

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 love. I hope this finds you doing so well. I am absolutely thrilled because today, is in fact, our 200th episode. Oh, my goodness gracious, what an absolute delight. I feel so honored and privileged and grateful that I get to come and talk to you all, each and every week about these topics I hold so near and dear to my heart.

If you're a longtime listener, or if you're new, maybe you've also learned that I talk about emotional outsourcing, which is my term for our codependent, perfectionist and people pleasing habits. I talk about embodiment, presence, intuition, our theme today. Because I lived the first 30+ years of my life wildly disconnected from myself, from my body, I was frozen to the emotions within me.

And it's not that I couldn't hear my intuition, I just would hear it and not hear it. Because I was so focused on keeping other people happy with me, not being abandoned, not being rejected. Being, like being seen in a really particular way that really mattered to me then. And now, from the other side of most of that, I mean, come on. I'm still a human, with all of the socialization and conditioning and learning from my family blueprint in my mind, but as a person, largely not living as an emotional outsourcer.

I remember how incredibly painful it was. How every relationship felt so fraught. How I just didn't have a grounded sense of self. And now that I do, now that I live from this deep and resonant presence, my life is so much better in every single way. And so, it is an honor, a privilege, a delight, truly a delight, to share all that I've learned in my journey with you, with the hope that it may be supportive for you.

I wanted to do something special to mark the 200th episode; it feels quite momentous for me, I must say. And so, I'm doing a giveaway. If you head on over to VictoriaAlbina.com/200giveaway, keeping it real simple there, you can get all the details on how to join, all the prizes; the prizes are super exciting, but I'm not gonna ruin the surprise. Go to 200giveaway. Learn about it. It's so fabulous. Look at us, 200 episodes, I'm so thrilled.

And super, extra super-duper, thanks to those of you who've been with me since the very beginning. It's so wonderful to know that you're here, and you've been here.

All right, my darlings. That is, in fact, a natural segue to our topic today, which is, intuit. So, a key component of reclaiming our lives from those codependent, perfectionist and people pleasing habits. From the lessons, from our family blueprints, from the patriarchy and white settler colonialism, is to reclaim and reconnect with our bodies. Our somatic experience of being us in the world, with presence and with our intuition.

I want to talk about intuition with you all today, both because it's an important topic, and because I get a lot of questions about how to tell the difference between anxiety, depression, stress, distress, trauma, and intuition. And I wanted to make sure to speak to the role of stress, distress and trauma, and listening to our intuition.

So, we did a mile high bird's-eye trauma 101 last week. And, we will be talking about the interplays between intuition and trauma, in next week's episode. Because telling the difference, discerning the difference really, is so vital. Or, we don't really know whose internal voice, what internal voice, what is this voice we're listening to, right?

And so much of the work of healing from emotional outsourcing habits, is learning. Well, no, it's not a learning, it's remembering. Yeah, it's remembering to trust ourselves in deep ways, when few things have helped

me to trust myself overall, as much as knowing that I can deeply trust my own intuition. So, let's dive in.

As children, we learn how to human by watching our caregivers, folks at school and in society, at the supermarket. We copy what's modeled; trust Allah, monkey see monkey do. And we learn in that process, unfortunately, to ignore our most basic needs, our biological impulses and instincts. Because it's what's most often demanded of us and the systems that so many of us live in.

We learn, for example, to ignore our hunger and thirst, and to eat at certain structured times because the clock says it's eating time. We learned not to pass gas or not to use the bathroom when our bodies tell us to, because it's gauche. Or, it might inconvenience us or the people around us, or because the teacher said no.

We don't use our voices when we want to, because we don't want others to be upset with us if we speak our needs, or we say, "This isn't working for me." And we certainly don't run away when we want to, because we're not supposed to.

So, we learn, steadily and slowly, or harshly and abruptly, to ignore ourselves. To put others, their rules and plans, ahead of our desires and our own body's needs. We learned that to get through, it's safest, smartest and best, to ignore and disconnect from our intuitive self. And that we've learned to sit with a little bit of afternoon hunger, when we know that someone has made us a really special dinner.

Sure, it's sometimes thoughtful, strategic, or smart, to hear our intuition and to go another way. As long as we're making those choices thoughtfully, with intention and awareness, because we've done a little cost-benefit math and have made that decision consciously.

But problems come when we ignore or have forgotten how to listen to and trust our intuition; the parts of our bodies and minds that know what we need. And we do that as a matter of course, as a matter of habit, in ways that do harm us. Because we make unaligned choices that only serve to amplify our codependent, perfectionist, and people pleasing habits, as we continue to knee-jerk; put others ahead of ourselves.

Those who grew up in stressful or chaotic homes may have had to ignore what our deepest intuition was telling us, out of pure survival. We may have felt emotionally or physically unsafe or uncomfortable. I might have gotten clear signals from our intuition that something was off.

But because we're developmentally dependent children, meaning we were not so very goodly at doing survival things like having a job, driving a car, or making dinner, we had no choice but to stay. And, to tell ourselves that everything was okay or normal.

And we knew, deep in our core, that leaving our adults felt dangerous because they were, after all, the source of our dinner. So, instead of thinking that they were the problem, we did what children do in all their brilliance, and blamed ourselves for the family stress or dysfunction. Because it felt safer than blaming the adults.

This holds true, even when a family wasn't stressful, wasn't chaotic. But perhaps, feelings weren't talked about. Emotions were okay; there was that 'suck it up, buttercup' kind of energy. Thus, we learned to distrust ourselves even more.

We checked out emotionally, or shoved all the anger and disappointment down into our physiology, into our bodies. Which is, a quick ticket to Shame Town USA, and, again puts more distance between us and ourselves. Because now, the story goes, we are a terrible mess-up, a bad kid, a kid

not worthy of love or care, especially if we're not getting those straight A's. Or, if no one cares that we did get them.

And so, we distrust ourselves because we put all this blame on us. If your childhood didn't teach you to ignore your intuition, your socialization conditioning likely has; particularly for humans socialized as women. We are taught, explicitly and implicitly, to devalue our intuition.

Our patriarchal society values logic and reason, while being dismissive of feelings and intuition. And the thousands of ways women put ourselves out there and are ignored, or dismissed, or denigrated, teaches us to not trust ourselves further. We're told in a million ways, that someone knows better than we do; what we want, what we need, how we feel, what we should do.

I heard this all the time in my functional medicine clinic. My woman identified patients would say, day after day, that they'd been to a dozen clinicians before me, and they had told their IBS story, their SIBO story, their thyroid, chronic pain, endless fatigue, terrible periods story.

And, they had been outright dismissed. Told, it was in their head, or literally laughed at. And told things like, "There's no way that's a symptom of hypothyroid. There's no way you're reactive to fibrous vegetables. It must all be in your head."

I heard things like this when I was so sick, myself. Things that made me feel legit bonkers. Medical gaslighting will do that to you. And led me to trust my intuition, and the allopathic medical system, less and less and less. As each white coat dismissed me and told me that what I knew was happening in my body just couldn't be, because science said so.

In the patriarchy of being rationalist privilege, for the femmes and women listening, how many times have you been told, "You are not being rational,"

as a way to put you down and make you feel less than. Like I said, it's happened a million times to me in my personal life. And clinically, makes me think of a story at one of my first years as a primary care provider in New York City.

I met a patient for the first time, and I just had this intuitive, witchy, gut level knowing he had cancer; I just knew it. And I talked to my supervisor, a white cis dude, who totally gave me the brush off. I clearly remember him saying, "There is no way you can know that. You're being ridiculous." He used the word ridiculous, but I just knew it.

And I gotta say, the story turns out well. I'm glad I listened to myself and followed up on it, because the guy had leukemia. And, my intuition just knew. So, we got him into care early; he's fine. But had I not listened to my intuition, what would have happened for his life?

Similarly, as a hospice nurse, I could feel it, every single time, when someone was fixing to die. Same with being a birth doula. Transitions have an energy to them that our intuition is attuned to, that our nervous system picks up. And we get to learn to trust that once more, the way we all did as little, tiny babies of ourselves.

My beauty, intuition elucidates the space between the conscious and subconscious parts of our mind. And fills the gap between reason, what we're taught, and our instinct as animals. No one teaches a spider to make a web or a bird to make a nest. And humans have instincts, too; they get buried by societal demands and wrong lessons.

The beauty of intuition, and this is key, is that it's always self-loving. Always working in your best interest, always. It will never steer you wrong, if you listen to it. And that leads me to a big question I always get; how do I know if it's my brain talking, my socialization, my fear, my trauma, or my intuition? And, that is the topic for next week. I'm so excited to dive in.

First, I want to say this; your mind is magical and amazing. It can make decisions, solve problems, create complex scenarios, and then work through them. It takes hormones and neurotransmitters and turns them on and off. It categorizes things and judges them as safe or unsafe. It's a pretty friggin' rad thing; a human brain.

And one of the things that's dedicated to my nerds, is conservation of energy. It's one of the three core human biological imperatives; the other being to avoid pain, and to seek pleasure. In order to conserve energy, the brain uses heuristics, which are mental shortcuts that allow us to do the things we need to do quickly and with minimal mental effort, towards the goal of maintaining homeostasis, or balance.

Part of creating these heuristic guidelines, these shortcuts, is inventing dualities, binaries, dichotomies; this thing good, low risk of murdering me. That thing bad, higher risk of murdering me. Brains love categories. And we talked about this in Episode 146, on all-or-nothing thinking.

Our brains, that have been awash in codependent, perfectionist, and people pleasing thinking, extra love dichotomies, categories, biases. Because they give us that false sense of security, that comes from believing that we know, 100%, what is what; good and bad, all and nothing, safe, murder machine. "I'm a perfect success and no one can criticize me, unless I can believe that I'm worthy of love and care."

Or, "I am a complete and abject failure. I'm the actual worst, and everyone hates me." "I'm the responsible one, and no one will ever meet me with interdependence in a relationship." Or, "I'm the eff-up who needs rescue, so I tried to fix everyone else in the hopes they'll show up and save me someday."

That about sums it up though, right? When we accept our brain's habitual good-bad framework for the world, we lose out on all the beauty and

possibility and growth in the middle. Beyond the black-and-white lies the gray, and let me tell you what; the gray is where the magic is, for suresies. And while swimming in the gray of it all feels safe and okay for me, most of the time now, I fully recognize that hasn't always been the case.

And most certainly, isn't for most of my clients in Anchored. Because our brains are programmed to avoid discomfort and potential pain. And our amygdalas, the fear center of the brain, are easily activated. To remind us of, "You remember, that one time you went on that first date? You were really into them. It was so much fun. You had this great conversation, and then you got ghosted. And then, you were so mean to yourself."

So, your amygdala screams, "Don't ever go on a first date. Or, if you do, don't get vulnerable. And also, what if you do go on that first date, and it's amazing. And you fall in love, and get hitched, and have babies. And what if that person then dumps you? And here you are, with all these babies. And oh my God, no."

Which is to say, our brains base their fear and worry stories on experiences from the past, and from projecting fear into the future. All with a goal of keeping you alive. Which is why we humans have a negativity bias. Which, I'll be talking about in-depth on an episode soon.

Meanwhile, intuition. God, I love my intuition. It cuts through all of that; all of that old storytelling, all of that future forecasting. Gets right to the heart of the matter. Intuition is your gut feeling. The inner voice of knowing. That part of you that knows, like really, really, really knows what you want, what you need.

And your intuition is a part of you. Just like your inner children, and just like your smarty pants mind is. I think of my intuition as the love child of my watcher part, Episode 2, and my authentic self. The self I am when no one is watching. My private self, like we talked about in Episode 155.

And it carries the wisdom of my watcher, my ancestors, my observer. The awareness that watches me think, feel, and live. And my intuition, like yours, is dedicated to the fullest expression of my authenticity, that my favorite version of me holds most dear. The part of me that has my best interest in mind at all times, and will always guide me towards the next right choice for me, which we talked about in Episode 42.

My beauty, we all have a rational brain part, we all have a watcher, and we all have intuition. And many of us have lost our connection with that voice within; secondary to our conditioning, or socialization, trauma. And if you've felt detached from it for years, for many of us since childhood, it can feel really scary to listen to it, to follow it, to trust it.

Because in losing connection with our intuition, we lost trust in a part of ourselves. So, why would we listen to that voice that just somehow magically knows? Well, I'll say, that reclaiming our intuition, along with our bodies, our minds, our spirits, our lived experience on this planet, with love and care for ourselves and the world, that's a central tenet of my intersectional communitarian nerd-tastic feminism.

And the reason why is simple; your inner voice is yours. It's your inner compass, your inner guidance, the voice of your inner most truth. And the more connected you are with it, the more you're sourcing your emotions, decisions, thoughts, feelings, life, from within you. Instead of emotionally outsourcing, by trusting other people's voices more than your own. Which is why this work matters so deeply, especially for us, my perfect, darling, amazing, tender ravioli.

So, we're going to do two things. I'm going to share a few of my favorite ways to connect with our intuition. And then, we're going to do a practice together; a meditation to help you experience being in touch with your intuition. Because so much of my work is about the felt experience.

Sure, we love being nerds here, my nerds. We love talking about sciencey stuff, and thinking about intuition. It's important, but feeling it is key to having your intuition be a potent and powerful ally in your life. So, one of my favorite ways to get in touch with my intuition is to journal.

I like to choose a time in my day, preferably, if possible, first thing in the morning. Because the prefrontal cortex hasn't like fully woken up, so you're still in that like juicy liminal sleepy state. I will either set a timer, or my favorite thing lately, has been to write for four pages, nonstop. And four's, you know, the number's based on like, how big is your journal? How big is your penmanship, right? But four pages works for me.

I do it stream of consciousness. And my focus... And I'll do a show soon about affect labeling; it's a really important skill, really evidence-based. It's not about telling the story of what happened, but it's really about how I'm feeling. So, just getting all those thoughts, that mental buzz, out onto paper. I recommend not reading while you write, but just writing and stopping when you fill four pages.

Next, is to, and this is so fun, to make a list of the things you absolutely love doing. And, extra bonus homework; where do you feel it in your body when you're doing those things? It is so common for us to lose track of and disconnect from who we are; what turns us on, what excites us, what's fun, what brings us joy, and passion and pleasure.

That is all guided by our intuition. So, pausing to get in touch with it, is a really beautiful way to let your intuition know, "I'm back. I'm listening. I'm here to hear you." Another thing I love to do that goes with that, is keeping a hunch diary. So, every time you get a gut feeling about something, write it down. And at the end of the week, take a moment to read it.

Even if you weren't spot on, it's such a beautiful way to flex that intuition muscle. Back to the topic of the things you like to do. So, many of us just

do life from habit. We've talked about this so many times, my darling. So, before you eat, before you get dressed, before you make a decision; pause, attune to your breath.

Remember this, family, because our focus is somatics we don't change our breath; we attune to it, we listen in to it, we change it sometimes. But when we're doing these practices, it's not like, "Take a deep breath, and then ask yourself..." It's, what is my breath doing right now? And, what does that teach me?

And when you're going to make a decision, ask yourself, how would I feel if I turned left? How would I feel if I turned right? Ask your body, pause and listen for the answer.

One of the things that's been incredible for me, is really focusing on, not just moving my body every day, which is vital; I'm like a full, half-Labrador Retriever, that I have to move every single day. I mean, I don't have to; we've talked about that before; I get to. It is vibrant, for me to move every single day.

But doing something different and asking my body. So, this is what I do in the morning: I ask my body, "Buddy, do you want to go on the Peloton? Do you want to do yoga? Do you want to do Pilates? Do you want to dance? Do you want to go for a hike? What do you want to do body?" And, letting my body guide me. And then, as I'm moving, tuning into the felt sensation, the physical experience, and just noticing how it feels to move from that energy.

And moving from that energy, brings me to the next thing for us to be thoughtful of here, which is not all of us hear a voice. So, I do, but I'm tapped into my "clairs", my knowings. So, I hear a voice from my body, but not everyone does. Right? It's a gut feeling. So, it might just be a feeling, right? Feel into a feeling and let that be enough.

Because that's the other thing we do as emotional outsourcers, we judge everything. And so, if it's not like, "I heard some people's intuition is this, like crystal clear voice," it often is. That doesn't mean it has to be, right. So, feel into what that feeling is for you.

Reconnect with the earth; Pachamama, Mother Earth. Pacha means earth. Mama means mother, in Quechua, which is language of the north of Argentina, my home country, and that whole area of South America. Connect in with Pachamama, Mother Earth, Gaia, nature, whatever you call; it totally works, I don't think she could care less.

Feeling your feet on the ground, and see what comes through your body. Resource your nervous system with a plant. There's this beautiful thing... My house is covered in plants. And I now talk with them, and hear them talk back. But I have this instinctual just knowing of what they need, when they need water, when they need fertilizer.

I move them around the house all the time. Taking care of something like a plant, is a really beautiful way to awaken your instincts, your intuition, your connection. Not just internally, but externally, to finally make contact with your body.

If this is available to you, if it feels safe enough, consider pausing throughout your day to put your hand on your heart, on your solar plexus, on the small of your back; wherever your intuition may live in your body.

And so, the practice is this; pausing, attuning to your breath, closing your eyes, and asking your body; where do you want touch? And if your body doesn't want touch; where do you want connection? And bring your mind's eye, your energy, your presence there.

All right, my angels, let's do a little meditation experience of getting in touch with our intuition. And, let's just see how it feels. Before we get started, if meditation or being present in your body doesn't feel safe to you because of trauma, then my darling, don't do it; just don't. You're amazing and perfect and healing and wonderful and incredible, whether you meditate with me or not.

What's really remarkable, is you following your intuition; "Ahem," that says, "Oof, not for me in this moment." Yeah, and if that's you, three cheers, darling. Three cheers to you, for hearing it and heeding it. And know that you can still connect in with your intuition deeply, without having to do this exercise, or any kind of go-into-your-body kind of meditation or visualization. They're not for everyone.

All right, my beauty. So, if it is safe to do so, I want to invite you to close your beautiful eyes or simply lower your gaze. And I want to invite you to connect in with your feet. If you are a human with the gift of having feet, if you have the capacity to move them, I'll invite you to place them firmly on the floor. And if you don't, simply use your imagination, should you care to.

With two feet on the floor, I'll invite you to tap into presence, in your feet. Feeling your own energy swirling therein, just check it out. Just see what it feels like. If you feel nothing that's normal, too. And if you feel rainbow, bright white light, tingling, lightness, heaviness; it's all perfect. Stay with it.

I'll invite you to bring that energy up to your calves and shins, up around your knee, through your thigh. Bring that self-energy, that presence, up into your pelvic bowl, up into your belly, up through your diaphragm, into your chest and heart center. Out into your shoulders, out through your arms, up your neck and into your head. Breathing into presence with yourself.

From here, I'll invite you to connect in with a moment that your mind-body and inner children, your intuition, believe and know to be safe. We're going

to keep this really quotidian, really every day, drinking tea, deciding to go to Target, calling your best friend. I'll invite you to think of something superduper safe, here. Some low-hanging fruit that isn't a big ask of your nervous system or your intuition.

So, as you think of that moment, of deciding, "I'm going to drink some tea," feel into your body. See if you can locate a place within you that guides you to there. A place inside you that says, "Tea would be really nice for you right now, my darling." Go drink it.

See what energies arise in your body. Again, if nothing comes, that's normal, and that's natural, that's human; nothing's gone wrong. But just pause and feel into that intuitive ping. That small note of guidance, that felt sensation, that guides you to do all the things we do on any given day.

Allow that energy to satisfy, complete. Perhaps you shake your hands, your legs; reset. And now, I'll invite you to think of something that you want to say no to. We're not going to trauma here. We're not going to a big deal. We're going to, "Hey, babe, would you like a grilled cheese?" And your belly says, "I'm good." "Would you like another cocktail? Another cup of coffee?" "No, no thank you." "Do you want to go out tonight?" "I'd like to see everyone, but my gut is saying no."

Just think of a moment where you said, "No, thank you." Then feel into where that no lives in your body. Ooh, my solar plexus just came alive. Wow. It's like a red and black, swirling orb. It's heavy and radiant. It's almost like it speaks for me. It says, "No."

Now, that's my experience. Yours will likely be very different, because while we are so similar, we are not the same animal. But feel into that now, in your body. And know that that 'no' is your intuition speaking to you. Your intuition telling you what's right for you and what's not.

Feeling into that sensation of no; really marking that in your body, really anchoring into it. And then, seeing if it is possible to bring yes and no, side by each. To feel that yes, which for me, is like a vibrant wave of blue in the top of my chest. And that no, a red/black pit in my belly.

See if it is possible in this moment. Honoring it may not be to feel them both simultaneously, at once. And know, that it is possible. Maybe not now, but someday soon, for you to be this in touch with you. With a felt sensation of being you, of your wants, your needs, your preferences, your desires, your yes, and your no.

When you're ready, fluttering open your beautiful eyes and coming back to the room.

How was that, my darling? Remember this moment, this experience, the next time you're faced with making a decision; in your romantic life, around a friendship, whether to go on that first or second or 12th date. If you should stay, or you should go now. About what job or degree to go for, what town to live in.

Whatever the decision is, I'll invite you to pause and to check in with the felt sensation that we just experienced here today. I like to put a hand on my heart, you do you, and I like to pause to clear my mind. And I like to use either, the Shambala tradition of Buddhism's teaching; to label the thoughts in your mind as "thinking" and to release them.

Or, I like to use Pema Chödrön's gift of a teaching, which is to picture your mind as the big blue sky and your thoughts as the cloud. And I just let my thoughts drift through my sky-mind without attaching to them. Just letting them roll through, as I let my brain know that it's safe.

"That's okay, nothing's gone wrong here. It's just time for me to listen to my body." To have a somatic or body-based moment of connection with self. And then, I ask my body for its guidance. I quietly listen in, feel in for that calm, centered, grounded voice that is my beautiful intuition.

There are several meditations I use and teach in Anchored, to help us ground deeper into our intuition. To be able to tell the difference between mind and intuition. And I'll invite you to start with mindfulness, like we did here together.

To start by letting your body know that you love it, and we'll be listening in with ever more self-love and self-trust. Remembering that when you choose to trust your intuition, your intuition will communicate more clearly and directly. And, it's this beautiful feedback loop.

As you learn to listen, oh no, wait, it's not learning. It's remembering, right? Because we're all born with it. As you remember to listen to your intuition, even when it's telling you something you don't want to hear, which you can do for sure, you'll multiply the guidance you're available to receive every day.

My sweet darling, my perfect squash blossom, I will pause here. And next week, we'll bring some complexity to our understanding of intuition, by speaking to some of the things that can arise in listening for intuition when we have a history of stress, distress, trauma, anxiety, depression, in our lives.

Thanks for listening my beauty. I hope this was supportive. I love talking about intuition. What an absolute joy. Thank you for being here with me today for it. My darlings, 200 episodes! I just, wow. Time is wild.

Alright, let's do what we do. But first of course, go win stuff. I love winning stuff. Winning stuff is so much fun. VictoriaAlbina.com/200 giveaway It's totally free. It'll take you like, 47 seconds to enter, so go for it; why not? What else you doing, right? I mean, you're busy, you're listening to your intuition, right?

Alright, my beauties, you know what to do. 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 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 gonna be a good one!