

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

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. So last week, we talked about the popular and, in my opinion, problematic use of the term "resistance." Often, in the hashtag spiritual and wellness worlds, as a way to blame and often shame folks when our nervous system says no, while our brains say, "Sure, yeah, okay, I'll do that."

This resistance comes up when we want to make new thought work stick. When we want to start to do something new, like exercise or journal or some other self-care habit. When we want to do a somatic practice, drop into breathwork, or another meditative practice. Change our thinking or our drinking. Or, otherwise try to change our lives through new thoughts, feels or habits. Things like movement, drinking less coffee, or cleaning our bedrooms.

Resistance can also show up as "buffering." And we talked all about buffering way back in the day in Episode 14, gosh, that feels like moons ago, because it was. Buffering is when we attempt to not feel our feels and push them away, however we can. And, that can be an experience of resistance.

Resistance can also show up as pressured perfectionist procrastination, which we talked all about in episode 104. Which is, when we stress ourselves out so much about having to have whatever we're doing be completely and utterly perfect. And in so doing, we put all this pressure on ourselves. And our bodies say, "That sounds terrible. I don't want to do that thing. I will resist."

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

And I gotta say, I don't love the way the conversation often goes about resistance, because it often frames it as a problem to beat into submission, to be pushed through or overcome. And I think that's not only unkind to the part of us that's resisting, to the inner child that saying, "No, thank you." It's frankly ineffective. Man, your gal is a nurse, after all; I love efficiency, effectiveness and practicality. And of course, I love being kind and loving.

And being cruel or mean to ourselves, negating our resistant parts, is far from helpful when we want to take courageous heart-centered action, as discussed in Episode 38, to change our lives, and to show up for ourselves in new ways, as we try to do new things.

Last week, we discussed this in depth, and this week, we're going to get into the nitty gritty step-by-step. That's right; so fun and so practical. So, as a refresher on what I invite you to do when you feel resistance in your body, that voice that says, "Just watch Netflix. You don't need to hop on the bike today. You don't need to do that new task. You don't need to feel that feeling. Just ignore it away. Push it away, negate it away. Shut it away."

Step one, resource your nervous system. Step two, witness and bring awareness to ourselves and our resisting parts. Step three, shift our relationship to the resistance, to befriend it. Step four, remember that this voice or energy is just a part of you, not the whole of you. And step five, engage your neuroplasticity by rinsing and repeating, rinsing and repeating.

So, let's dive in. Step one, resource your nervous system. Resourcing is a way to feel grounded in our bodies. To connect with something inside or outside of ourselves that helps us to feel safe, present and calm in this moment. Not to negate or turn away from whatever nervous system we're having, but rather to source safety within ourselves, in our bodies, or by co-regulating with someone or something.

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

Where regulating means to bring your nervous system into the safe and social part, which is called ventral vagus. And co-regulating is when we connect with someone or something like; a plant, nature, Pachamama or Earth Mother, pets, a memory of a thought of someone you love, etc. So that, that energy, that source outside of you, can support you in regulating yourself. And we do that so we can move towards the challenging thing, knowing we're Anchored in ourselves.

I often resource the ground beneath me, the feeling of soft wind on my skin, even if I can't feel it, right? I'll just evoke it within myself. I'll resource my connection with the Earth and nature, and a beloved resource is my Abuela Marta, who passed long before I was born. But my Tia Bichi has shared so many loving stories about her with me, and I have photos of her on my altar. I feel her love ever-present around me. And, it helps me to feel safe.

So, when I don't feel safe in my body, when I feel activated in my nervous system, I call on her. I talk to her directly, "Abuela Marta, support me here, please." Yeah? And I can do that, and I recommend we do whatever resources us, before diving into the deep and murky waters.

We talked about resourcing in detail, in Episodes 135, 172 and 174. And, I'll also say that resourcing our nervous systems is one of the core things we do in Anchored. It's vital for all the inner child work, parts work, somatic and thought work we do. It's really important. So, we can feel safe enough to go deep. And oh, my goodness, do we go so deep in Anchored.

So, step one, is to ask your body, not just your mind, what you need to feel safe, held, loved, calm, connected and present in the moment. And if you've been listening to my work for a while, I am careful when I say "want," and when I say "need." And when we're talking about the nervous system

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

and our resource, and working with these feelings within us, we need to feel safe. So, ask your body; what will fulfill that need?

And one of the things that can feel really helpful, is to connect with your body in the environment. So, ask your body; what does the chair feel like? Where are my feet? And, what are they feeling? Right? If you have access to moving your feet, consider putting them on the ground and feel into the edges of them.

Ask your body; what are the felt sensations of us? Me and my body, in my current environment? And for my polyvagal nerds, my nervous system nerds, this is also known as “orienting” and is a great way to resource ourselves.

And if you want more support around orienting, I have a free audio recording to guide you. And you can grab that at the top of my website, at VictoriaAlbina.com. There's a little teal bar, just click there, and put your name and your email in bada-boom, you have a resourcing audio. Isn't that nice? Okay, so that's step one, resource, your nervous system.

Step two, step into greater awareness. Notice the sensations in your body and begin to locate them within you. And I want to pause before diving into step two, which is all about internal awareness and getting present to the feelings in your body.

And I want to say this very clearly from a trauma thoughtful place, if it doesn't feel safe to be present inside your body, to feel your feelings in your body, then my darling, please don't. Don't go to there alone. Get the support of a therapist, a coach who is trauma thoughtful, but please, no going into dark alleys alone at night; it's not a great idea. So, if your body

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

says no, honor it, and work with someone who can help you to go to there with more safety.

And, I will also say that there is no rule or law that says you have to get internally present to be a good person dedicated to healing. If your body was the site of trauma, if you get deeply dysregulated by connecting to the felt sensation in your body, then I want to invite you to focus on resourcing and just stay there for a little while, right? Get solid and stable in knowing that you are able to resource yourself, before you attempt to access internal felt sensation.

So, once you feel safe in knowing your resource within you, and when it feels safe to connect inward, then, when resistance comes to call, your most important job is to hit the pause button. Do not pass go, do not collect \$200; just pause. And, we pause so we can listen, so we can listen in to our bodies.

Meanwhile, letting our minds know that our focus will be on the body and it's okay for it to allow you to drop in. And in that moment, we can remind ourselves that resistance is sensation trapped in our bodies. And in this step, we get present to it all, so we can process it through our bodies and on out.

And of course, my darling, of course, I know that this step can be wicked uncomfortable. Seriously, super uncomfortable. And that's understandable, natural, normal; because science. And things that are new and really push the edges of our comfort are likely to feel uncomfortable.

And, that's not a problem. It's something that you can choose to sit with, be with, and to practice holding space for. But please don't let your brain tell you that you should be good at listening to your body. Or, that it should be

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

easy. Come on, now. It's a skill like any other. And if this is all new to you, well, then it's all new to you, right?

So, as you connect inward, I want to invite you to continue to resource and to orient yourself, by continuing to feel into your connection to both your body and the space around your body. Focus on feeling into what's coming up in your body as a sensation, not a thought, or a story, but a sensation; like a light blue energy in my belly, a tensing in my shoulders. And, we'll get into that more in a moment.

Also know that it's completely normal to feel numb when resistance arrives. And the more you're able to name and get present with the sensations, the more space you can hold, to feel the feelings underneath the numbness.

Because know, that while your body might be presenting you numbness, which could be a dorsal vagal response, which is the freeze or disconnect part of our nervous system, there is always more sensation underneath. It may just take some time and some love to be able to access it. So, if you feel numb, nothing's gone wrong. You didn't eff up, but like being a human, that's part of *your* experience of resistance.

So, as you connect in with the felt sensation, here are some curious questions, you can start to ask yourself: How do I hold my body when I'm resisting? What's my posture like? Am I slumped over to one side? Do I want to lie down? Do I want to walk around?

What tension, holding, tightness, heaviness, or other felt experience is alive within me when resistance comes onto the scene? What are the thoughts in my mind, and feelings in my body? What emotions are present?

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

What does this energy of resistance, this sensation, want and need to say? What do I say or do when this voice is present? What do I want to do when I hear it? What do I create in my own life when I turn away from this voice? Or, let it dominate my experience?

After asking yourself these questions to help you connect inward, pause once more. And allow yourself to come back into your body, from your mind. Ask your body how resistance is showing up for you. Where does it live in your body? And, what's it like? Does it have a color, a shape, a weight or temperature? Is it small? Or, is it expansive?

As you stay with the sensation, coming back to resources as needed, it's important to know that the felt experience can change, can shift. And in that process can show you more of what it is, and what it wants you to know. Your individual experience is yours, of course, and what you feel where, is completely yours.

And some places I commonly hear my clients experience resistance, is in the following, and here's what it often means. Not always. But often. If we feel resistance in our belly, which is where I have historically felt it, that can be our intuition calling out to us. If we feel it in our heart center or in our chest, then there could be longing, sadness, or grief underneath that resistance.

If it's in the jaw, then that could be the signal that we are clenching our bodies against frustration, anger or annoyance that needs to be let out. When it's in our throat, it can be that we're holding back our words and want to be heard, but maybe also fear being heard.

When it's in our pelvis, that can be a sign that we feel out of our agency, or disconnected from our power. We may feel ungrounded or not rooted in

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

ourselves and our capacity to create our own lives. When it shows up in the breath or diaphragm, that can be a sign that there's fear under there. That we're scared or threatened, feeling under attack or a pressure to perform.

So, the diaphragm should be a muscle respiration, and can work like a muscle of stabilization when we get activated in our nervous system. And, that simply means that the diaphragm can start to do a job that's not its own, when our nervous systems are activated, when there's some sympathetic fight-or-flight energy within us.

The feet or legs can get activated when you want to escape. And the hands, when you either want to push back and fight back, or when you want connection, you want to pull someone you love closer into you.

And I have found this step, of locating and feeling the sensation in my body, to be absolutely vital. Because it's vital for opening up the lines of communication with ourselves. And we do that so these sensations don't continue to live within us. So, we don't get stuck in those feelings, so they don't run the show. And instead, we can step into intentional relationship with the energies within us.

And that takes us to step three, focus on the relationship. So, this is the befriending step, and helps us to shift from being reactive to and mad at ourselves and our resistance, to recognizing it as the gift of self-love that has something to tell us.

In this step, we hang out with that resistance. We ask it questions about itself; how long it's been a part of us? Where we learned to resist change, or growth in this way? We get to know the sensations that come with it, so we can build intimacy with it, and thus ourselves.

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

And to do this, we need to really stay with it, so we can both get to know our resistance and what's underneath it, wanting our attention and care. And we do so with love, so we can heal. And we can use our connection with our bodies to help us move forward in life.

I like to bring in movement, in this step, and to ask the resistance, how it might want me to move my body. I also honor that sometimes resistance wants some stillness, so it can settle. Some other tools I love to use, are coloring or drawing. I love those oil pastels. They're so messy, and minor children love playing with them. And I love to make a whole mess of colors and just let that voice express itself, right?

And in that process, I get to know it. I get to know what it likes, what it wants, what it sees, who it is. And that is a brilliant segue into step four, disidentify. Right? So, we're talking about learning who that resistant voice is; becoming its most bestest friend, bringing it in, holding it close, hugging it, giving it love, petting its perfect little hairs.

And disidentifying with it means to remember that this voice, this energy of resistance, is just a part of you; a part you're friends with, now. And, it's not the wholeness of you. You, my love, are more than just this part. No matter how strongly this voice speaks, no matter how intense the sensation, no matter how checked-out this resistance makes you feel, you're not doomed to live in this resistant place forever.

And by getting to know it, and to see it for what it is, just a part of you, you can stop identifying with it, and believing that the sensation is who you are, as an animal. To support you in this practice, I want to invite you to combine steps three and four, and draw or write or move the story of who this part is.

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

Really allow yourself to picture it, in all of its complexity, and all of its colorfulness and all of its details. So, you can see that you are you, and in your psyche, a part of you is this voice. But you don't have to identify with it and make what *it* is saying about your capacity; to do that new habit, to eat the way you want, drink the way you want, move the way you want, work the way you want, function the way you want, feel the way you want, mean anything about you.

And, that brings us to step five. Practice makes fabulous. With time and attention and love, doing this work, at the level of the body, shifts our internal capacity to be with ourselves and to honor ourselves deeply. At the biological, physiological and neurochemical levels, this work allows us to begin to rewire the neural grooves in our minds and the neural pathways in our body, so that being present in our felt sensations can be the new norm for us. Instead of fighting with resistant feelings or other feelings within our body, which gives our bodies a potent way to heal old wounding and pain.

When you do these previous steps, one to four, you can trust that the story that lies beneath the resistance will start to shift, with time at task. I highly recommend setting a timer on your phone or otherwise reminding yourself to make yourself and this work a priority, for even just one to two minutes a day.

To connect with felt sensation, with a resource, to call that resistance up in a moment where you're not trying to do anything new. You're just living your regular life. And actively say to your body, "Hey, resistance, I would really love to speak with you right now. I'd love to be present with you." And from that ventral vagal place, where your body's not offering resistance, you're calling it in. Ah, see what we're doing there, right? We're keeping ourselves ventral vagal with it. You can meet it using the steps.

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

And for goodness sake, my darlings, let it be fun and gentle and easy. It doesn't have to be super heavy and serious. I mean, this is very serious work, and you can come to it with a childlike wonder and curiosity. And trust me, that has worked out so much better in my life, than coming to this work from a place of doom and gloom and heaviness.

When you stop thinking about resistance as a problem, you really can let it be easy; for realies. In closing, I want to say that while I love thought work, I love it, and it has absolutely changed my life, in so many glorious ways, it is often insufficient.

When the issue at hand is a resistance, based in your body, and a deep old wound or story about yourself and your capacity, asking the brain to solve a body-based somatic issue is unlikely to give you the result you want. And, in my experience, certainly won't bring you into deep connection with and presence to your physiologic experience of resistance.

When life gets lifey and old emotions like worthlessness, anger, profound loss, grief or sadness comes up, those are felt experiences that deserve to be met in a felt way, through the body. Likewise, resistance deserves that same honor. Even though it's so tempting to retreat back into the cozy place, that is our very smart and nerdy minds.

So, to give our minds a break, to help us stay in our bodies, you'll notice that giving yourself a pep-talk, giving yourself the old atta girl, you got it, you can do this, you can move through that resistance, you can beat it; it's just not a part of this list. Because what we don't realize we're doing in that moment, is suppressing our emotions. We're running roughshod right over them, when we tell ourselves to push through, and thus, not part of the plan.

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

Instead, we sit next to them. And we let them know that our capable adult self is here with love. Not to force change or beat that part back with hashtag positive vibes only kind of b.s. Or, by “shoulding” on ourselves about how we should be able to push through this, and should be able to change the way you feel with the snap of a finger.

No, no, no my love, we honor our bodies. And, we respect our physiologic and biological processes by holding non-judgmental space for them. You deserve that my, beautiful lovebird. This process is an opportunity to transform some stuck, old stuff that needs a little more refined attention. And you're well on your way, my perfect tender ravioli. You are well on your way, when you implement these five steps to meet your resistance with love.

Thank you so much for listening, I'm so grateful that you are here. If you've been loving the show, I'd be so grateful if you could head over to wherever you get your podcasts and could leave a five-star rating, and a short, doesn't have to be a whole thesis, but a short, written review.

This show is my way to give back, to be of service, to provide free information to folks across the globe so we can all make our lives better. And the more ratings and reviews our show has, the more often it comes up in search functions, on podcast platforms. So, when you take a quick minute to tell the world just how much you love *Feminist Wellness*, you help more people to hear this message of self-love, self-worth and somatic connection.

So, thank you for subscribing, rating and reviewing, wherever you get your shows, and for sharing on social media. And don't forget to tag me; it makes me so happy when you share the show and tag me. It's so fun. I love connecting, and I thank you in advance.

Ep #181: How to Shift Your Experience of Resistance (Part 2)

So, my beauty, let's do what we do. A gentle hand on your heart, should you feel so moved. And remember, you are safe. You are held. You are loved. And, when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well my beauty. I'll talk to you soon.

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