

## Ep #142: Relationship Green Flags



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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## Ep #142: Relationship Green Flags

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. We talk so much here at *Feminist Wellness* about the things that are challenging for us in relationships from our codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thought habits.

And from the ways our socialization and conditioning and the patriarchy and white settler colonialism keep us in old patterns of relating. The ways we self-abandon to try to make connection work because a part of us doesn't feel safe when we're alone, or when we aren't getting the external validation we hope a relationship will bring.

And while I think it's so important to talk about the painful stuff because we often can't even see our habitual thoughts, feels, and behaviors because they're all we know, it's also so vital to me to highlight the good.

I came to this work of self-development and growth from a place of thinking I was broken, that I needed fixing. And what I've come to know for sure is that I'm not now nor have I ever been broken or in need of fixing. I just had a set of habits in relationships, be they romantic, friendship, family, work, habits that served me once upon a time to help me and my inner children feel safer.

And now that I can regulate my nervous system and can support my inner children through thought work and somatic practices, those old habits of seeing and promptly ignoring the red flags in a relationship, well, they just don't feel the same.

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And I can see how those old habits, they don't serve me. Because I know how to love up on me now, to celebrate me, to honor me, to validate me for me within my mind and my body. And I know and believe that I'm not broken and that I don't need to settle for anything less than relationships full of beautiful, bright green flags.

And neither do you because there's nothing broken about you, my darling carinho. And when the internal story within us is that we need to do this healing work to right the wrong that is us, we miss out on the main reason for doing this work. To live a life of greater pleasure and joy, more fulfillment, more authenticity, integrity, and ease.

So this week, I'll be focusing on the positive, on relationship green flags. Some signs that a relationship may be a healthy and interdependent one based on mutuality and reciprocity while making some notes about our common relationship red flag thoughts, while keeping it positive, promise.

Because I'd posit that the more we focus our minds and hearts on seeing the good and believing the good is out there and the more we can cultivate a relationship to ourselves to be a loving one, the more we can connect with other humans who are available for what we want to grow and build in the world.

Mutually beneficial relationships built on respect and kindness above all. I'm going to be citing some examples from my own dating life and those of my clients who I recently polled on this topic. And of course this list isn't all inclusive, so here's where I'd love to hear from you.

Drop me an email to [podcast@victoriaalbina.com](mailto:podcast@victoriaalbina.com) and let me know what your relationship green flags are. And I will include those in a future show. How fun is that? And as you listen in to these green flags, I want to invite you to see what resonates for you, mind, body, and spirit, and to not just

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ask yourself if your dates or your friends are bringing these energies to your connection, I'll invite you to see if you are showing up with the energies you want from others in a relationship. And to ask yourself why or why not.

A spiritual teacher of mine once told me to write down everything I wanted in a partner. And then told me to do the work to become those things that I was seeking externally. So listen in as I go through these green flags for the things that you're looking for someone else to bring to your life so you can become those things for yourself.

And that reminds me of that Gandhi quote, "We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change around him. This is the divine mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and a source of our happiness. We need not wait to see what others do."

So beautiful. And if you're in a relationship or if you're not in a relationship and you're not dating and you're applying the following to friendships and you're like, well, I love all these green flags and my relationship has few or none of these, then I'll invite you to get curious about whether your current relationships serve you if they don't feature what you consider to be green flags for you.

I know now why I stayed in painful relationships, why I got out, and why I have the relationship values I have now. And this is a great opportunity for you to get real about your romantic, friend, and other relationships and to ask if you're getting and giving what you want and need, and if you're being your own best friend in your life and in all of your relationships.

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So let's dive in. Top of the heap for me is kindness, which encompasses so many other beautiful green flags. I value kindness deeply. And I'm not super into someone just being nice. Operating from conditioned responses, choosing politeness over honesty. That's not a turn on for me.

Meanwhile, being kind, profoundly kind to me, to strangers, to servers, and other workers is key. It's not just actions. It's a politic that I hold dear. I think it's fair to assume that how someone treats people in the world is an indicator of how they may treat you in relationship.

Folded into being truly kind for me is being honest, direct with a gentleness, thoughtful, thinking about themselves and their needs, and also those of the other beings in their world. And if you want to hear more about the difference between being kind and being nice, I'll invite you to listen to episode 132.

When someone radiates true kindness, and I feel like all the work I've been doing over these years has really helped me get my antenna up about that, my body relaxes and my mind does too. This includes the baseline green flags of being respectful and thoughtful, not raising their voice, lifting me and others up, versus putting folks down, being real about challenging feelings without disparaging others, not talking smack about their exes while also not glamorizing past relationships or holding them up as perfect.

Being able to own their own part in what went wrong in those relationships, and evidencing how they've grown since, versus just writing their exes off as being bonkers, which is red flag city, USA.

Next is having chemistry, a spark, can laugh and enjoy yourselves. It's not a struggle to get through a conversation, or to find what to connect around. That energetic spark is what I'm talking about. Not just sexual chemistry here because remember, we can apply these green flags to our

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friendships, our work partnerships that we get to choose, et cetera, et cetera.

All of our relationships and even in romantic relationships, feeling that energetic spark of connection is a sign from my intuition to proceed. That I feel safe enough in my nervous system to be myself. My authentic self, real and honest, open and vulnerable, to speak up and to say my truth, even if they may not like it.

Recognizing, of course, that how much we feel safe to open up has a lot to do with us and our own growth, and how comfortable we are being open in general. And there's an interplay there with the energetics of the connection. It's co-created for sure.

And this is particularly important for folks who may not have felt that romantic connection before because all of this applies to platonic friendships too, so you can source your understanding of what that spark feels like from meeting someone, a friend, and being like, oh this feels nice.

Because you may not know what it feels like to be open and comfortable with a date, you may have experienced that with a best friend. Those folks that you get that immediate sense of ease with, who you can really show your weird to.

This is when we check in with our gut, with our inner children, and we ask ourselves, am I able to show up as my authentic self with this person to the best of my current ability or do I feel that urge to show up in ways that are less than truthful, to not rock the boat here, to people please, in the hopes of making them like me?

Do I feel that pull of perfectionism, people pleasing, or can I just be myself as much as I'm currently able to at this point in my growth and

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development? Likewise, it's a green flag when a date or a new friend can show me their real, authentic, weird self, can share about their past, their present, and their hopes for the future without dumping or oversharing, which is a really common stand-in for true intimacy.

And it goes like, "Well, I told you all my traumas, we must be so close now," which is not how real intimacy works. So that's less than a green flag. And the green flag is when someone can show up authentically in a balanced way, and when they can read the room and can check in, which can sound like, "Hey, I want to share some stories from my childhood, do you have room for that right now?" Or "Let me know when you want to hear about x, y, z from my life, I'm excited to share with you, and I'm excited to hear about you."

When someone is ready, willing, and able to show up with and from their full open heart, with empathy and open, direct communication, that is a vital green flag for me. And when they want to know about me in equal measure with how much they want to share and be heard, that's a glorious thing.

When they ask curious questions and want to know me, my intentions, my thoughts, hey, why did you say that thing? What's going on for you? And they want me to know them. Green flags all over the place.

Next is when you want the same thing from a relationship. This is important from jump because fantasy thinking is such a common habit for us from our codependent habits.

We have this sneaky belief that we can change people if we just love them hard enough, if we badger them enough to change, and it's just not based in reality. And it's such a quick way to get hurt.

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So if you're looking for marriage and kids, a serious partnership, pause before you start daydreaming about swiping right on someone who clearly says, "Just looking for casual fun," and vice versa.

Green flag is when they clearly state what they want and act in a way that supports that statement and you do the same. And it's important to say it's okay if you connect with someone and you just want casual fun and that evolves over time as long as there's clear communication. But that evolution feels so different than someone saying they want one thing and acting in a way totally counter to that.

Next is that you have some overlap in your interests and are aligned in your values. So I'm not looking for every date, every friend, everyone I hang out with to have a one for one overlap with my interests. But rather, to care about the things that matter deeply to me, my core values, and to have alignment in those values and some overlap in our interests.

Values like honesty and social justice, dedication to personal development and growth, interests in meditation, astrology, animals. I really love cute little baby animals. Valuing nature, valuing a connection with spirit, creator, the universe, unicorns in the sky, whatever you call it. Valuing creativity, art, music, poetry.

And our interest doesn't have to be the same, meaning it doesn't have to be the same music or art or poetry, but valuing creative expression. So for example, if someone doesn't value honesty, that's not going to be - a red flag for me. That's not going to work out.

And if someone is mostly interested in, I don't know, sports ball or watching reality TV, housewives scream at each other, if they prefer fast food over the slow food I prefer, which is also a value for me, then those are things to make note of really early on because it may not be the best fit.



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If they don't have an interest in mediation or learning about themselves, evolving, growing, that's not a green flag for me. It's not a red flag per se, but it's a sign of less than optimal compatibility.

And what's really important is that I'm not out here to change who I am or what I want in a relationship, what I want for my life, and what I'm into to make someone fit into my life. And likewise, I don't want to be in a relationship with someone who wants to change their core interests or values so I will be into a false version of them. Not interested.

And green flag-y as it is to have similar or overlapping interests, it's a beautiful green flag when they have interests and skills and knowledge that's different from yours and wants to share that with you because it provides a space for you both to engage with what matters to you on your own.

And a green flag for me is not just being in the teacher or the learner role in a relationship all the time but having a healthy give and take that supports mutual growth. And when that other person is super into you both growing and supporting you both becoming your favorite versions of yourself, that is a wonderful green flag in my eyes that is so important to me.

The concept that you grow through your work and I grow through mine and that we then come together and that makes us the third party in any relationship, the relationship itself stronger. That is a really important thing in my world, rather than that old urge to merge that I used to think was - I didn't really think about it. I just did it.

Which looks like trying to make the growth always be the growth together, versus growth interdependently and coming together to share with one another. And key to learning and growing independently, interdependently, and together comes open-mindedness.

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So your new friend, your new date may not know about all the things you're passionate about. They may not have heard of your super niche-y hobby. But it's a green flag for me when they're open to learning about it, when they don't disparage your interests or passions, when they honor them and are open to learning more.

Because no two humans will be on 110% into the same things all the time, and that would just be weird and frankly, pretty boring. I think it's particularly lovely and for sure a green flag when a date or a new friend cares about what you care about because it's what you care about.

And getting to know you and what matters to you matters to them because you matter to them. The truth of who you are matters to them. You can file this one under they show up to meet you with more than words, taking action towards creating and cultivating deep connection.

For example, my Argentine culture, my language, a.k.a Spanish, Argentine history, Argentine politics, poetry, music, these things are really important to me. Our customs, they matter. And it's so wonderful that my new date took note of that and has been listening to Argentine music, reading about Argentine history, and has been practicing their Spanish.

While also teaching me about their culture, their traditions, and has invited me to learn their language, Tsalagi, with them. Because their language and culture matters to them. And so it's this beautiful place of mutuality and reciprocity.

And that brings up the various ways someone can show you, not just tell you that you hold similar values, that you move through the world in ways that are simpatico, that foster interdependence and reciprocity in daily life because a life with someone is made up not of the shiny bright things alone

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but of the quotidian bullshit that makes up a life together. Those daily things that really are our worlds.

And a dedication to reciprocity in the quotidian everyday life is so key for me. For example, this can look like an attitude of, well, if you cook, I will clean. A desire to meet me domestically. And if someone was like, I don't clean, that's not something I'm available to do, then these days, I'm just not interested in that relationship.

While someone taking the initiative to clean and this is just an example, but this is a really big green flag for me that demonstrates that energy of reciprocity. I was socialized as many humans socialized as women are, though not all of course because class and family blueprint always complicates things, but many humans socialized as women were actively trained as I was to take on an undue burden of domestic labor.

To plan meals, and then grocery shop, and then cook, and then clean up afterwards, while also doing laundry and cleaning the house and remembering if we have enough Dr. Bronner's and paper towels, et cetera, and et cetera.

And as a feminist and someone stepping out of my codependent habits of doing all of the things for all of the people, I am not out here to be in a romantic relationship again with someone who isn't game to do their fair share of that domestic labor and who thinks that that is okay.

Because it's not for me. I'm not into it. I'm out here for the big green flag of deep reciprocity and mutuality, thank you very much. And that brings me to the adjacent green flag of willingness to do emotional labor. Another task that tends to fall on humans socialized as girls and women, on the shoulders of fems.

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Most often, particularly within the context of a cis hetero relationship, a cis dude and a cis woman, or a fem and a masculine animal, it often falls on the fem or the woman to be the one in therapy and coaching, to be the one reading the self-help books and listening to fabulous podcasts like this one, being the one to initiate and navigate the challenging conversations, the one asking the curious questions.

And so when someone is doing their emotional work, is filling their own cup, and is here for doing their share of the emotional labor, that is just so damn sexy to me. And this ties back to values.

If your value is to grow and learn more about yourself, then doing that work for yourself and not engaging with someone unless they're doing that work for themselves is a key part of that life value.

To that end, when someone can be alone with themselves, if able to validate themselves for themselves, versus chronically seeking external validation, that too is a beautiful red flag and can be a sign of secure attachment, which allows us to be present with ourselves without grasping for others to fill the self-void in our lives.

In support of that is when someone has healthy, vibrant friendships and friend-family to lean on just as much as they are comfortable being alone. Because it is vital to process our feelings on our own and then as we talk about so often here, to coregulate with the friends, our family, and to process with them versus asking their date to be their primary processing center, which isn't always the most loving choice.

It's also a green flag when in this same vein, their opinion matters to you, but not more than your own does. And your opinion matters to them, but not more than their own does. When there's mutuality there too.

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And remember that all of this applies in friendships as well, especially for folks with our codependent and people-pleasing habits, I think it can be easy to let our opinions get lost with friends as well as lovers, particularly if you have friends with strong personalities and voices.

So run this check there too. It is super hot to me when a date takes care of themselves. When they're a fully grown adult who manages their mind, their life, their exercise, their nutrition, their self-care, their finances, keeps their shoes shined.

And doesn't expect their partner to do all that for them, when they don't expect their partner to be in a parent role. And part of that is practicing regular self-care, whatever that means to them.

And it can be super fun and enriching when those categories of self-care overlap, and when you can give each other space to do your self-care on your own. For example, I love working out with a date or a partner. It's fun and motivating and super sexy to me, and my new date and I regularly go on trail walks and runs, do workout classes and yoga together over Zoom if we're not in the same space, and that is so fun.

And we're both able to say I'm going to go on a run on my own today, enjoy your workout if you choose to do one. We support each other in our self-care, trust each other to take of our own selves how we see fit, and each take care of ourselves for ourselves.

Sure, it's fun to go on a run in the woods together, but we don't need the other one in order to take care of ourselves. And the offer to do so, to exercise together, to engage in movement together is just that. It is an offer, said with offering energy. Not obligation.

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So it sounds like, “Run with me if you want to. If not, I’ll be back in an hour.” Which is a beautiful segue into the green flag of respecting and honoring your boundaries and their own.

I only want to be in relationship with folks who recognize the importance of limits, boundaries, and how important it is to state those clearly. And folks who see that clearly stated boundaries are self-care and community care, because clearly stated boundaries are resentment prevention.

And while having a date or a friend honor my stated boundaries is vital, we all make mistakes. And apologizing for stepping over a boundary is a green flag. Owning their mistake and speaking to how it made me feel is a green flag. Making a bid for reconnection and a sincere apology, green flag. And changed behavior is the biggest green flag.

It’s important to me to give people the grace, to understand that of course we all mess up here and there and I’m no longer available to repeat my historical patterns of writing off and putting up with shitty behavior. I’m not here to sweep things under the rug anymore.

And a middle ground, a place between writing it all off, letting it all go, and holding on so tight, not letting anyone be a human, a middle ground is possible when you’re aware, grounded, and present in yourself and your relationships.

And when we are grounded, we don’t write lousy behavior off, we don’t dream of changing the person, of fixing them. We remember people don’t change if they don’t want to change. No matter how much you want to believe that you’ll be the one to shift a lifetime of thought habits for them, you’re unlikely to be, my darling.

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People will be who and how they want to be, regardless of what you want for them. And so for me, the key to holding that middle ground is not allowing myself to date or to be in a friendship from a place of fantasy and dreams of what could be when this person changed, but rather to stay super present to what is. Intentional living 101, right?

And I'll invite you to listen to episode 84 for more on that. And that brings me to self-responsibility and the capacity to name and own their mess ups, to properly apologize versus doing one of those I'm sorry you felt that way halfway apologies we talked about way back in episode 72 and 75.

This is deeply important to me as I said at the top of the show because I lived for so long with the story that I was broken, inherently F'ed up, always messing something up, and I stayed in an emotionally abusive relationship for so many years where that person capitalized on that and used that worry of mine, that narrative that I was broken as a means to control me, to convince me as often as they could that I was indeed the only person who ever did anything wrong in a relationship because I was the one and only problem.

That person did not take self-responsibility and did not own their mistakes or change their behavior. And in my dating life, my friendships, my business relationships, on and on, I am no longer available for folks who can't say I messed up, for folks who cannot apologize.

And I'm not here to be made the problem when I'm not. I'm here for self-responsibility, to own it when I mess up, and to be in relationship, all kinds of relationship with people who are equally dedicated to self-awareness and owning what's real versus blaming, shaming, and guilt.

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Next green flag is when our friends like our person. My friends did not like the person I was just talking about and my BFF TI told me directly that she did not like how I was around them. And I was not in a place to hear her.

So a green flag for me now is that my most beloved and trusted confidants get a good gut feeling about someone I'm dating. And so I actively seek out their opinion because they matter to me. Not more than my own do, but the opinions of the people I truly trust truly matter, especially early on in dating when I'm awash in the chemicals of early connection, all that magical and vision-clouding feel-good oxytocin and dopamine, and frankly, it's when we can't see the trees for the proverbial forest.

Or is it the other way around? We can't see the forest for the trees. Sometimes I'm not good at American idioms. My English is pretty decent but the idioms, they don't click. But anyway, regardless, when my people like a new person in my life, that's a green flag for me. And the inverse is true as well.

Finally, though honestly I could go on for hours about this, but I'll pause for this week. So finally, this is so important. I want to invite you to allow your own intuition to be the biggest green or red flag ever.

Pay attention to how you feel in your body around the people you're dating and making friend connections with and make note of internal calm versus internal anxiety. Remembering that intuition is that calm, quiet, loving voice within. Not the frantic, frenetic voice of anxiety or worry, but that deeply chill voice that says go with this, my beauty, or you know, I'm just not into them for you.

The more attuned you are to your own attachment style, your habitual thoughts, you can put the intuitive signals from your body into context. And so the more you can understand and honor what your body is telling you



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about a possible connection so you can take honest stock of the green flags and the red and can make decisions that truly honor you, your life, your desires, your big and loving open heart.

And I'll remind you, my beauties, as we close out, to make a list of the things you see as green flags. See if they are present in your relationships. Why or why not? Does that work for you or not?

I'll invite you to see the things that you most want in a partner, in a friend, in all kinds of relationships, and to ask yourself, how can I live into this for me? How can I be this? How can I be a person who respects me, who honors me, who really takes stock of my boundaries, my limits, and believes they're really important? How can I be this for me?

And then look outside of yourself. Try it on. It's pretty magical. And if you've been listening and you're like, "This all feels too good to be true," I want to assure you that it is not. After so many years of really painful relationships where I was not showing up for myself and I was getting met with more red flags than green, I want to tell you it is really possible to be in relationships that feel loving and kind and caring and to show up for yourself in these ways too.

If you want this for you, I want to remind you that it all starts from within. And when we do our work and do the activities we enjoy on our own, when we learn to cultivate love for ourselves, then the energy around us is different and we don't attract what we did when we were hurting.

Learn how to step into ever greater self-love, learn how to get more somatically connected with your own perfect, beautiful body, your intuition, your spirit in Anchored, my six-month program where we explore these themes and more.

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We explore the ways we historically show up in relationship from our attachments, from our childhood patterns, from our own codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thought habits. Head on over to [victoriaalbina.com/anchored](https://victoriaalbina.com/anchored) to learn more about the program and to get on the waitlist for the next cohort starting in February of 2022, which is right around the corner after all.

Alright my beauties, so excited to share Anchored with you all. It's such a delight. It's a green flag for me. Alright my beauties, let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart if that feels loving, closing your beautiful eyes if that feels safe and if you are not driving.

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

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