

Ep #186: Getting Anchored: Natalie's Experience



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

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

Victoria Albina: Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. This week, I am delighted, as always. I find life very delightful, I must say, now that I've done all this somatic and thought-work based healing. I find life very delightful. So, I am, in fact, quite delighted to share a conversation I recently had with Natalie, who was a member of a recent Anchored cohort.

Natalie and I talked all about her experience and her growth, which was whoo wow, mind-blowing. So, I'm sharing these stories from previous Anchored members with you all, because they really matter. Because, when I was mired in my codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing ways. When I was living 1,000% from the neck up, so not in my body, so not connected somatically, so not in presence. I felt like it was impossible.

How could I ever change? How could I make such wholesale change in my life? And now, while there's still stuff to, you know, to work on, I'm a human, there will always be stuff to work on. But my life is just so much more better now. And, Natalie's is too. And I think it's one thing to hear me say it.

And it's just such another thing to hear from folks who really took the deep dive and said, "I want to do this work, I'm worth it. I'm worth it. My communities are worth it. My family's worth it, my kids are worth it. It's time, it's time to make these huge changes. So, I can live the rest of my life the way I dream of."

That's really inspiring. And I think that word gets overused, but I've got to say, I feel like... You know the little stars emoji, I feel that is just dancing in my chest, when I think about the change that folks make through the Anchored process. And I am just so grateful that I get to do this work, that I

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get to be a coach. Like, what an exquisite privilege that I'm so grateful for every day.

I just added an extra hour of coaching for the current Anchored group because I felt like, it because I love my job. And I was like, there are more of you that want coaching this week than we can do in an hour, let's just meet tomorrow. I love that I feel so motivated to do my work, and to support and coach the amazing people who join me in Anchored.

There's not a day that goes by that I'm not grateful for this immense privilege and honor. And, sharing Natalie's story is equally a privilege and an honor. So, without further ado, you know I love you, here's Natalie.

Well, hello, hello, Natalie. I'm so delighted to be here with you today. Thanks for coming on the show.

Natalie: So good to see you.

Victoria: So good to see you too. I've missed you. So, will you start us off by telling us your name, where you live, and sharing a land acknowledgement?

Natalie: Sure. I'm Natalie and I live in Columbus, Ohio, which is occupied Kaskaskia territory.

Victoria: Beautiful. So, Natalie, what lights you up? What are you passionate about?

Natalie: Hmm. I am passionate about connection, growth. And, I think that applies to not just individual relationships, but also connection and growth across communities and organizations. So, it's, you know, kind of at all levels, I guess.

Victoria: Yeah. What do you do for fun?

Natalie: Hmm, I play with my boys. I have a lot of fun with them being silly, having dance parties, and doing artwork with them. We're big into that. Crafting, if you would.

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Victoria: I would. You know I want...

Natalie: ...the good markers.

Victoria: Oh, yeah. God, I love the good markers. Right? You know, it's a good day when you pull out the good markers.

Natalie: Exactly.

Victoria: Yeah. What do you do for work?

Natalie: I am a management consultant. So, I do strategy work, and I help organizations manage their talent. So, it kind of goes back to that connection and growth. I get to help companies better connect with their people and their potential employees.

Victoria: So, you were recently in a cohort of Anchored. Why did you decide to join? What interested you about the program?

Natalie: Well, I have been down a path of self, you know, reflection and really trying to work through some things in my life. And I had gotten on to the podcast. So, I had tried a couple of other platforms before I came across your podcast app. And, they didn't work for me. So specifically, I felt like, although some other opportunities I had for connection, healing, were pretty virtual and platform based, I think when I met you the first time I said, "I need to be surrounded by humans and other, specifically, imperfect humans."

Victoria: You do find imperfect humans in Anchored.

Natalie: They were perfectly imperfect.

Victoria: I think it was like such a hot mess in the best way.

Natalie: Yeah, I mean, I just, you know, for me to get through things, and to demonstrate vulnerability, I needed to be around other people who were willing to do the same, and share with me where they had tripped up or fallen before. So yeah, I did find that here.

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Victoria: Yay. What were your favorite takeaways from being in Anchored?

Natalie: Oh, I just think the muscle that I flexed the most, as a takeaway, is being my own watcher. So, in a time situation, now, I can much more, take a step back, even while still operating, and kind of watch what's playing out. And also, do the same having kind of compassion when I see someone else who is struggling. You know, I do have a bit more compassion now to say, there's something else going on, right, watching myself, but also watching others.

Victoria: I love that. I really love that. The sort of wellness industrial complex can really feed us this line, that it's just all about self, and individuality. And, of course, I think it's incredibly important to heal ourselves and improve our own lives. But I love how you refocus continually on how you show up in community, how you relate to others.

Natalie: Yeah, absolutely. This is kind of a funny tangent, I read a book at the same time as the program, *Living Untethered*. And it talks about how we're all stardust. And so, during the course of the program, when we would talk about other individuals in our lives who were acting out, or who were, you know, really operating from one of their child hurts. I, in my head, now, literally still out in the world, I'll see someone and I'm like, agitated stardust.

Victoria: Oh, my God. I love that.

Natalie: Like, you know, it's just like, their stardust is a little off, right now.

Victoria: That it's so compassionate. It's so beautiful.

Natalie: And silly, because I think you often taught me to bring a lot of like, humor to things.

Victoria: Yeah, I mean, it's so easy. When we're working to find our way through codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing habits, we can get so serious. And I think the levity is incredibly important. And definitely from a nervous system standpoint, I think levity and lightness can really help.

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Natalie: Yeah, it definitely helped me, for sure.

Victoria: So, speaking of the nervous system, I'd love to hear about your experience with the nervous system components; the polyvagal components, the somatic parts of the program, and the work that we do.

Natalie: I know you attract nerds, as you lovingly call it, and I only got nerdier through this experience. I think I really was hungry for more information about nervous system regulation. Although I didn't know that those were the words that I needed to ask for.

And it, both, has to do with about how my body is in moments of stress and anxiety, but also, as you know, because I have a son who's neurodivergent with epilepsy and autism spectrum disorder. And so, it has taught me not just how to regulate myself, but how to watch, and observe, and intervene in supportive ways with my kiddo.

Victoria: What a beautiful gift to give yourself and him, and then your other son and the other people in your life. Right.

Natalie: Right. Yeah. And I mean, I even told, I remember, halfway probably through Anchored, when we had an appointment with his epileptologist, neurologist, and, you know, he said... And I told him that I have a theory around better seizure control, through nervous system regulation. He was like, of course, you know, keep doing this. Keep teaching him the skills, keep teaching him about mindfulness. But also, just about, you know, how to bring himself back to baseline using our work.

Victoria: Wow. Oh, that is so amazing. Wow, that is so beautiful.

Natalie: You didn't know you were going to build this whole other toolkit, but it's been really beneficial for me and my son.

Victoria: Wow, wow, wow wow. Just so powerful to think. Yeah, changing his sweet little baby life. And, I know he's a big boy now, but...

Natalie: He's springing up, that's for sure.

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Victoria: Cutie. What did you enjoy about working with me as your coach?

Natalie: Well, you're great. Period. Um, what did I enjoy? I mean, you're so incredibly intentional and really supportive with, yes, your tenderoni side, but also in pushing. So, I think that you were able to ask me questions about my life and my relationships, that I wouldn't have let other people ask me as directly. Because I was like, wrapped in a supportive container.

Whereas someone else might have asked the same thing, and I would have told them to get out of here, more colorful commentary than that. With you, I, you know, engaged in the process.

Victoria: That's beautiful. And, I'm so glad you did. Yeah, we did some really powerful work together in Anchored. What are some standouts for you? Some things that have changed, through this process, being in the community, being coached by me?

Natalie: Yeah, I am... One of the reflections I had during the program, was the support of women communities. And so, I hadn't really realized it, but throughout my life at various times, I have wrapped myself in support of women communities.

So, whether it was when I chose to become a yoga teacher and go through the training program, right. I don't currently teach, but at that time of my life, I needed to be wrapped in support by those kinds of women. And then, you know, similarly, after I had kids, there was my new moms group. And, you know, I was with them. And I didn't realize how much I was lacking that until I got into Anchored.

And, you know, I've moved, as an adult, from one city to another, and reestablishing that kind of community is difficult. And especially, with the kind of trust and structure that Anchor afforded me. I mean, I'm just really grateful that I got to be in community, even if it was virtually, which was a, you know, I was nervous at first, but it really worked out.

Victoria: What were you nervous about?

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Natalie: I was nervous about if I could commit to the program, with everything else that I have in my life to balance. With, you know, the other hats I wear as a mom, as a professional, as a friend, or family member. And I'm proud of myself that I did. I was nervous about not being accepted for my life path. And, you know, the times that I've tripped up, and everyone was really supportive and wonderful. So, I didn't need to worry about that. Yeah, those are probably the two biggest ones.

Victoria: And, you really committed. I mean, you really showed up in the Slack®, in coaching, in breathwork. You were very present. What was it that supported you and enabled you to be able to show up?

Natalie: Yeah, I showed up for this program because I wanted to get the most value as possible, right, out of it. And I wanted to make sure that I was putting my like, actions with my intention, right. I wanted to make sure that I was using... So, there are parts of the program that I heavily used, and there are parts of the program I didn't as heavily use.

So, for example, I made a commitment that I was going to show up to coaching, every single time, if I didn't have my children. And, I did that. I also made a commitment that if I was working through something difficult in my life, that I was going to put it in the Slack and get coaching from you.

There were some parts I didn't engage with as much during the program, like the somatics. You know, for me, I needed to get through some regulation first, before I could totally integrate some of the breathwork and somatics. But now, I've been using those after the program, in more of my integration phase.

Victoria: Yeah, that's beautiful. And what I'm also hearing in there, is you, and always correct me if I'm wrong, but you stepping out of perfectionism, right. To say, I don't have to do all of the things, all at once. Like, everything's downloadable for a reason. The invitation is to go at your own pace. And, I feel like you really embodied that.

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Natalie: Yeah, I went at my own pace. There were times that I went deep, in journaling. There were times that I went deeper, in coaching. Right? There were exercises that called to me; there were exercises that didn't. I was really impressed with the quality and the depth. So, I could tell how much you poured your heart and brain into this work. I have my notebooks right here.

Victoria: Aw, quite the stack. Wow.

Natalie: Yeah, well, you have a lot of content. I have a lot of reflection that I can go back to. There's been a couple of times, post-program, where something has come up for me, and I go, I got coached on that. And I can go back and watch the video. Or, I can go back to my notebook and reference it. Or, I can look at a handout.

So, for example, right now, I'm not operating as I would like to, on managing my schedule. But I know I can go back to that module, and revisit how to reclaim my time.

Victoria: I love that. Speaking of time, you are a busy mom of two, total boss at work. What would you say to someone who's like, I don't know if I have time for this.

Natalie: So, you don't have time to take care of yourself?

Victoria: Oh, snap, you said it. I didn't.

Natalie: Um, yeah, I guess that ultimately, I know that in the healing circles and the wellness circles, we hear this a lot as a side of quip of, you know, you can't take care of others unless you take care of yourself. That never really stuck for me, yet in going through this program, I have found that I do have greater capacity to take care of others when I take care of myself.

And so, I had to take a step back and say, really, you can't do two hours of coaching a week. Right? Then, something's really off here, right? You're going to cruise Instagram® for two hours, or you're going to play Wordle™

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for that amount of time over the course of a week. You can commit to doing this.

And I also felt, if not now, when? So, if I don't start this now, when am I ever going to actually take time to invest in myself?

Victoria: Yeah. For sure. If not now, when? Is so powerful to think on. You know, I'll go all hospice nurse for a second, right, and say that people on their deathbeds reflect on the time they spent with loved ones, the time they were in honest, authentic connection and community, and the times when they prioritize themselves and thus their people, right? Like that is what matters the most. Right?

Natalie: And with small children, you know, I don't want the win to be after they're grown. I want to be able to show up for them now, as a healthy mom. And you know, I told my youngest, when he was probably far too little to understand, you know, that they're on loan to me, as you know, a care provider until they become adults.

And then, I'll have a different relationship around being friends or you know, just the difference. So, there's going to be a shift someday, where I'm responsible for you now, and you're going to be responsible for yourself in the future.

And I wanted, during the time that I am responsible for them, to make sure that, since I chose to bring them into this world, that I was showing up as the best version of a mom that I want to be.

Victoria: Yeah, I mean, there's so much intentionality in what you're saying, which is just so beautiful to hear.

Natalie: Thanks.

Victoria: I mean, it is so easy to stay in the chaos, or drama, or dysregulation. Or, like whatever our childhood experience of what life is, in the way that it's painful, and it's challenging, and it's hard, but it's easy at

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the same time, right, to just stay in that status quo. I hear you saying basta, like no more, right, basta. It's so good. Yeah, yeah. Beautiful.

So, I feel that you spoke to this somewhat, but let me ask really directly, what was it like to be vulnerable in front of the group, to get coaching in front of the group? It's a huge thing that people get, particularly us, who are so protective of our tender underbellies, from that core wounding of unworthiness. People were like, I want one-on-one coaching. I'm nervous about this, but could you speak to that?

Natalie: I was definitely nervous about having this kind of one-on-one format with an audience, at first. And then, I found out that the audience was a supportive type squad and was our you know, I think at the end, we had our warrior moments around, you know, being together and being supportive of one another. And so, I really, I got used to the format.

And I also really appreciated being able to watch you coach someone else, right. And so, watching you and one of the other Anchored familia work through an issue, brought up a lot in me. And then, I would feel better or more comfortable perhaps, about getting coaching, because I'd already seen you work through this safely with someone else.

And I had either some preliminary insights or some questions, as a result of what they had. So, I definitely wasn't super excited about that format, like coming in right at the beginning. But as soon as we got our training wheels on and got going, then I really found it to be very supportive.

Victoria: I love that image of training wheels. And I love what happens around week like three or four, when people are like, get these off. I got to go. Like, let's go. Let's like Tour de France this.

Natalie: I imagine it's very interesting for you to watch, you know, the slow requests for coaching and then this like influx of everyone.

Victoria: Uh-huh, all of a sudden, yeah, and it makes nervous system sense, right? We need to feel it's okay. It's safe to be in ventral vagal

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together. And then from there, it's okay to show up in sympathetic, totally freaked out, totally anxious, or worried, or collapsed. And that, that often more protected states that we don't show people like, oh, wait, that's okay, too.

So, what would you say the transformation, in your life and your lived experience, was once you were in the program, and now as an alumnus?

Natalie: The transformation for me, while I was in the program, was knowing that I had a group of humans to go to who would be supportive, safe and empathetic. Which just gave me a level of confidence during the program, that if shit got hard, something was really challenging in my life, that I would have somewhere to go and process it in community.

So, I think during the program, that was the strength that it was giving me. A daily kind of pep in my step, or a secret little Vic in my pocket. You know, I felt like I could just call on the group at a moment's notice, and get support and guidance.

After the program, the transformation, for me, has been that I am my own best watcher. And I can also have a lot more compassion for other people, for what their experiences might be. I can't assume what they are. But I have a lot more curiosity and compassion for what's across the table, as opposed to always making it about me.

So, I think at the end of the program, the intention that I set at very end was not just growth and connection, which you and I just talked about earlier, but also intentionality and depersonalization. And so, post program, I've been telling myself a lot in different situations; this isn't a personal attack. When something across the table isn't going the way I expected or wanted it to go.

Victoria: Yeah, that's so powerful. I remember taking things very, very personally. Right? I could make a dog barking next door about me. Like why isn't the dog more thoughtful about my work schedule?

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Natalie: The hard part, though, is that I still, like, I see it now, but for other people who I see taking things so personally, I just want to unlock this insight and you can't do it.

Victoria: Yeah. Yeah, no, I get that too. Yeah, I definitely was very deep in my fixer, for quite a while. Yeah. And I think also, part of it is not just being a fixer, but it's like really loving and it's like, whoa, like, my life is so much more better. I want it to be more better for you, because I love you, right? You don't think we need to pathologize all nurturance, right? Is nurturance a word in English?

Natalie: Well, it is now.

Victoria: Okay, we're very postmodern. It is officially now postmodern. I love how loving and accepting everybody in Anchored is, of my making up of English.

Natalie: We've learned languages and words, and it's all good.

Victoria: It's a damn delight, it really is. So, what would you say, if you were seated across from someone who is having some nervousness or some trepidation about joining the program?

Natalie: Just do it. I would say, that if you are ready to change the way that you operate, for yourself and for the others in your life, from a place of compassion, growth, and self-awareness that you don't really have anything to lose. Just step in and take the risk. And know that if you put in the effort, that you will get out of it the result.

Victoria: Anything else you want to make sure people hear about your experience, about the program, anything at all?

Natalie: I would just say that I am a huge Vic fan girl. Because, you know, I have very high standards, and I'm very discerning in, you know, where I choose to put my time, and my money, and my focus. And I can't say enough, how grateful I am that you were there to receive those things.

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Because I am just so impressed with the depth of like, science that you bring to this, that passion that you bring to this work, and the energy and focus. It's like, truly, I'm getting a little choked up. But it's like truly inspiring. You're a very unique combination of human, Vic. And I'm very, very grateful I went on this journey with you.

Victoria: I am receiving those words. Which is the work I'm in right now, is receiving, full heart. So, thank you for that. Yeah, and thank you for the gift of getting to work with you. You know, I don't take it lightly that people put their trust, and their faith, and their time, and their money, and their hope in me, in this program. And so, it's a really big deal that you decided to do this and showed up the way you did.

Natalie: Right. And I was like, okay, I can do this. So, it is a big investment, right? I did have some nervousness at first that it would be like a very entitled circle. But it, you know, at the end of the day, it was well, well worth it.

Victoria: Thank you so much, Natalie, for being here, for sharing about your experience. I can't tell you how much I appreciate it.

Natalie: I appreciate you. Thank you for having me and for bringing me into the familia.

Victoria: Thank you.

Thank you so much for listening, my love. I hope that was a supportive view of what is possible when we dedicate ourselves and commit to doing this deep work. To connect in with ourselves, to find presence, to really live our lives in a different way. And Natalie's experience is so gorgeous. Yeah, inspiring. I'm going to say it again. It's inspiring, because it is.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for subscribing to the show. Thank you for being part of this community. If you heard your own story in Natalie's story, if part or all of what she shared resonated for you, where she was. If

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that resonated in where she is now, if that's what you dream of, join us for Anchored. It's my favorite place on this planet.

It is the most amazing community. We do tons of coaching. We do tons of somatic work, we dance, we laugh, we cry, it is transformational and I'd love to have you with us. Head on over to VictoriaAlbina.com/anchored to apply and to learn more, and you could hop on a call with Patty, the head coach on Team Vic.

She can give you all the details about the program and how we do what we do. We do answer all of your questions. Those calls are super casual and chill, and they're really just about connecting. So, take a moment to apply now. Once again, it's VictoriaAlbina.com/anchored and we'll be in touch.

I can't wait to welcome you to the Anchored familia. It's a beautiful family, indeed.

Alright my darlings, 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 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 to grab your seat now. See you there; it's going to be a good one!