

Ep #197: When You Get Unstuck and Others Don't Like It



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

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

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

Hello, hello my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. As I'm sure you can hear from my voice, I am so much weller. I'm feeling much better and way on the other side of COVID. And I feel so absolutely grateful. Yeah, I felt like crap, but overall just how easy my experience was compared to a lot of other people.

So I'm on the other side with a lot of gratitude for my body, my health, modern science, ancient healing wisdom. And for everyone who sent sweet notes, and DMs, and text messages, and emails, and wrote comments on Instagram and just shared love and your hopes that I feel better, and I really appreciate it. It was very tenderoni of you, so thank you.

This episode goes live on what is referred to as Thanksgiving, blech. But anyway, that's what it's called. So I want to talk about some issues that might just come up as many of us see our families of origin, in some cases for the first time in years due to the Rona.

And that issue is change and stuckness, both your own and that of those around you. And how getting unstuck and making changes can be received by those close to you, especially at a big family gathering. And how you might feel when you're making changes but those around you are not. So many feelings.

So my darlings, you know we don't BS around here, change is not always easy, especially if you're someone with a history of codependent thinking patterns. But it is absolutely possible, I promise. I pinky promise indeed. So

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let's dive into why making change can feel so challenging, especially when we're living life from the neck up.

So as emotional outsourcers, folks with codependent, perfectionist and people pleasing thought habits, we don't believe in our inherent worth as humans. And we walk through life with that burden on our tiny shoulders, believing we're not good enough or worthy of true care from ourselves or anyone else.

And while we might do all the hashtag wellness and hashtag self-care things, we might take the bubble bath and exercise and eat what feels good for us, or what we were told is the right way to eat. All of that is different than truly believing we are worthy of fully receiving love and care. I know it was for me.

I did all the things, and yet there was this block within me. This part of me that didn't believe I was worthy of being truly treated well, or that it was okay or safe to fully receive love. And I hear this same sort of theme all the time from the folks in Anchored, it's a major block to living the lives we most want to live.

And we have these kinds of blocks, most often because we learned in childhood that we weren't going to get the kind of love we needed from our caregivers. Or that it wasn't smart to take care of ourselves because it would draw attention to us. We were taught directly or indirectly that we aren't worthy of care, work is more important, something else is more important than baby you.

Or we don't really know what it looks and feels like because we didn't see or feel real self-care modeled for us by our caregivers who may have been

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more of that martyr kind of archetype. Or because we saw our caregivers taking care of themselves and not us.

There are all sorts of permutations there that lead a child mind to say, truly taking care of me in a deep way, receiving love, not just like, "Oh, thanks for the compliment anyway," receiving love, those things aren't for me, they're for other people.

As children our nervous systems were focused, as well they should be, on survival and safety. And depending on how we grew up, we learned that it was safest to worry about others, to outsource our sense of self-worth. Our genius child brains were just trying to help us manage difficult circumstances where we weren't necessarily getting the sense of safety and okayness we needed from our caregivers.

And just in case our personal circumstances weren't enough to direct us away from prioritizing ourselves, our culture is filled with messages that people socialized as women come last. And women of color come laster. Our role is to give, to care, to make sure everyone else is okay before we even begin to think about ourselves. To be a good girl, a good wife, a good mother, is to put our families first.

And just because people socialized as women entered the workforce, though to be real women of color have always been working and raising families at the same time, those societal messages and expectations didn't shift. Now we are expected to excel at our jobs while also caring for our families. Where is the us in there?

Another reason we don't take care of ourselves is shame. I hear this all the time from my clients and my friends as well. So many of us feel a lot of shame about the ways we aren't doing life right. And we also carry this

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story so often that taking care of ourselves, making change for us is selfish, and that's a very bad thing.

And when we don't have the tools to work with shame, instead of getting out from under it, it overtakes us, which makes sense. And from there, we believe we're totally effed, unfixable, and stop trying. Which is, of course, based in a protective nervous system response. We go into dorsal vagal, the checked out, disconnected part of the nervous system which lives on the pathway to feigned death response.

Which means when we are there, when we are in dorsal, we are not actively engaged in life because our animal bodies are saying, "Oh my God, don't you dare. That will lead to death. Stay in this story that you're deeply messed up forever, and then at least you won't risk annihilation."

Our egos can also get wrapped up in it in the identity of ourselves as the broken one. Especially if we were the scapegoat in childhood, which is a super common role in households with emotionally immature parents, which we talked about in episode 167. So one kid is the golden child who can do no wrong, the other the scapegoat who is identified as the one who messes everything up.

And that was me as a kid. This was the joke in my household, I would be sitting at the table with my dinner and there would be a crashing sound in another room. And everyone would turn to me and would say, "Vic, what did you do?" And maybe it was meant as a funny ha ha. But let me tell you what, it did not feel that way to my child self, to my nervous system.

I took that on to mean that things were always my fault. That I was always to blame for anything going wrong. Yes, all or nothing thinking there, but that's how kid brains work. And that's something I've spent years rewriting

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in my body and my mind. That story that I'm inherently bad, to blame, total eff up.

In my case, that led me to be deeply dedicated to doing self-work, to changing and improving myself from the story that I was broken, which sucks to carry around by the way. And for other people with other constitutions and interpretation of those same experiences that could lead them to go full ostrich mode. To put their head in the sand and to say, "That's it, I'm broken, I'm unfixable. It's not even worth trying."

And that's one of the experiences we're talking about here, the old why bother? And that can lead to a deeply held and felt fear and skepticism that getting help or trying to rewrite patterns and ways of being in the world will actually do anything. Building off our childhood stories we might try to shift how we show up in the world but, again we're doing it from that dorsal place. That story that it's likely not worth it.

And so we fall into this kind of apathy after trying the meditation, or therapy, or movement, or whatever and not seeing massive immediate change we believe is needed to fix someone is broken as we are. So then incremental change, like what we do in *Anchored* by taking tiny kitten steps seems like just not enough given the enormity of our terribleness. So we come to think it's not possible for us, that we are the one and only very most broken person in the world, so why even try?

And all of those childhood experiences and stories about us can also lead us to believe that we are not worthy of a better life, of more care, to be truly loved, to receive gentleness or goodness, to have the lover, partner, job, exercise, family, nutrition, whatever we desire because of the core story that lives within us as emotional outsourcers. That we're inherently not worthy of love unless someone tells us we are.

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And if all we're hearing and all we've been hearing is that we keep messing up, then all we experience is a short spurt of motivation and then a lack of follow through, which we assume it's because we're broken. While the truth is that we've been through some BS and our nervous systems, our inner children, our inner parts don't feel that letting us have what we actually most desire is safe because we've been denied it before. We've been directly or indirectly told that good things aren't for us.

And all of these are reasons why we don't make change, why people don't make change, why we feel stuck and like we're walking through quicksand. While it's so important to look at that story, to look at our belief that we are in fact stuck and to understand that part of the problem is continuing to believe that story, this is also where the clarion call for somatic work comes in.

For remembering the power of the beliefs held not just in our minds, but in our nervous systems, our inner children, our bodies that remind us that just changing our mindset isn't enough. We need to work with our bodies to create real and lasting change. Because while it might feel like our brains are in charge, our capacity to grow and change is truly dependent on how much capacity for change lives in our nervous system.

So with all of that said, we're going to switch gears just a smidge. So I'm going to invite you to join me in a deep breath in. Long, slow out. You, my perfect darling, tender ravioli, may be well on your way down your own healing path, you're listening to a show called Feminist Wellness after all.

And you may be frustrated that you're doing all this work to grow and change and to show up as your most favorite version of you, and your partner is on their own journey. Your family members, your friends, the people you love. And that journey does not currently include a growth

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mindset, but rather is centered on, I don't know, hitting the couch hard watching reality TV and mindlessly eating hummus.

Perhaps they won't go to therapy, or get a coach, won't exercise, or go to that meditation retreat with you, or even meditate or co-regulate for one deep breath when you ask them to. You are healing your nervous system, and you can see now that they aren't exactly regulating theirs. And you may be asking, why won't they make the changes they need to make? Why are they not taking action?

First off, I want to say I see you, I hear you, I feel you. I was in a relationship with someone like this for quite some time. They would constantly complain about how exhausted and stressed they were, how hard everything in life felt. And they wouldn't put down their phone and go to bed before two or 3am. They wouldn't exercise, meditate, stop eating foods that directly and immediately made them feel like crap, on and on.

And oh my goodness, was every emotionally outsourcing bone in my body infuriated, and frustrated, and sad, and annoyed, and frankly angry sometimes. I wanted them to want to be different, and that's exactly the problem here.

What I wasn't able to see then, and you may not be able to see now, is that they weren't making change for the reasons we just went through. Because they're on their own path and timeline. Their nervous system and inner children are where they are. They came from the family they came from. They were living with the same shame, guilt, worry, apathy, fear we just discussed.

And I wasn't in a place to see that and to give them the grace around all of that. And that part is totally on me. I wanted them to want to have different

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behaviors, and didn't realize that what I really wanted was for them to be a different person. Oops. And that once again, is totally on me. You know I'm out here to take responsibility, to own when I've effed up doing it, but I [inaudible].

I thought that if they were different, we could be happy. I could finally be happy. Woo, and pinning that on them, oh that is not kind, loving, not okay. It was me pinning my emotional wellness on their choices. Talk about emotional outsourcing. So, my perfect tender lambikins, what do you do if you're dedicated to change and your partner, your family member, the people you love are 0.0% interested?

Well, you pause, you step back, and you get curious. You ask yourself what is motivating that desire to be all up in their business? What stories are you telling about your life based on how they operate in theirs? Why is their self-care your business? Get really curious about it. Write it out. Get honest.

My love, before you started your healing and growing journey, what did you think about your partner, family or friends? What did you not think about them? How did you accept them? And how did you not judge them? You can use your former self as evidence that it is in fact possible to be happy with them just as they are now. Having seen that and felt as a reality, then you get to ask yourself if that's what you really want. That's where the work is, my love.

You get to notice that maybe what you want is not actually for them to change your behavior, but for you to have a feeling you believe is tied up in their behavior. And that sounds like, I can only feel happy, proud, good in this relationship if they do X, Y, Z that I want them to do. And when I say

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relationship, I mean all of our relationships, family, friends, partners, et cetera.

And your brain is offering that that would be so much easier if they did all the things that you think are important in the world. Your brain is offering that you can fix your problem by fixing your person and telling them they need to meditate, et cetera.

My beauty, my darling, how do you think that one's going to work out? I mean get real with me for a second, how is that going to work out, sweet pea? Probably not so hot if they change because you want them to. Is that actually going to satisfy you? I mean, be real, right? And again, I'm inviting you to ask yourself these questions because these are the patterns I was wrapped up in.

I wanted to be with someone I could be proud of in a specific way because I thought their being different would make me feel different in my life. But it wouldn't, and it didn't. And once I looked below the surface, beneath, yeah, the surface things about couching and movement and meditation, what I did come to see, and once I stopped looking to them to change to make me feel better, I was able to look below the surface and to realize that in many ways, it was more about the values beneath it all.

I didn't want to be with someone who doesn't value what I value, a dedication to growth, evolution and exploration. So from there I did the work to embody the things I once wished they would be, and continued to grow and shift. And from there, both wanted to be with someone who valued the core tenants of interdependence, mutuality, reciprocity, respect, mutual enrichment, and simultaneously did the work to be that person for me.

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And at the end of the day, it was wrong of me to try to impose my values and desires on them so I could feel something. And what I came to see is this, it's okay to want things for the people we love. And it's so much more supportive to work on our own side of the changes and to accept in a deep way that another person's desire to change or not is not your business.

Attempting to impose your desires on others just isn't okay. And what's completely your business is deciding if you want to be with someone who doesn't have the same core values as you. Who doesn't want to grow and evolve and change and travel, do whatever the way you do. Deciding that for you, that's you managing your own life, not theirs.

And so you get to be really honest, does your situation, whatever it looks like, truly work for you? It very well could be totally okay that you're on different growth trajectories, I mean, right on. Totally not a problem. You do you, they do them, cool, cool, copacetic cool. Or it could not be the right pairing for you, and that's totally okay.

What's not okay is for you to make them feel bad, or nag them, or try to manipulate them, or control them into wanting what you want them to want. That sucks, says she who did it. Acceptance is key to interdependent relating. And wanting them to change when they just don't want to is the absolute opposite of that. That's judgment and conditional love, and you both deserve better.

Now, what about when someone is in an acute moment of stuckness or spinning? That's when we can offer our support and love and care, if they want it. Totally beautiful things to do when they are consenting. It's only a gift if it's given with an open heart and open hands. You don't give a present because you want to hear thank you or want to see them using that gift or you're going to be resentful and grumpy about it.

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You get consent to offer help. If they give it, you offer what you want to offer and then hands off. Let them relate to it as they are willing and able and that is it. We leave the badgering, nagging, demanding at the door when we're living interdependently. That's some codependent business, and we're here to move past that, is that not right my perfect pain au chocolat?

What it boils down to is this, if you're changing and they're not or they're changing and you're not, it can be super challenging, for sure, for both of you. But it doesn't have to stay that challenging. We've talked about why you resent them not changing, so let's talk about why people won't like it sometimes if you do change. Because, for sure, not everyone is going to like it.

There can be so many reasons why someone can get their back up when you shift how you show up. And we're going to explore just some of those reasons why you getting unstuck, setting boundaries, getting anchored in you and finding happiness within yourself can really kick up resentment among your friends, family, coworkers.

The author and psychologist John Bradshaw talks about this as the change back demand. I don't like how you've changed because it no longer serves me, change back, I say. And that happens. People want you to change back because, come on, when you stop people pleasing, people are likely to not be pleased by that.

They may be used to you bending over backwards to take care of them and their needs, to put them first, to honor their wants in lieu of your own because it does, in a way, make their whole life a lot easier when they're the focus of your efforts and life. Then they don't have to take personal responsibility because you're doing it for them.

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When they see you making changes, maybe changes they want to make for themselves, it holds up a mirror and they may be confronted with the ways and reasons they have not been able to change. When our problems feel intractable and unchangeable and someone close to us comes along and makes changes in their own life, it can throw a lot of things into question.

Maybe all those reasons I thought I couldn't change aren't real. If Kate was able to change, why can't I? What's wrong with me that I can't change the way she did.? I told myself it wasn't possible to leave my lousy job or marriage or whatever, but Kate, she just did it.

Seeing that can be motivating for some nervous systems, but it can also lead to resentment and jealousy for others because you're making change by point out circumstances that people feel trapped in. And so your change calls attention to the circumstances, choices, mindset they live in that they feel are confining.

For example, a client of mine in Anchored, who had a lifelong history of emotional outsourcing by overworking had been doing some pretty seriously deep work with me in the program around taking care of herself in new ways. After never taking a break from work in 20 years, this is like some Dwight Schrute business, she was planning a much needed vacation for herself.

And when she mentioned it to her sister, who is a single parent to kids with complex medical needs, her sister lit into her saying, "Oh, look at you planning a vacation when I am dealing with so much. You can go on vacation, but you never show up for me." In that moment the contrast between her sister's life and that of my client was just too much.

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My client not visiting her had felt tolerable and okay when my client had been overworking because that was what was praised in their family of origin. But when my client was taking a break, taking care of herself, untenable. It highlighted everything that felt impossible in her sister's life and she sure did let my client know all about it because it showed her the ways that she wasn't taking care of herself by finding ways to take the breaks she herself needed and wasn't getting.

Maybe that other person is afraid that the changes you're making will lead you away from them. They might be afraid of losing you. Your changes might also disrupt some cozy buffering unhealthy habits you shared, like over drinking together, spending unintentional mindless hours watching TV. Note, I did not say watching TV is bad. I love me some conscious, I made a decision TV watching. Just it's the zoned out not present kind I'm calling to mind here.

Your changes may be disrupting patterns that they really enjoyed and perhaps relied on, especially if they don't know how to manage their mind and have been using those things to keep their challenging emotions at bay. Finally, they might have all of these change back feelings and simultaneously still love and celebrate the changes you're making. Both things can be true. Nuance, right?

Because they love you, they want what's best for you. And yet, they're also human and your changes can be kicking up a whole lot of feelings for them that they might not have the skills to manage on their own, so it comes out in a subtle, well, you used to prioritize me more, or you used to take care of me instead of doing things for yourself.

Or it might come out in a more aggressive, there you go, going to yoga and abandoning your family again. When, A, number one, go to yoga, right?

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Like take care of you. But also, B, number two, those kinds of lines can come out when you know full well that dinner's on the stove, the laundry is done, the homework is done, I mean, on and on. Because what's coming up, it's not about the yoga, right? It's that the only person you're not abandoning anymore is you. And that's scary to a nervous system codependent on you continuing to put you last like you've always done.

So let's talk about the remedies my love. First, remember that you are not responsible for whether or not someone else changes or how someone else feels about you changing. This is where self-trust comes in. When we trust and believe that we are living from our integrity and our values, then we can trust that we are doing right by ourselves and those we love.

Second, you prioritizing your own self-care, health, and happiness does not mean that you have done anything wrong. Even if those close to you are freaking out and giving you a hard time. It's absolutely okay for you to take care of you. And it's okay to make the changes you need to make to live your best, most fulfilling life.

I want to invite you to try to not get sucked into either trying to change them or feeling like you've done something wrong by changing how you yourself are living. Stay in your own lane, clear about your choices, understanding that if and when someone else changes, it will be on their own terms and in their own timeline. Much like how you changing came about when you were ready, and not a millisecond before.

As folks with emotional outsourcing, codependent, perfectionist, and people pleasing patterns and pasts, we are primed to take responsibility for others feelings. And when someone is coming at you telling you that your changes and behavior are hurting them, whoa, that's challenging. And it's also an invitation to pause.

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I'll invite you to look at the claims they are making and to get really curious. To ask yourself, is what they're saying true? Am I abandoning them? Or am I acting in my integrity? And am I just putting myself first in a new way or for the first time since childhood? What's going on for them? What would I be feeling if they made huge changes in how they relate to themselves and me? We ask that as a way to bring in compassion, which is a cornerstone of interdependence.

Next, we could ask, are they actually just grumped and disappointed at themselves for not changing all these years? Or are they scared and worried about losing me? What would love say here? How can I love them up while not forgetting about me and the changes I want to keep making to get fully anchored in myself?

And if you feel all swirly or stuck in this process, well that's what a good coach is for, right? Bring it to Anchored, bring it to coaching, I'll help you sorted it out real quick. And run it by the people you trust the most.

I've talked before about how important it is to have a powerful committee of friends who help you to reality check, right? Because when the neural pathways, the neural map in your brain and your body is telling one kind of story, you coming in and saying it's possible that this story has changed, it's going to feel challenging, right? It will be our knee jerk habit to go back to I'm wrong, I'm bad, I shouldn't have changed.

And so I want to invite you, if you're going to there, bring it to coaching. But also bring it to your committee, bring it to your friends. The ones you really trust, the ones whose relationships you most want, you most want to emulate, right? Those who are living life the way you most want to live life and get real with them and allow them to help you to get real with you.

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That is not codependent, it is interdependent. By getting curious about what the what is, by doing this process, it can really help you to get clear on what's actually on your side of the street and can remind you of the fact that your life is yours. And while others, family, friends, partners may be lobbing accusations at you or even directing anger at you for changing, that still doesn't mean you did anything wrong by changing the way you're living for the better, especially when your goal is interdependent living.

Again, once you get clear about what's what you may want to practice holding compassionate space for you and for them. You can remind yourself that you can indeed empathize with what they're going through.

After all, you've likely been there before yourself, feeling stuck, frustrated, unhappy, but not quite able to make the changes you may want to under it all. You can approach them with love and compassion without taking on their thoughts, feels, or problems. You are responsible neither for causing them nor for fixing them.

All right, that's all I've got for you today my loves. I hope this was supportive and is a helpful lens when you go to that holiday table with the old fam who might say change back. But you don't have to, you really don't. I won't. I'm not available to change back. 0%, 0.00%.

So if you are ready to make these kind of powerful, life changing, world altering, but slow and incremental and nervous system minded and trauma thoughtful changes in your life, the only place I know of that brings together cognitive behavioral theory, polyvagal theory, nervous system nerdity, all kinds of witchy-woo, but also based in science, right? We do the woo, we do the science, equal parts, they both really matter.

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The only place I know of is Anchored, my six month program. It's a powerful community where we heal together, support one another, practice living interdependently and supporting each other as we make radical change in our lives in a thoughtful, slow way that is safer for our nervous systems.

If you're curious, if you've been listening in and you're like, "Huh, what is this Anchored thing? Maybe it is for me." Or if you've been listening to the show and you're like, "I can make the changes I need to make just from listening to the show," sure.

And the kind of support and love and care you get, the coaching you get in Anchored will take your transformation and take it into the stratosphere. It is so powerful. I could clearly talk about Anchored forever, but I shan't. Head on over to victoriaalbina.com/anchored to learn more and to apply now. Why not, right? Applying is free, don't cost you a thing. Why not do it?

All right my beauties, let's do what we do, 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 and 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!