

Ep #183: Getting Anchored: Attachment Styles



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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

Hello, hello my loves. I hope this finds you doing so well. This week, I am sharing one of my favorite episodes, all about attachment. So, in this episode, I talk about what attachment, and attachment styles, attachment theory; what that is and give you the nerdy 101 on it. And, I share about how your childhood-based attachment style is not your destiny.

It sure can influence a lot of your decisions, when you are not conscious to it, when you are not being intentional around it. Which, come on now, I sure wasn't for a very, very long time. And now that I'm aware of my attachment tendencies, I'm able to advocate for myself, with myself, on my own behalf.

I'm able to intervene on my own behalf, when those voices inside me say, "Run!" When those voices inside me say, "Aargh. Enmesh. Engulf," right? "Text every two seconds," do those things from anxious attachment.

And instead, I can pause, breathe, regulate my nervous system. Which means come into ventral vagal, the safe and social part of the nervous system, with and for myself, and co-regulate with another person. Instead of engulfing them whole, which was 100% my habit for many years. I tended to be more anxious, but with a little avoidance streak, where I was like, if things didn't feel right, I would just totally shut down.

Deb Dana talks about, in our nervous system, the ventral vagal is all of our home, and we all have a home-away-from-home. Some people will get angry and go into sympathetic quickly. Mine, historically, was shut down and would go into dorsal and disconnect fast.

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And knowing these things about myself, raising my awareness around it, mapping my nervous system around it; doing somatic practices, and breathwork, and thought working, getting to know my habitual thoughts and feels and actions. Oh, has been absolutely life changing, because now, I know where my mind and body habitually wants to go in relationship. And, not just romantic relationship, all relationships.

So now, I can get ahead of it in a really loving, compassionate, curious way. It feels so much better than just running from habit, right? Living my life from habits.

So, before I talk too much and give away entire episode, I am delighted to share this amazing episode with you. Next week, we will be continuing the conversation on attachment, and I will be talking all about avoidant attachment. And the following week, disorganized.

We're going to have a whole attachment styles roundtable here, because... Well roundtable; it's just me. But "roundup" that was the word I meant. We're going to dive deep because I love this stuff, I love nerding out, and I love you. So, thank you for listening. Thank you for your interest in making your life more and more better, and take it away 'past me'.

Hello, hello my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. I think I might just say this every episode forever in the summer, but this little Leo is loving the summer. This is like, the happiest, freest, most amazing summer I've had in quite a long time.

And the full moon in Aquarius last week, Leo season, I am just feeling myself. I'm feeling really great. What I'm really feeling is the payoff, is the result, that R line in our thought work from all the work I've been doing for the last 10, 15, 20 years.

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I just really feel like I have been stepping into myself in this powerful way and I feel - we're never complete and arrived. We're always in process. But I feel arrived. I feel a certain level of like, arrival in myself. And it feels magnificent. It feels so good.

And one of the places in my life that just feels so juicy, so in my pleasure, in my joy, in my vibrancy is Anchored, my six-month program. The community there is so beautiful and as we're building the community for the next group starting on September 20th, 2021, the energy is already starting. That vibration, that energy of moving towards creating something greater in our lives, of building into and growing into our potential.

And I hope you can hear the smile on my face because I am just cheesing so hard these days and spending time with the humans in Anchored is just this source of joy. Just pure joy. I look forward to our weekly coaching calls, to coaching them in Slack, the direct message service we use every single day, to doing breathwork with them, somatics with them, to dancing with them, endless joy.

And one of the things that we've been talking about a lot in Anchored is dating and romantic relationships. So for us coming from our codependent, people-pleasing, perfectionist thought habits, our go-to in dating, in relationships, in pretty much every aspect of our lives is to live on good old autopilot.

From habit versus intention. And one of my life goals is to live my own life from that deep embodied awareness, from really thoughtful, just from integrity, from intention, from checked-in-ness. And my life's work, my job here on the planet as I see it is to support you in doing the same.

So one of the theoretical frameworks that has been so helpful for me in evaluating and understanding my own habitual thinking has been

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attachment theory. And I know my nerds love to talk about things like theories.

So today, we're going to talk about the basics of what attachment theory is and how it commonly shows up. And of course, how we can work with our habitual patterns to shift what is possible in our lives.

I want to say it clearly now and I will very, very much say it again. When you understand thought work and neuroplasticity; our brain's capacity to change, you understand that our habitual thoughts are not our destiny. That whatever survival habits we have learned along the way to get through our childhood and our lives intact are changeable, malleable, rewireable, rewritable, mutable, which is the gift of learning how to do daily thought work, which I detail for you if you're new to the show in episode 107, combined with somatic embodiment practices, which I talk all about in episode 109.

So as you listen in and learn about the different attachment styles, I want to ground this conversation in the invitation to pause before you let your brain run away with you and say, "I am doomed, I will be this way forever," because nothing could be further from the truth.

Your current attachment habits are just that, my darling. They're like our codependent thought habits, they're just habits. They're just patterns, it doesn't mean anything about you. It's not who you are. It's just how you've been doing and it's all rewritable. I hope you're hearing me.

So today, my tender darling raviolis, I will be giving an overview of the attachment styles and it's definitely too much to go into great detail about each separate one in one episode, and I will put the link in the show notes to some books I love on this theme for those who want to further nerd out and I will actually be doing an attachment workshop coming up where we'll

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be talking about attachment and how to really dive in deeper, apply these theories to our romantic relationships.

I will also be focused today on anxious attachment, which is the style of attachment that I see most often in us, folks with codependent, perfectionist, people-pleasing thought habits, us who externalize our sense of self-worth.

Okay, so let's dive in. Attachment theory posits that we all fall under one or more of four possible attachment styles. Anxious, avoidant, anxious-avoidant, often called fearful-avoidant or disorganized, and secure attachment. And that we all have a predominant type.

Today, I'll be talking about what's often referred to as the main three, anxious, avoidant, and insecure, and just know that anxious-avoidant is you're anxious a lot of the time, and then sometimes you're also avoidant. It's an overlap of those two.

So our attachment styles tend to influence our perspective on intimacy, conflict, sex, communicating our needs and wants, and our expectations of our partners, our relationships, ourselves. Before you go pigeonholing your perfect, tenderoni self, what's important to know is that our attachment to others can vary in different kinds of relationships, with different social demands, and at different points in our lives, and in the lifespan of a given relationship.

That is, I know that I am deeply and securely attached with pachamama, with Mother Earth. I am securely attached with my sister Eugenia, who is the bestest sister ever in the history of ever and I love and trust her so much. And I have friends like Andrea Glik who was on the show not that long ago.

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I am so securely attached to her. She is going to tell me how it is; I am going to tell her how it is, we're going to be kind, we're going to be loving, we're going to be forthright and honest, we're going to hold space. I don't worry about our relationship. I just show up as the most authentic iteration of myself.

I show up messy, I show up dolled up, I show up everything in between, and so does she, and she holds space for me. So too with my sister. So those are relationships where I feel that like, securely attached.

And there are times in my life where I've felt really anxiously attachment with friends as well where it's like, oh my gosh, I really want this cool kid to like me, I'm going to do what anxiously attachment folks do, which we're going to get into detail with.

I also know that in my own history of romantic relationships and dating, I have been attachment in secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized ways in different dating scenarios and at different points in my life and the dating journey.

So I'll invite you to pause and breathe before you declare yourself like, 110% one kind. And instead, you can choose to stay open to this being a spectrum and to being your own watcher around your patterns in different relationships. Because really where we learn is from the patterns.

So as always, we can be asking ourselves the question, does this pattern serve me? Is this a pattern I want to shift and change, or do I like what this thought habit, this habitual way of being, do I like what it's creating in my life? That's always a central guiding thought for us.

Okay my beauty, so let's back up. How did it get this way? So attachment is a pattern we learn in childhood in response to our primary caregivers,

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whomever that was. So my nerds, let's look at the studies like we love to do.

So John Bowlby was the British psychologist who was the first to really dig into attachment theory. And he described attachment as and I doth quote, "Lasting psychological connectedness between human beings." In his initial research, he put an unknown caregiver - and I'm not saying this was a kind experiment y'all, I'm just citing the study.

This stranger danger experiment is not super my favorite, but here we are. So he took a baby and he put it in a lab room with an unknown caregiver, a member of his lab team that was unknown to the baby, and that baby's parent, their mother.

He would then have the baby's mom leave and then come back into the room and they would monitor, evaluate, and just see what was going on with the baby. Before mom left, once mom was out of the room, and when mom came back.

So the securely attached baby would look at mom when she came into the room and would connect with her, would seek that coregulation, and would generally not scream when she left the room. Anxious babies would effectively lose their shit. They'd be like, oh my god, where's mom? I will not let this caregiver soothe me, whereas the secure ones would just play with the blocks they were given, would just stay chill. Their heart rate would stay chill, they were just chill.

With the avoidant baby, when mom would leave, they were kind of like, okay, whatever, and then what was really interesting is that when mom would come back into the room, they declined to re-engage. So the anxious ones would cling to mom, mom is back, mom, where did you go? I'm so glad you're back, I'm clinging, I'm anxious about the safety between us.

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The secure one was like, oh hey mom, what's up? You were here and I was cool and then you left and I was cool and now you're back and I'm cool. I'm secure in the fact that you've got my back, mama.

And the avoidant baby was like, you know what, you left, effectively forget about you. You know what I mean? Just like, I'm a little anxious about our connection, I don't feel secure, and so what feels safe is not to count on you. You left the once, maybe you'll leave again. I'm avoiding connection, avoiding sourcing security with you.

And so what we see in the continuation of the research is that when kids grow up in a relatively stable, secure, and warm environment, they're more likely to have a more secure attachment pattern, to be chill when a parent leaves because in their little body, their little mind, their little intuition, they just believe and trust that that parent is coming back.

There's nothing to worry about here, no grasping needed, nothing to panic about. They're secure. If a kid grows up feeling dismissed or not given the attunement, care, or security their nervous system needs, like if they don't have the connection they need with their caregivers, if their parenting human has their own unhealed, unparented inner children, or if they have unmanaged codependency of their own, or if a child grows up in a more hostile, toxic, or dangerous environment, emotionally, physically, or both, they're more likely to have a more insecure, anxious, avoidant attachment pattern.

These childhood patterns continue on like all of our habitual lessons, our habitual ways of being into our adult lives until we can learn to use the tools we use here on Feminist Wellness. The thought work protocol and somatics that allow us to pause to question these habitual thoughts and to rewrite them.

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I am particularly interested in anxious attachment because I have found that anxious attachment and codependent habits tend to track together, which makes sense when you think about the primary relational wound of codependent thinking, which is this belief that you don't matter unless someone else says you do, believes you do act in the exact way that you believe you will prove to you that you do in fact matter.

So it makes sense that that framework would lead to grasping at others for validation. Feeling anxious about getting that attachment that you want from someone else to help your brain believe you're worthy. It makes perfect sense frankly, and coming up soon, next week I believe, we're going to be talking about a specific characteristic of anxious attachment that I recently saw in myself and worked through, so do make sure you're subscribed to the show so you don't miss that one because I'm going to tell on myself and it's going to be a good one.

So here is the thing with the anxious attachers. They really, really, really want to attach to their object of affection, to the person that they have decided is the one that will make them feel safe. And they want to attach like lamprey eel style, like no joke.

So in true codependent, people-pleasing style, the anxious attacher will shapeshift, manipulate, chameleon themselves, they will cook you dinner and do your laundry, they will actually believe within themselves that they like what you like, all in an attempt to make you like them.

Does this sound familiar, my darlings? I mean, come on now, raise a paw in the air if you've ever started liking something new or stopped liking something you loved for years just because you're dating someone and that thing isn't their preference.

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Like all of a sudden you like camping or playing pool or guitar or working out or whatever because your date does. And all of a sudden, you're not doing the crafting, canoeing, poetry reading, whatever it is that you've liked so much just because your new date isn't into it, or thinks it's dorky.

Those are just a few hallmarks of anxious attachment and at the core, it's not that different from a codependent relating style. Tell me who you want me to be, this habit says, so I can be that person and then you can love me because I'm the person you told me to be. But please note that I'm also a little resentful about it but I won't tell you for like, quite a while until you're in so deep and you're really reliant on me too, okay? Oh brains.

Other hallmarks of an anxious attachment style include worrying your date or partner will abandon or leave you, requiring - not really desiring, but requiring and I know I did this one for sure, requiring that constant validation from others, particularly your date.

Do I look okay? Can you read this email before I send it? Hey, is this okay? Is it okay that I like them? With this rushed energy, like the energy we talked about in the pressure procrastination episode, that push for things to be perfect or it's all a disaster. Kind of like that.

Oversharing in an unconscious attempt to convince others to bond with you or to understand you, people pleasing as your norm, and thus feeling really challenged by setting limits and boundaries because you don't want to create a situation where anyone is less than 110% adoring of you. So you convince yourself it's easier not to have needs.

Really, really not being okay with or not liking being alone because you don't feel safe emotionally if there isn't someone there to project onto as the root of your safety. And this can look like being a perma-dater, just chronically dating.

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And this just came to me. You know how chainsmokers light one cigarette off the other? That's kind of what anxious attachment looks like. You start one relationship in the barely extinguished ashes of the last one. Sure have done that. Definitely have done that.

And so this desire to not be alone, which for me was healed by really consciously spending time alone and learning to really sit in that discomfort, that can also look like spending time with people with social connections. People you don't really call friends in your heart but are your friends who you really don't like, but your mind is telling you that spending time with them is better than being alone.

And this one's coming up in Anchored a lot because people are coming out of quarantine in places with high vaccination rates and are really going to the bar and seeing the people they used to call their friends and are like, I don't know about this.

After six months in Anchored, six months coming home to myself, all this time in quarantine, this connection doesn't feel like a connection, but maybe it's better than being alone? So there's a complexity there.

This can also really look like buffering as an attempt to not be alone, especially things with TV. So having that constant external companion, versus being and learning to be okay with being alone with yourself.

Another story just came to me and it's going to sound like I'm going sort of off into left field but I promise I will come back. So I was talking with a coaching client just the other week about her cigarette smoking. I think it's because I said cigarette earlier and it sent me to there.

This is super interesting. So we had worked with the theme of presence before, vis-à-vis her smoking, and how smoking kept her out of presence.

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She was not present with herself when she was smoking because she was buffering. She was not feeling her feelings and instead was tuning out and not being present with herself because it felt too scary.

And I totally get and honor that. That that's where she was. So instead of doing that, she used smoking as an easy enough distraction. And what came up recently on a coaching call was that one of the roots of her smoking was in her anxious attachment habit.

In that as long as she was smoking, she never quite felt alone. She had that constant companion, that little buddy of the cigarette, and she could feel accompanied because subconsciously she was thinking that she wasn't alone. She was with her cigarettes.

Fascinating, right? If you're not a cigarette smoker, sub in that glass of wine every night that you tell the story, it helps me relax. Or whatever food you may eat unconsciously. Whatever it is that fills that companion role instead of showing up to be that for you.

Really, really interesting to sit with. Some great questions to start asking yourself. And what this also points to is that our attachment styles, much like our codependent habits show up in so many areas of our life, not just romantically where maybe we'd expect them, but in our relationship with ourselves, with our friends, at work, with our family of origin, on and on.

In anxious attachment, you are often giving up your own autonomy by handing over your sense of safety and okayness to someone or here, something else. Trying to get their validation, trying to get them to tell you you are okay.

So in anxious attachment, it's scary to name our wants, feels, and desires because we want to be liked more than we want to be seen in our

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authenticity. Meanwhile, a person with secure attachment doesn't believe that they're about to be abandoned at any moment, which is part of anxious and sometimes avoidant attachment.

Secure attachers trust that they will be liked, that they will be taken care of, that they will be well, secure, safe. So secure attachers can communicate their feelings and needs with greater ease. They can problem solve in conflict versus collapsing. They don't attack their partners and fall into what The Gottman Institute calls the four horsemen of relational apocalypse, which anxious and avoidant attachers love to go to and yes, your girl has gone here many a time. Reeling that one in.

And those are criticism, contempt, defensiveness, or stonewalling, which are topics already planned. We're going to take a deep dive into those in a forthcoming show.

Securely attached folks are able to feel comfort with intimacy and feel ease with being warm and loving. It is not that secure attachment excludes us from conflict or difficulty. It's just that secure attachment allows people more ease and resiliency than other attachment styles with dealing with the challenges of intimacy.

Secure attachment is accepting that someone else can possibly help us, being seen and getting help is possible for you as a human from a place of mutuality and reciprocity. Meanwhile, the avoidant attacher swipes right and then ghosts you. They deeply fear intimacy, but they sort of want it at the same time, so they make it really hard to actually break through and connect with them, often without even realizing it.

And what they're doing there is fighting to keep others at a distance, even if they are dating, or even if they're in a serious relationship. Which, if you

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think about it, is a smart little self-defeating defense strategy from their inner children.

Our avoidant attachers believe that being independent is key to their wellness. So, in relationships and while dating, they frequently feel that their independence and self-sufficiency is being threatened by the very nature of dating. They feel safest when they are independent, when they are counting on no one and no one is counting on them. And movements towards interdependence, mutuality, reciprocity feel like challenges.

And what is particularly challenging for them is that they want to be close to others, because they're mammals after all, right? And at the same time, push others away by not opening up, by not being vulnerable. And to be able to stay in that shut-down place, they need to suppress their emotions, which makes them feel even less like they're living in their authenticity or like it's safe to be seen.

It's a vicious little cycle here. And this habit also gives them a false sense of maintaining control, false sense of superiority because the internal story can go that they're so independent and don't need a relationship like all of those other foolish humans. They are also notorious for having go-to emotional escapes like overworking, spending more time with friends than they spend with their partner, playing video games or otherwise buffering instead of connecting with their date.

Or even – and this is the old avoidance stand by – fantasizing about either the perfect relationship, which no human could possibly measure up to, or their perfect ex. You know, the one that got away, that one that, of course, no human can measure up to.

They're so busy fronting that they don't care what you think. And so, they may not pause to check in to ask themselves what they think or ask you

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what you think or feel either. What they emphasize in relationship is strong boundaries that can actually feel more like a brick wall, and they find compromise challenging, as sticking to their proverbial guns is central to how they seek to defend themselves and their tender hearts.

The avoidant attacher wants security – we all do – but doesn't trust their connection with others. The anxious attacher wants security – we all do – so they put a stranglehold on it as soon as they smell a whiff of availability for attachment in a potential partner.

The secure attacher wants security and is like, "Wait, but actually I'm cool. I mean, you know, I would love to connect with you, let's do a thing, let's go on some dates, let's take it slow and see where it goes. But I'm also good over here. I don't need you to prove my lovability to me because I know I am lovable and I don't need outside approval. If I want security, I look inside myself. I'm already here for me. I'm living it."

The secure attacher knows what they want and speaks it. They know what they feel and they embody it. The secure attacher is what so many of us aspire to in our lives. I know I do. And I know that the more I become anchored within myself, the more I learn to trust me the more I show up in my own dating life from that more secure place and put that old anxious disorganized habit set in the rear-view mirror.

So my beauty, this is a high-level overview of attachment styles and I deeply believe that we learn to function from these habits as a way to seek safety in the world. Yes, yes, we do. And what's so beautiful is that it's so possible to use thought work and somatic body-based practices to begin to move yourself closer to feeling secure in yourself. And from there, more and more secure in your attachments with those you love and those you date too.

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It starts, as always, with awareness, with recognition of when you're in your anxious or avoidant habits when you really like someone, so you smother them with affection and gifts – anxious – or you turn away from them and make them come to you – avoidant.

Where I started on this journey was to start by considering that it was possible, that I could maybe source my sense of safety and security within myself. I wrote that new thought out giving myself so much space to be a human.

Historically, my habit was self-flagellation, to be mean to myself if I “failed”, so I gave myself a lot of space with this new thought and I wrote it out. I wrote it out and I wrote it out and I wrote it out and I danced it. I move it. I sang it. I did breathwork to it until it started to feel like a real part of my brain through neuroplasticity and a real part of my body through that somatic experience of being me.

And part of that work for me was to recognize how it both helped and hurt me to live from anxious and disorganized attachment, my own default go-to. Because when we can bring understanding to ourselves for our own intentions, we can bring acceptance, compassion, love, understanding, all energies which breed a lot more motivation than shame does, right?

So, I can see that this anxious habit helped me because it was a way to pretend to feel safer in the world by glomming onto someone else. It helped me while I didn't have any other skills because it didn't challenge me and kept me from doing the deep inner work that wasn't willing or skilled to do so many years ago.

And it hurt me because it kept me from feeling secure with myself and kept me chasing the false comforts of believing a new date or a new partner could make me feel safe, which led me to ignore a lot of red flags in

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previous relationships. Because I projected all my desire for safety onto them when that energy really only comes from within ourselves.

So, the important thing as we are stepping into understanding our own attachment patterns is to become aware of what's going on. Then, it's important to acknowledge that you can shift whatever patterns you choose to. You get to source safety within yourself.

You can ask yourself what you're looking for from someone else and you can then do the work to give that to yourself first, honoring, as we always do, that coregulation is vital. And we are able to coregulate in healthy ways that honor our needs when we are also holding that knowing that belief that we don't have to give ourselves away to get that coregulation. We can regulate ourselves, for ourselves.

As a very practical nurse, I think examples are helpful. So, here is a good one to start with. So, let's say that your date, your lover, your partner doesn't text you back for several hours on a weekday, which is when they usually text you back pretty fast.

So, in this situation, I'll invite you to be your watcher. I want to invite you to clue into your body. Are you feeling tension anywhere? Are you feeling anxious, worried? Are you feeling butterflies in your belly or a tightness in your chest, a lump in your throat?

I'll ask you to clue into your brain, what is your brain doing in this moment. For example, from anxious attachment, you might start to worry about the relationship about your own sexiness, your lovability, about whether or not this person is into you anymore instead of thinking what our secure siblings may think, which is, "I bet they're busy. They're at work."

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From anxious attachment, you start to question their love for you and the future of the relationship. You go into worst-case scenario and you increasingly feel anxious and increasingly insecure. Doubt steps up to fill the emotional void that your unreturned text left in your energetic field. You easily catastrophize and begin to question everything.

And that level of worry may lead you towards a little avoidance, a little mental, “Well, F that then. If they’re not going to write me back then I don’t need this relationship anyway.” And that bit of avoidance so often fades the second you hear from them. And that tension inside you, that buzzing ball of anxious all starts to fade a bit once you’re squarely – what your brain and body read as safely – back in their attention.

When you understand that this pattern likely comes from you, you can show yourself the compassion and care you need, remembering you developed this pattern because your little kid brain was trying to protect you and to help you to survive. Now, that you are an adult, not just needing mere survival but wanting to thrive, the good news is once you recognize your attachment style, call it out and name it, understand it for what it is and what it is and what it has done for you, you are then so much more able to change it.

And as always, nervous system regulation is such a key part of shifting our nervous system pattern. Our neural grooves around safety love security and thus attachment. When our nervous systems tend towards dysregulation, towards sympathetic activation fight or flight or dorsal shutdown, freeze, which we talked about way back in episodes 43 and 61, those are good ones to get started with.

I talk a lot about the nervous system. I also did a nervous system 101 and a piece about nervous system dysregulation and how important it is for folks

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in white bodies working on racism. I just remembered that. Those are both Instagram Lives, so follow me @victoriaalbinawellness.

But anyway, when our nervous system tends towards dysregulation, to move out of ventral vagal, the safe and secure, into sympathetic or dorsal, then we tend to stay in the nervous system patterning that feels comfortable. And so, what we get to do is to learn these tools, these tools to bring our nervous system back into ventral vagal, so that when, for example, you're dating someone and they say X and you interpret that through your mind and body in a way that makes you feel more anxious. You can know that your nervous system will respond from your own attachment habit.

And so, before your nervous system takes off like a rocket, you can pause. You can breathe. You can center yourself in you first. And from there, from that grounded place, that oriented place, you can respond to their texts or reach out from ventral vagal, not from anxiety.

And from there, my sweet anxious attachers, you can begin to take risks and can show up as your most authentic self in all of your relationships. You can also work to change a scarcity mentality, which often fuels anxious habits. And here, I mean scarcity specifically around love.

So, if the person you are with doesn't appreciate and ultimately cherish your full amazing self, emotional warts and all, the you can lean towards an abundance mindset around love, which tells us that there are many wonderful, unique, incredible, amazing people out there for each of us who will relish us for who we are. You never have to settle.

Also, my love, when you are dating and you know that you have these anxious habits, you can be prepared for what your brain is likely to do. This

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takes my own thinking back to the “Of course they did, of course he did,” episode, of course, I will.

So, you go on a date with someone. You have this really great afternoon and then you go home and craving starts, urges start, that desire to mentally obsess, to think about them nonstop, to future-trip into all those fantasies, it was your first, second, or third date and you’re planning the wedding.

Pause. Pause. Ground yourself. Orient. Come back to your breath, to your body, to the space you’re in, whatever feels safe for you. Connect with our conscious distraction tools, those great interrupters we’ve talked about here before, a walk, a book, a call with a friend, a craft, writing, drawing, being of service to others, taking care of yourself, all beautiful ways, movement, dance, singing to drop back into yourself and your body to give your monkey mind a break, so you can start to recognize the next step, the obsessing, the next step, the fantasizing, the next step, the anxiety, “Will they like me? Am I good enough? Will they write me back? It’s been an hour since I texted. What do I say? I’m questioning me. I’m doubting. I’m making them more important than I am to me.” That is the habit of anxious attachment, the habits of codependent thinking.

My beauty, the more you practice pausing and being your watcher, the more you clue into yourself with daily thought work, the more able you are to slow things down and to see what you’re doing for and with you in these moments.

The move from avoidant attachment towards secure is also grounded in nervous system resourcing, thought work, lots of self-love and acceptance. It is also really important to explore your ideas about why you value independence if avoidant attachment is your style. And to ask yourself how you can open your heart towards accepting support.

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You can start by taking tiny, tiny, small steps like we talked about in the episode about the minimum baseline, dipping your toes in the joys of trusting, creating some interdependence with friends, with members of your chosen family. Practice there before you work towards doing that in a romantic setting.

Like the anxious attachment style, avoidant attachers can get very negative, picking out a small detail and exploding it as a way to create distance, making gratitude or celebratory lists about your date or partner is a beautiful way to counter this negativity bias that ends up creating isolation and separates us from people.

It is also very important to learn to take the risk of communicating in a clear and honest way about what you understand is going on in your own body, in the relationship, in that experience that you are building with another person.

Checking in about your own needs and the needs, thoughts, and feelings of the other person while finding loving ways to take care of yourself by negotiating taking the space your anxious attachment may lead you to need is so important.

Also, my darling, dropping the fantasy. There is no perfect relationship. All relationships are work. And come on now, my darling avoidant attachers, let's be real. That ex of yours is not perfect. That person is not like the great white whale that got away. Yes, Moby Dick references because I'm just a nerd like that.

But let's be real. If that person was so perfect and you were so perfect for them and they were so perfect for you, would they be your ex? Come on now.

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So, look at why you're holding onto that story and I'll invite you to ask yourself, how can you let it go so you can build the future you dream of?

And finally, one of the most powerful ways to get into more secure attachment thinking and doing is to ask ourselves in every potentially intimate encounter, "What would a secure attacher do in this situation? If I sourced my safety within myself, what would I do, say, think, or feel here? And even if that behavior is uncomfortable, because you know it's going to be, try doing it anyway. Try showing up from that secure internally-sourced sense of safety and see how it feels.

Because the more we train our brains and feel into that securely attached place, the more likely we can inhabit it as our new habit. We can then create the relationships we desire, ones of mutuality, reciprocity, interdependence, where we avoid resentment, take deep care of ourselves, and learn how to build the true freedoms of being securely attached and deeply connected to others, which is what we all want and need at the end of the day as human mammals.

It is our heart's truest desire. And if there is one thing you have learned from Feminist Wellness, from thought work, somatic work, breathwork, it's that you can change your habitual thinking for your own growth, for your own good, for the good of your communities, the collective, the planet.

I know you can, my sweet beauty. And you can change this habit as well. You can shift into more secure attachment every day, but by bit, piece by piece. And I know it because I have done it. I, my love, continue to be living proof. After years of codependent, anxious, avoidant-relating – more anxious than avoidant, let's be real – I feel very secure in my attachment these days.

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I am speaking up for myself. I am owning my truth. I am saying, “That doesn’t work for me. I’m having clear boundaries.” And I’m a human, right? There are times, my darlings, where I’m not in full alignment. And that’s okay because I see it. and I’m kind to me about it now. And what a beautiful change that is.

So, my beauties, thank you for joining me. This has been a delight, as always. And I would be so thrilled, if you are enjoying the show, if you are growing from listening to these episodes and doing thought work and somatic practices, from the work that we do here together, I would love to have you check out my six-month program Anchored: Overcoming Codependency. It is a high-touch, high-results six-month program. It is a small group community. We grow together. We cry together. We laugh together. We share recipes and pictures of dogs and babies and poetry and it is lifechanging.

It is that shift from being anxiously attached to all of life to being deeply and securely attached to ourselves. It is a coming home to ourselves. And it is amazing. And I would be beyond delighted to have you join us. Head on over to victoriaalbina.com/anchored to apply now and get on a call with me. If you have been interested in joining one of my programs and getting my one on one support, this is the time. This is the last offering of Anchored in 2021 and we start September 20th.

The group is, I think, a little over a third full, so it’s filling up pretty quickly. We just started taking folks about a week ago, so really, if you want to join us, act now. What do you have to lose other than your anxious attachment, my darling? Or your avoidant attachment, right?

Alright, my beauty, let’s do what we do. I’ll invite you to put a gentle hand on your heart, if that feels nourishing and in your pleasure to do. Nice slow breath in, always a long slower exhale. Remember, you are safe, you are

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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 going to be a good one.