it did take some time for me to finally claim that power back and not be so afraid of someone's, what I would call backlash, at the time. What I would call now their own shit, their own problems or whatever. And I love that you said you give it back. You have the orb around yourself. Because I always say return to sender. That's my empath mantra. Return to sender. That's not mine. Wrong package. You have the wrong address.

And getting to a place of forgiveness for myself because you're right, that idea of perfectionism is a way in which we try to survive, to stay safe. If we can just stay a few steps ahead, we won't be subject to the cataclysmic downpour of the teeth.

Victoria: Right. I would even say for my framework, there's nothing to forgive. Because little you literally didn't do shit wrong. Little you was 127 million percent on point. Little you made the exact right choice for your own

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survival. There is nothing to forgive. There is something to celebrate. Get out the balloons and the streamers. There's something to celebrate.

Alea: I love that.

Victoria: You develop perfectionist thinking to survive a goddamn T-rex. Yay.

Alea: So how is that fucking up our life in our adulthood?

Victoria: Holy shit, every possible way.

Alea: Let's get into that.

Victoria: Let's do it. So perfectionist thinking can keep us believing that there is something outside of us, there's some mile marker to meet that will make us lovable, whole, perfect. And therefore, it keeps this veil over our eyes, it keeps us from seeing that we are already perfect. You were born perfect, so was I.

Everyone listening was born perfect and whole and amazing. And our socialization, systems of oppression, our culture, our families, et cetera, led us to believe that we were something other than perfect and perfect was something we had to work towards.

But from the energy of believing it, believing that you are already perfect and fucking amazing, you get to show up in your wholeness, dropping the story that there's anything to strive for. Because striving has that yucky, icky, graspy, got-to-get-it kind of energy.

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Versus knowing that you have so much to give, that you have so much bright light, and that you get to show up and shine it. A note on somatics, I'm watching my body on the video, which I know listeners you can't see, but I'll share with you, when I'm talking about that feeling of being less than, having to prove it, I watched my own shoulders collapse.

My posture collapses, my head tilts down, which is smart survival, protecting that vagus nerve. The second I brought in that energy and started talking about believing in my worth and my value and my wholeness, and that I get to give - I opened up. I felt my chest, my pecs, my shoulders just - my posture opened.

From that belief that I have nothing to prove. I have nothing to prove to anyone. Now, the pushback is but goals, Vic, don't you have goals? Don't you want to get shit done? You know I do. And I want to do it from the place of self-love and love for you and love for the collective, love for the world. Not from the place of trying to prove myself.

Alea: That's fucking powerful, Vic.

Victoria: I'm so fucking glad you fucking think so.

Alea: This is - I don't think I've heard anybody kind of put it that way before, which is always pleasing to me because I'm always looking for new angles to slice something up. Let's get into this because you talk a lot about feminist ideals and how patriarchal society and all that good stuff is how it affects this perfectionistic ideals.

So kind of give to me what your philosophy on that is because there are some people who are like, kill the patriarchy or whatever, and then there

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are other people who kind of come from the perspective of like, it's not men's fault and it's not this and it's not that. Obviously, we're talking more from a spiritual perspective of healing, but we do get these social ideas from being socialized in our society. So kind of talk to me about that and your philosophy on those.

Victoria: Yeah, absolutely. So my work is guided by key core feminist principles, which I believe can and should and must transcend the gender of any one person or group of people who use these practices in their lives. So I use these principles to guide how I move through the world and the approach I use with my clients and historically with my patients.

So to me, this means holding a deep belief that every human on this earth has inherent dignity and value. Core feminist principle. Deep belief that we are all capable of change and growth, no matter how we've been socialized, or how we've navigated our lives in the past.

So again, that forgiveness, that regret is optional, recognizing we are where we are, part and parcel of the systems we've been trained in. I deeply believe that we are not able to heal the world until we heal ourselves first. Not from some white supremacy teaches us that the individual is the only thing that matters and that Horatio Alger's, "Pull yourself up by the bootstraps" bullshit. I'm not ever here for it.

But I believe that we need to heal ourselves first because it is only from that place of putting ourselves first with love that we can show up for collective healing which is vital, with our fullest energy and love, kindness, care, and not from that grasping. Does that make sense?

Alea: Yeah.

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Victoria: Bien. I'm from Argentina and I did a thing I know not to do, which is I spoke to my mom before getting on this call with you and so when I spend the morning speaking in Spanish, it just...

Alea: I speak a little bit but I'm better at French.

Victoria: So another core feminist belief that I bring to my work is that while so many of us have been taught to believe that we are less powerful than we are, we are all worthy and capable of reclaiming our birthright to exist in this world as our full complex selves and to live our lives on our own terms, claiming full autonomy over our own bodies and our own choices, which we've often been socialized not to believe.

And certain bodies have been disenfranchised from that belief, having been told over and over and over again, "Your body makes you less than," which is the biggest crock of fucking bullshit I could ever imagine.

Alea: Yeah. This question came from Karen. Karen is my guide person that I talk to, which is funny because now I have to do this whole disclaimer. I'm not saying Karen because - not that.

Victoria: Not that kind of Karen.

Alea: Not that kind of Karen. The question that came to me was how do you feel in context that the soul transcends gender? How are we healing through and bringing through our energies without gender? I don't know if that makes sense. What's coming through me in the biggest chunk of download is like, this idea of healing without the societal attempts to say we're less than because of our bodies, or because of who we came in as, or because of how we identify, et cetera.

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Victoria: I think we can - codependency, perfectionism, these things teach us black and white thinking. Again, T-rex, not T-rex. It's a survival skill, it's brilliant, it's amazing until it isn't. And so our brains can get really stuck on saying it's this or it's that. But I teach that we can hold the duality as a way to bring in a different kind of wholeness.

So I believe that one can recognize that yeah sure, the soul, the spirit doesn't have gender or race or class. It transcends all those things, and I think it behooves us to be very thoughtful and careful not to use that framework of the genderless, raceless, unclassed soul, spirit, energy, body, as a way to ignore - not saying you are doing this.

But we know who is in the white spirituality world, that bypassing world. To not use that story as a way to disavow the realness of the bullshit that's going on on this planet in this moment, especially for humans in Black bodies, especially for immigrants, little children sitting in cages on the border covered in Covid. And so I think we get to hold them both and, in that process, not drop the thread of either. Does that make sense?

Alea: Yeah, because I was getting the overall - I don't even know if I communicated that question and what she was saying because it felt so palpable, like a big bubble that was sitting on me. But this idea that if you're spiritual, you can't be an activist. Or if you're spiritual you can't have an opinion, or if you're spiritual - the biggest one, you have to be perfect.

So there are a lot of people running around with torches and pitchforks that are coming after people and saying you said this and you said that, whatever, but more than anything, so many things being either bypassed or people who step out and say something who are "spiritual" like myself. Sometimes I get some guff about having a very strong opinion about certain things.

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And I'm like, I'm someone in a Black body. I identify as a cis-gendered female. But there are definitely things and oppressions that I've experienced for sure that affect my psychological, my societal, my spiritual being. So it's interesting to see the flex between the two. And so I thought it was very interesting to see how you kind of put that together and how perfectionism, codependency, all of those things kind of are ingratiated into these concepts very much so.

Victoria: Very much.

Alea: Make sense?

Victoria: Yeah, absolutely. And I think that if someone is to be a spiritual leader, they must address the suffering of the human form in this lifetime. Why are you talking about the chakras? Why are you talking about energy being - what are you talking about if you're not recognizing that different bodies are differently oppressed in this physical lifetime and moment? I don't know, I think the talk of bending time and the 5D...

Alea: Go there.

Victoria: Oh shit. Well no, I guess I just mean we mustn't lose sight of what is happening to the humans that we are talking about when we are talk about going to an astro plane because I'll go on a journey. I love a goddamn journey. I have a lot of gratitude for the abuela, I have a lot of gratitude for the little people. I have a lot of gratitude for a lot of access to journeying. And we cannot forget this human plane and that we're talking about actual fucking humans.

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Alea: Now, we started at the beginning of the interview of talking about things that are very accessible. Now, I know that you are also super weird like me. And so I want to get into all the weird shit that we could talk about. Right now, like, what's something that - not even right now. You talked about the little people and the abuelas and stuff like that. What are some of your belief systems that you work with that are kind of far out there?

Victoria: I think that's so - it so depends on your lens. Because when I was a primary care provider, telling my patients to take probiotics, the people in my office were like, wait what? And I was like, no, she has IBS, she needs fermented foods. And they were like, que?

So it's so - what's the most out there thing? My brain just went right to everything that's happening in the white dominant healing space of this rugged individualism. And so I think yeah, I don't know that that's so out there but...

Alea: Let's go there. Because people know, we leave these interviews more intuitively. So go with that.

Victoria: Okay. We need each other. We are pack animals. Our nervous systems need one another. Coregulating our nervous systems with another living human, with another mammal, or with a tree, or with the concept of Mother Earth, or with your resources, your internal resources, so like resourcing your abuela.

A client of mine resources Dr. Maya Angelou when she feels down. Connecting in with the importance of lifting all of us up has to be primary in our work. This is tracking - am I making sense? My brain is going to so many places.

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Alea: For people who are listening who don't understand what she means by resourcing, we mean accessing people who have passed away, who may be in the beyond, who could be spirit guides, could be angels, things like that. As you just heard, I spoke to Karen. She's a really cool ancient name that begins with a K, it's just hard to say so I abbreviate it.

And being able to access this kind of we are all one. I talk about a text a lot, The Law of One, where it talks about our collective consciousness and how we're all blended together and that the whole point of this whole damn Earth school is for us to understand that we are not individual, that we are all collective spirit kind of acting together, trying to essentially raise our consciousness in a way that we're able to progress in the expanded soul, if you will.

And that this rugged individualism that we do have, this capitalistic, individualistic, it's for me, not for you kind of thing will be the downfall of every empire, the downfall of every society. Atlantis, Rome, all of our largest empires to come in, kill, destroy, take over, colonialism, all of it.

And so we're not living - and that does seem like an out there idea for a lot of people. That we would - I was reading some article or something on Instagram where there was indigenous people and they were talking about how Westerners or Western life, corporatism, things like that, are destroying the Earth.

And the woman had said you're not used to indigenous people calling you ignorant. And I loved this line because there was a much larger article where she spoke about how the oneness, our connection to Mother Earth, our connection to the animals, our connection to nature and our connection to each other, and how important it was for our own survival.

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And kind of seeing the dichotomy of what's happening in America right now especially. And there's a part of me - I'm Cherokee Native American as well and so yesterday was - while we're recording this was Columbus Day/indigenous people's day.

And I had a discussion with my boyfriend about it because I posted a meme that said hey, fuck Christopher Columbus and had the middle fingers up and I just thought it was funny so I reposted it. And we had this long discussion about identity politics. And he was like, sometimes that can be dangerous because when we get into identity politics, it can essentially negate the oneness that we're trying to achieve, as far as as a people.

And I was like, I get what you're saying but when a particular group of people have been oppressed, fuck that dude. I couldn't mesh the two as the sum of all lineages that I've experienced. Like nah. So we had a very interesting discussion about that.

And even in that, me thinking okay - because I love the point that he brought to me because I was still thinking, okay, yeah, what does that look like to be in oneness when you have been wronged, when you have had societies of oppression and things like that. Before I just keep rambling, what do you think about that?

Victoria: First off, I love your rambles. Subscribe, rated, and reviewed your ramble. So that was A, number one. B, number two, no, I think you're completely right on. I think there is such a difference between we're all one or one human race and me first in that that's where it begins and ends. And what I'm hearing you say which is no...

Alea: Nah.

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Victoria: I just translated it. No, we have to lift up. Communities that have been oppressed since 1492 was it? Somewhere around there. And I think that is a vital part of reclaiming that collective spirit and re-energizing that collective spirit. To say there is unity here.

I picture spirals. So I picture it spiraling outward. And so for myself, it wasn't until I was able to do the healing work on my own over-reliance on attempting to control other people and their thoughts and their feelings and their emotional state and their needs that I was able to get into oneness with myself versus a fight within me.

And from there I was able to be of service for my wholeness. And so I even think of like, in my early 20s and service trips I went on where I thought I knew shit and where I wasn't humble. And I showed up in indigenous communities without humility. Oops.

And to then fast forward to being at Standing Rock or going to the Navajo nations to be of service through herbal medicine and just the difference it made to show up and experience those settings and those communities from my own watcher versus that rugged individual that needed to insert myself. Is this tracking here? Bien.

I think it is vital and important for communities to come together to find that collective power and a collective shared experience. Not just of oppression but of that - the joy that is inherent in whatever that identity is.

Alea: Right. Because it's really difficult for all of us to be one when we haven't essentially been able to not just acclimate because we don't want people to just acclimate, but to heal what's happened to people that we have had that type of trauma happen to. And when we talk about survival,

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let's bring it all back here to the way we would behave as children and the T-rexes that we have in our life and we think about the people - to me, this is such a spiritual topic and people are going to say it's political.

Victoria: What's the difference?

Alea: Right. We are still spiritual beings in the midst of all of this and it's like, don't get political. It's like, this is highly spiritual for our expansion. If we are not able to integrate this, we cannot expand. We can't.

Victoria: Agreed.

Alea: So without being able to let and allow - how can we all be one when we don't all have the same experience. And being in certain bodies doesn't allow you the same experience to progress. Talking about going into yoga studios and sound baths and all kinds of stuff and never seeing anyone who looks like me.

What's accessible to some people is not accessible to others. And to see how we're not able to make those connections together, you want to talk about T-rexes, I've got perfectionism out the ass on other levels - I'm just talking about myself, but from my perspective, I can only speak as myself. But there are other levels - there are levels to this shit. There are more T-rexes that I encounter that I notice some of my other friends do not.

Victoria: My brain just went to Kamala and at the debate where God, it was like, it was so many layers of feelings to watch her embody the character of not the angry Black woman. Because that trope is so ready and available to be thrown in her face. Her tone was off, why did she have to be angry?

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Alea: Look at all those facial expressions.

Victoria: Oh my God, why did she have a face with muscles in it? So Pence got to sit there and tell actual lies and she got to calmly say I'm speaking, I'm speaking. So talk about the government is your T-rex. Racism is the T-rex. And I say got to - I mean, to get her message across, it is almost - she has to embody this story of being the acceptable Black woman. Not the angry Black woman. And that's some bullshit right there. That is some bullshit right there.

And if I may to your previous point of like, we're spiritual, don't get political. If that thought ever crosses your mind, I want to invite you dear listener to check your privilege. With all the love in my heart. If you believe for a millisecond that the personal is not the political, then you are sitting on a mountaintop of privilege.

And there's no guilt, there's no shame needed if you are born into a white, cis, het, moneyed, educated family. Bueno. There you are. Stop telling others how to live their lives in bodies that have been systemically traumatized and oppressed.

Alea: And it's so interesting because it does veer so much into how we behave in the way that we're able to heal, or the ways in which we hold ourselves in societies, the way in which we're able to love or not love, the way in which we're able to provide or not provide.

And how we're able to essentially see the world. And so I love the "out there" is essentially the thing that I think people are most afraid to hear right now. Large audiences of people who are afraid to hear right now. I'm not actually sure when this episode is going to run so I don't know if this will be

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before or after the election once we write out the schedule. This is how the podcast works, guys.

But to know that even just right now in this current climate that wherever we're at, we're all still - whatever body you're in. Most of us listening to this show, I'll say that, are trying to heal in some facet. We're trying to discover more about what it is that we're doing on this Earth, why we're here, and what we're here to do.

And if you are someone who is able to have privilege in some form or another, whether or not that triggers you, to just pray. Pray with us for a second that you have awareness brought to you right now. Awareness brought to you in such a way, in such a strong way that spiritually will be able to connect on all fronts that we would all be able to have the same experience at some point.

I know that sounds impossible, but I think that's the goal. That we can all live freely and all live in a place where we're not traumatized or oppressed by others. And that is a very spiritual thing. If we're all going to come to the concept that we're all one, we can't bypass the fact that right now, some people get to just think about oneness and others don't have access to it. And so that may be radical to some people, but to me, it's incredible spiritual. Incredibly. And yeah, I'm done preaching.

Victoria: I love it when you preach. And I think there's a piece about authenticity. It's talked about so much in the spiritual world, like dear authentic self, your magnetic authentic city. And I'm totally into it. And just again, the way people in bodies that have been oppressed and marginalized have to step out of their authenticity to survive white spaces. The way queer folks, trans folks, undocumented folks, et cetera.

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Alea: That was interesting. The other day, I had said - it reminds me how many times I've done this, how when I'm getting ready to present or have a class to teach or I'm going into shoot a wedding somewhere fancy in certain space where I will straighten my hair to be more accepted.

Because I noticed that I'm treated better if I look more "acclimated." And how that doesn't allow me to show up as my authentic self. Even a couple days ago, you guys can't see this but my hair my curly right now. And if it's not super defined and silky looking, when it does look like what my sister calls bonchy, when it's in its fro state without all the definition or whatever, how I don't feel pretty. Because that's socialized. You're not pretty if your hair...

Victoria: Taught.

Alea: So many of my friends as compliments will say, "Oh, you look so pretty with your hair straight." And that being like - it's not their intention to say that but to survive in these spaces, to show up in these spaces, I don't feel like I can be my authentic self. I can't be my actual self because I'm not as accepted.

That's just a small example. We have so many more. We don't have time for all that. But it is something that does affect my spirit. Does affect how I show up. It does affect how I accept myself. It does affect my practices. It is something that widely affects the way that I'm able to see the world.

Now, I know I'm talking a lot about me because I can only speak for myself. I can't speak for everybody else. But in that space, that we're talking about I think is super important because the inclusion of others - I'm just now learning how to do the pronoun thing right.

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We just aired an episode about non-binary worldview. And that is not a world I live in. But I'm super curious about it because I'm like, how can I exist in this space where I'm not excluding other people? I'm not perfect. But wanting to show up perfect and wanting to be able to anticipate someone else's needs and not have the misintentions of excluding someone on accident because I'm ignorant was something that I was like, I need to know, I want to know, okay, teach me more about this, how we live in a cis-gendered sexism society and how even our psyche is gendered.

And so if that's important to me because I want to be inclusive, then you guys can do that too. Very easily you guys can do that too. Can you speak on that?

Victoria: To which part, my love?

Alea: Anything that you feel led.

Victoria: Well, I love what you just modeled for us, which was having the love for the collective and the love for self to raise your own awareness about a place where you wanted to be educated, to learn more, to align intention with impact.

Because intention is great, fine, impact matters as you said. And so you recognized as a cis woman that you need to learn about this. And so the process I teach is awareness, acceptance, action. So you had that awareness. I'm imagining from what I know of you, you stepped into an acceptance.

Okay, there's a deficit in my knowledge here due to my socialization and this heteronormative culture in which I was raised and created. Bien.

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Action; let me bring a guest on, let me read a book, let me learn about this and become one more person modeling the importance of attending to the collective.

The importance of taking that extra step and the extra time, which you took to say I want to show up as a vessel of love and when I mispronoun someone, I hurt them. It is not kind, it is not loving, it is not how I as a spiritual animal want to show up. And so you did that work and you're modeling that, and I think that's absolutely beautiful.

Alea: And still working on it.

Victoria: It's lifelong.

Alea: But I think that may be why and just to bring this back to perfectionism, why so difficult for us to accept when we don't know something. When it's difficult to feel ignorant, when it's difficult to feel like we made a mistake. That perfectionism and just being like, I'm just going to ignore that T-rex because I don't want to mess up. I'm not going to speak up about this because I don't want to mess up.

I had a lot of people come back after all the George Floyd stuff went down earlier this year. And people were being like, first, people attacking other people for not saying anything, but a lot of other people being just afraid that they were going to say the wrong thing. And that how perfectionism not only fucks up your life, but it fucks up others.

Victoria: I did an episode of my podcast, *Feminist Wellness*, about this specifically. I also did an IGTV about the nervous system and how it's incumbent on white and white passing folks like myself, white passing, to

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deal with that shit. To regulate our nervous systems and to get right with the fact that we are going to fuck up.

You're going to say some shit wrong and that's okay in service of learning how to do it right. And the key thing here, in my opinion, is to not center yourself as the person who is not of the oppressed group. So not to be, "I'm so sorry, I did it wrong."

Yes, have that moment. Have it with your journal. Have it in your own sacred space and bring the best of what you are learning and working on and doing to the collective. Do not burden Black folks, gender non-binary folks, trans folks, other oppressed communities with you learning to do the work. Come with your best work. Does that make sense? Learn better, do better.

And when you do fuck up, what is so beautiful is when you do not make it about you. I did a whole series about apologizing in part, thinking about this. My partner is gender non-binary trans and folks will often fuck up their pronouns. Like chronically, constantly.

And there's such an energetic difference and I watch it on their face when someone says, "Oh, she, I mean, oh, I'm so sorry, it's they/them, right? I use they/them? Or he? I'm so sorry, I don't know why I can't do this right. God, you think I would learn," and make it into this whole shame show that I get.

I have struggled for 41 years with my own perfectionism. I get it. And in that moment, you get to step into that higher version of yourself that doesn't need to center you. So I watch my partner's face when that shame show

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shows up and when someone says, “Sorry dude, they are going to the park with me. I fucked it up, sorry, they, my apologies.”

That is putting down that perfectionism to say it’s okay to be a human, to be new to a process, to be learning. And in that same moment, to drop that need to center yourself and to center the person who may be harmed to recognize the impact.

Alea: I think that’s incredibly important in the process of having to essentially become aware of how perfectionism produces shame.

Victoria: Yes.

Alea: And how shame - I did an episode about this a couple weeks ago where we say guilt is I made a mistake, shame is I made a mistake. And so perfectionism, when we are in the spirit of perfectionism, how shame exudes and how it then not only hurts us but does hurt others as well in the process because of the way in which we see the world as we have to be perfect to avoid being a mistake, which is just unrealistic.

Victoria: Yeah. It’s also not true. So if we come back to that belief that we are inherent goodness, that we are each born completely perfect and we’re just figuring it all out as we move through this life, there’s nothing to prove. You just get to learn, and to learn, to apologize, to learn.

I say that perfectionism is shame plus fear. I am an oopsie and I fear that you will know it. I fear that I will be shown it and then I will beat myself up wildly.

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Alea: And this is why essentially that's what stops a lot of us from continuing education, continuing to learn, because if we find ourselves in a space where we are ignorant or we've made a mistake or something we, one, have to admit it to ourselves to expand, but then two, maybe others would find out. It's better for me to stand my ground exactly where I'm at and put on that face in order to protect myself, put on that mask to protect myself in the midst of while I'm feeling like I'm a mistake. It's the duality of the mask and the shame.

Victoria: Yes.

Alea: Man, we can talk about this forever.

Victoria: And ever and ever and ever.

Alea: So I'm going to ask you a few more questions on Patreon, we're going to get a little bit deeper. But before we go, what would your lasting thought be for our collective and something that they really need to hear?

Victoria: You are the medicine you've been looking for. You are your most powerful healer, the guru is within you, the teacher is within you. And we each get the opportunity in this lifetime to tap into that deep internal well of healing and to spiral it out to learn from and give to the collective. That oneness. To lift us all up.

Alea: Beautiful.

Victoria: Thank you.

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Alea: Thank you so much for being on the show. Can you tell people where to find you?

Victoria: Oh yes. On the Instagram @victoriaalbinawellness. My podcast is called Feminist Wellness, it's on literally all of the things, so check that out. And my website is victoriaalbina.com. I have a set of free meditations that you can get for free to your email inbox because I love you and you matter. So head on over to my website, it's right literally at the top of the homepage. You put your name and email in and poof, they arrive.

Alea: Amazing. Well, thank you so much for being on the show. Guys, I feel like we got through so much today and so much to think about. Some things may have triggered you and we're not sorry. Triggers are good, they're good to show us where our awareness is at and where we need further healing.

So I hope you did get a lot out of this as I did. Please share this episode with someone you love and make sure to find us in the next one. We'll see you later. Bye.

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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.