

# Ep #236: Unraveling the Threads of Unsolicited Advice: Nurturing Authentic Connections



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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

## Ep #236: Unraveling the Threads of Unsolicited Advice: Nurturing Authentic Connections

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 and I hope this finds you doing so well. A couple weeks ago, which maybe it was a couple months ago at this point, what is time? It's certainly not linear. But anyway, I got an email from a fellow coach who I've never met or heard of who said she loves the show.

She loves my work. She loves my webinars. She loves everything I do. And she says I'm sure I wouldn't mind her adding that she finds it very distracting when I touch my hair, my face, my glasses while I'm giving a webinar. And she would advise that I stop doing that and, here's my favorite part, that I get some coaching around that.

So, I had a lot of thoughts about this. Not a lot of feels because I've done an awful lot of thought work and somatic nervous system work to not take things personally. But some thoughts included, oh wow, the audacity. Followed by, this is hilarious.

Also I had the thought, well I guess this is a feeling of deep confusion because what would coaching around touching my face, like I don't even get how coaching would sort of come into that. But mostly what I kept coming back to was who on Earth do you think you are to come into my inbox and to give me unsolicited advice? To try to tell me how to live my life, particularly as a coach who is telling me she is a coach and she loves my work.

And I thought it was worth writing a podcast all about because it's such a habit that can go unnoticed when we're doing it. Or when we're doing it we can feel like I'm just being nice. I'm just being loving. I'm being generous. I'm really going out of my way to help this other person.

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And what we don't pause to consider is consent. I have a phenomenal show all about consent in a larger way, non-sexual consent, coming up soon. I wanted to speak specifically to the advice slice of this because it's been coming up a lot in my life and my partner's life.

But yeah, it feels like, oh, I'm just being really sweet. And then I'm going out of my way to give this person feedback, to give them some thoughts. But they didn't ask for it. I certainly didn't want it. I understand that I touch my face, I touch my glasses, I touch my hair. Touching my hair is actually this really important way that I ground myself. It's part of my spiritual connection. There's a lot of Pachamama earth energy in hair, And so touching my hair is like a ritual, it's really important.

And regardless, it's not this person's business and I didn't ask for advice on it. So I want to talk about it in more detail because it can feel really crappy to be on the receiving side of unsolicited advice and can have significant implications on our relationships in every area of life. So let's talk about it.

We'll start by defining terms as a nerd is wont to do. So giving unsolicited advice is proffering up guidance, suggestions, recommendations, or sharing information that wasn't asked for, that you don't have consent to be sharing towards another person. It can often contain the word should, like you know what you should do. Or it has that gestalt of you telling another person either directly or indirectly that you know what's best for them.

This can sound like telling a buddy that you're really struggling and her asking if you have a gratitude practice instead of listening to you. That can leave you feeling alienated, isolated and like your struggles and your feelings are being negated. Like your having feelings and sharing them was a burden or a bother that she wanted to do something to stop instead of honoring those feelings.

This can sound like back in the day when a friend would tell me, a friend, a new acquaintance, someone at the grocery store or CVS would tell me they're having tummy troubles. And I would start telling them exactly what

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they should do. Oh yeah, I said “should do” an awful lot. I would tell them what they should do to heal their guts instead of just listening and then asking if they wanted my opinion. I didn’t know I should be doing that.

This can sound like so many of us, coaches, therapists, facilitators, others in the healing professions, engaging in our professional work outside of work and without consent. Like taking a person into a process without checking in about whether they want to go through there.

That can sound like, hey, I hear you that that was hard when your partner said that. Which of your parents does that remind you of, right, but you’re out for drinks with the girls and this person didn’t ask to get facilitated. But we do it if we’re not paying attention.

And in classical outsourcing style we can also be wildly indirect about our advising too. We can do things like leaving pamphlets or articles or books laying around. We can talk about, oh, so and so lost weight, quit drinking, got pregnant or whatever by doing XYZ, when the person we want to influence is around. Or we can talk about our own experience with a very pointed energy of “I’m telling you the right way to do it, how I did it.”

Or, a perennial favorite, talking about what other people are doing wrong in front of someone who’s also doing that thing as a way to sideways say, I see you living a life I don’t approve of, right? Like, oh yeah, I have this cousin and can you believe it, she gives her children cake and sugar. I’m like, ew, how could you poison your children? When you’re sitting with a friend whose kid is right there eating a popsicle. And then when they’re like, but, you’re like, oh no, I wasn’t talking about you, I was just talking about my cousin. See how sneaky it is? So insidious.

Unsolicited advice giving can sound like anyone telling anyone else how to live their life best. As though you could ever know what’s actually best for anyone else. And the unintended consequence is the advice recipient feeling belittled, ignored, unimportant, not valued, disrespected, and can lead to big ruptures in relationships.

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If someone always told me what to do when I told them how I feel or what I'm going through, you can bet your butt that past me, the one that didn't have the communication skills I have now, would have just stopped talking honestly or openly to that person. Or I would have kept the focus on them or would have played off at everything in my life was oh, just fine, thank you, so as not to be on the receiving end of all that advice giving.

Or I would have ghosted. I would have just – Well, I was never a ghoster. I would have made up some excuse, right? I felt too burdened by feeling like I had an outsized control on other people's lives. Like I didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings by ghosting.

So I would just be like, oh, I'm sorry I can't make it. Oh, I need to wash my llama on Wednesday, I can't come out to dinner. I would be avoidant, instead of just saying it really hurts when you give me unsolicited advice. And that whole thing is a wicked bummer for everyone involved, right?

So why do people feel the need to offer advice without being asked for it? Well, it can often stem from a genuine desire to help or to connect with others. I know it felt that way for me when I was in the habit of over advising without consent. I had learned all this nerdtastic stuff and I was bursting at the seams to share it from a largely loving place for sure and, there's always an and around here, right? I couldn't see my own other internal motivations because they were the proverbial soup I was swimming in.

I was so deep in my own emotional outsourcing that I had no clue I was getting all up in other people's business without their consent. Oops. As always, when we're talking about the psychology of being human there can be so many roots to any given habit. And so we're just going to touch on some other ones I see most often. And yeah, of course, there are others. And it could be none of the above as well, right?

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So offering up a heaping spoonful of you know what you should do, can stem from a lack of internal safety. And can be an attempt to create a sense of protection for the person giving that advice.

By positioning ourselves as the advice giver, we might feel a temporary boost in self-esteem and it can give us the illusion of having it all together and being knowledgeable, which can be pretty darn alluring. Especially when we don't feel like we're kicking butt in our lives. When we feel like we definitely do not have it together.

We can also give advice from the belief that it will make us look better in other people's eyes. Like they'll think we're smart and good and wise, which we believe will make us feel like more important people to them. That is, people worth keeping around.

People worth taking care of. And you guessed it, on this savanna of evolution kind of way, people worth saving when the lions or marauders come to murder the village. That's our thought, at least. Let me give this advice and seem so important that they can't live without me. Though sadly, it usually has the opposite effect and can make people not want to hang out with us at all.

Nonconsensual advice giving can also be a defense mechanism to shield ourselves from confronting our own vulnerabilities and uncertainties. A buffer against feeling our own feelings and being present in our own lives. Instead, we thrust ourselves into everyone else's feeling-scape and life and take their world on as our own. A tidy escape from being in our lives when we don't like them, when we don't feel appreciated or seen in them.

And when we feel stuck and like we can't make traction to leave marriages, change jobs or careers, to shift familial relations that we don't like or don't feel good. Because we feel so stuck and unable to make change on our side of the street, we hop on to someone else's and we insist on telling others how to make traction in their lives in a little bit of an ignore the man behind the curtain kind of move. You know what I mean?

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There's someone like this in my life and it's really, really interesting to see how she's not making the big changes in her life. She's not shifting the relationships that really just don't feel good.

And instead, at every turn is telling wildly competent humans in her life what they should be doing to get pregnant. What they should be doing about their careers. What they should be doing about grad school, without consent. I really am curious there, what she's seeking to not look at in her own life, right? It's interesting.

Unsolicited advice giving can also be a way to attempt to assert control over others and can be unwittingly quite manipulative. An attempt to change someone's way of being without their opt in, often employing guilt, shame, moralism, catastrophizing to get someone to behave the way you think is right and good.

Oh, honey, you shouldn't dress that way. If you want to succeed, no one's ever going to take you seriously. Or you're really going to ruin your kids, parenting them that way. Or everything is going to be a disaster if you don't do it XYZ way. Your way, right? The advice giver's way.

It's heavy, right? It sucks to receive that kind of intense direction. And I've got to say, it's also got to suck to be on the giving side of it too. Truly thinking that things are going to be a huge and colossal disaster if your way of being and doing isn't the right way, isn't honored above all. That's stressful all around and I have lots of compassion for both sides of that street.

Giving unsolicited advice can also be a way to control moments and situations that make us uncomfortable. Like when the people we love are having big feelings and we don't know how to hold space for those feelings, which I find often happens when we don't hold space for our own feelings. Or here's another one, when we take someone else being upset or being sad or being disappointed or frustrated and we make it mean that we have failed in some way.

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In those two situations we may try to change the circumstance of our person, this person having a feeling by recommending or insisting that they do what we think they should. As though action was the antidote to feelings, which it most certainly is not. Right, my nervous system nerds? Yeah, action doesn't change feelings. Not at all.

While the intention behind giving unsolicited advice might often be really positive or loving, the impact on the receiving end can feel anything but. Unsolicited advice can communicate a lack of trust in the other person's ability to make their own decisions and steer the ship of their own life. To live in their authenticity and autonomy. To know themselves and what's best for them.

Telling folks that you know what is best for them is the opposite of interdependent thinking, feeling, acting and being. And in fact, it's a pretty darn codependent way of thinking about relating to others. As creatures you need to fix or save, sometimes even martyring yourself for in the process by going out of your way to put your life aside to take care of them or give them advice or set things up so it could be good for them, when maybe they really don't want you to.

Getting all up in someone else's thought work by telling them how to think, feel or act can feel so negating. And in my life has historically shut me right down and has made the other person saying just look on the bright side or it's your birthday you should be happy or you should do XYZ for that concern. It just makes them feel like someone I can't trust. Someone I can't be real or honest with. Someone I have to hide a part of myself from and it just, well it just feels like poo.

So, how can we break free from the cycle of offering unsolicited advice? And what do we do when someone just keeps offering their thoughts on our lives? Well, either way, it begins with the three C's we're always talking about here on Feminist Wellness. Compassion, curiosity and care.



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If you're the offeror and didn't realize you have been doing it or didn't realize the discomfort or disconnection you may have unwittingly caused, start by taking a little breath, by grounding yourself. And remembering that what's done is done and beating yourself up for the past won't do anything to fix or change it.

And in fact, rolling around in self-blame, shame or guilt keeps you stuck right there and keeps you from taking action towards change when the past and your past eff ups is your focus, right? You see that? When the action you're taking is worrying and being like, "Oh man, I really messed up," that's all you're doing. That's the action you're taking.

We talk a lot more about self-compassion all over the show, but specifically, episode 15, choosing suffering the second era, episode 168, regret is self-abandonment, and episode 176, loving your past self, living with compassion. From there once you've developed and really stepped into some deep compassion, because I'll also say I think most people who give unsolicited advice do it because they grew up with people who give unsolicited advice. It was totally normalized for them at some point, which is why it feels so normal to do, right?

So from there, self-awareness is key. Stepping into being your own watcher, episode two, around the somatic or bodily sensations that arise within you around the urge to step out of your own lane, your own life, to shift your focus from you to someone else. Bring some awareness to the moment when you feel the urge to jump in with advice, abandoning yourself and focusing on others.

Gently, lovingly, caringly, kindly ask yourself, sweet, wonderful, beautiful, self, amazing me who is so loving in the world, am I desiring to offer this advice to genuinely help? Or is there something else at play here? What is my intention? Give yourself permission to sit with discomfort and embrace the beauty of listening without always needing to respond or step in to be the fixer.

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And listen, when your body says, yeah, you know what? Thanks for asking that question. It turns out I'm just actually really stoked about this thing that I've been studying and I really want to share about it. And when you hear that, when you hear that true excitement to share within your body, especially for my neurodivergent fam out there, because getting very excited about things as part of what our brains do and that's okay.

That's when I want to invite you to breathe, to get present and to be aware of your why without judging it so that you can make an intentional decision about sharing or not. Because sharing is not a problem. What makes it unsolicited advice is the unsolicited part. It's not getting consent. So take a breath and pause and ask before interjecting.

Take a moment to say, hey, I have something to add here. Do you want to hear it? Or hey, I have some thoughts about that. Or I have some thoughts about things that you could do for your belly ache, your baby with colic, or your dog who needs training, whatever, whatever, whatever. Let me know if you want to hear it. Those are my magic words, let me know if you want to hear it.

And just doing that, pausing for like a millisecond of consenting can go such a long way to build trust with the people you love, and strangers at the bus stop, or coworkers or whatever. And it's a really respectful way to interact with the folks in your life and just takes, "let me know if you want to hear it." What's that, three seconds? It just takes three seconds.

Healthier, more loving communication means learning to listen actively and deeply. And sometimes, instead of offering advice, we get to practice loving empathy. Validating the other person's emotions and experiences without immediately jumping to solutions. Remembering feelings aren't anything to solve, they're something to feel.

Remember, sometimes the most significant support you can provide is a listening ear and a reassuring presence. I know when I'm upset, it's what I want most. And I've communicated that to my partner and my bestest

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friends. And we've all agreed to ask each other, how can I support you? Do you want me to listen, give advice or get involved, when the other starts to talk about what they're going through.

And we do that instead of jumping to offer anything. Condolence, support, suggestions. And part of learning how to be a more active, loving listener, instead of getting into each other's business is to honor what you hear and to respect boundaries when they're set, reminding yourself to ask permission before offering advice, and really being ready to not take someone's no personally, and to accept their decision to get your advice or just your ear, or whatever it may be.

Embracing vulnerability is a key aspect of shedding the urge and desire to offer unsolicited advice, because they're often doing a cover up job for our own vulnerability when we try to jump in to meet feelings with facts. When we acknowledge our own struggles and uncertainties, it becomes easier to relate to others without trying to fix their problems.

And in my experience, it's building somatic trust within ourselves that allows us to have our own backs in a real way, which then supports us in having the confidence and capacity to just listen without feeling like we have to take on other people's problems or to make ourselves the important savior fixer.

Vulnerability fosters genuine connections and creates a space where both parties can learn and grow together. Some pretty rad stuff that vulnerability, I must say. That sigh is like, yeah, and it was really challenging to do the work to learn how to support ourselves to be vulnerable without feeling like we're going to die. Or to be vulnerable while feeling like we're going to die, but supporting ourselves by reminding ourselves that we're not going to die. It's a whole process, right? And it's been so helpful for me in learning how to hold a truly loving space.

Meanwhile, if you're on the other side of it, if you're subject to unsolicited advice, I know it can be challenging to not take it personally. To not be hurt

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by it. To not put up walls. And so I want to remind you that all of those things are normal, natural and expectable reactions to someone disrespecting your capacity to manage your life and not offering the listening ear you're requesting, and instead getting all up in your business.

And so as always, I'm going to encourage you to feel the feels. To process them somatically, meaning through your body, by actually feeling them instead of shoving them down. Instead of making someone else's habit mean anything about you at all, because it doesn't.

From there you get to practice setting boundaries around unsolicited advice so you can kindly and assertively communicate your desire for space to share without receiving advice unless explicitly requested. Some phrases I've used are, hey, thank you for sharing your thoughts and I'll let you know if I want advice.

When you give me unsolicited advice, it makes me feel, and then state how you feel. For example, disrespected, like you don't think I can handle my own life, negated, shut down. Like you don't trust me. Like you don't think I'm capable of making good decisions or handling my life. Like you don't think I'm worthy of just listening to.

Next up, hey, I'm not available for advice or suggestions, are you available to just listen? And finally, if someone persists, hey, I'm going to need to pause you right there. I'm not looking to hear your opinion, I just wanted to be heard. Are you available to listen right now?

See what you're doing there? You're stating your preference, need, and are asking if they are consenting to be on the listening side without giving advice, right? So you're getting consent too, and I think that's so important. And modeling that for ourselves, like look at me taking care of me by actively asking for consent and establishing boundaries around the consent I'm giving or not.

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It's a really beautiful gift to give ourselves and the people we love, right? The people in our world. And what better way to teach people about getting consent from us than to check in about whether they are giving consent to us? Pretty beautiful thing to do.

Finally, one of the things that I do in my partnership that's really beautiful, and I do this with my best friends. Shout out to my Marie, my Alessandra, my Juana, my Sinai. My girls, I love my girls so much, is stating upfront, stating your consent upfront.

So it could sound like this, "Marie, I need to talk about how I'm feeling and today I'm really just looking for you to listen. Are you available to just listen?" And then she can say, of course I'm available to just listen. Or she can say, I'm actually feeling really tender myself and I'm feeling like I would have a hard time listening without giving advice. So do you want to check if Alessandra is available to listen? Or whatever, I'm just making it up. But something like that.

But really, that first part is a thing we practice a lot. It's what we do. And it has really changed the landscape of giving and receiving in my friendships, in my romantic relationships. It's just been a game changer and it has been such a beautiful gift to give myself, to give the people I love, and for them to give me.

So I highly recommend it. As always, I'm going to remind you, not everyone's going to love it when you start setting boundaries, when you start being real. When you start saying, hey, I don't want your advice. Please don't tell me what to do, how to think, what to feel. Oh, you shouldn't be sad, don't be upset about that. He's in a better place.

When you start saying no thank you, people aren't going to like it. And I want to be the first to tell you it's okay. This is when you get to really double down on self-trust. And to really trust yourself that you are being a kind, loving, caring person, and you're setting boundaries. And other people might not like them and that's okay. Really, truly, truly okay.

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Yeah, I say all the time boundaries are resentment prevention. They are. They really are. And this case around advice giving is no different. I would rather have that uncomfortable moment with someone I love being like, hey, no, please stop with the advice, than resent them on the back end.

Then avoid them. Then be dishonest with them by not telling them how I'm thinking and feeling. Then when they ask, oh, hey, how's whatever? Being like, oh no, I'm fine and lying because I don't want to hear their advice on it. All of that sucks. And so I would choose the discomfort of being upfront versus the discomfort of well, being dishonest, right?

That's what I've got for you, my darlings. Stepping out of unsolicited advice giving, learning how to set boundaries and state what you're available for. It's all a journey and it starts with greater compassion for self and others, curiosity around what's driving you and others to say and do what you say and do.

And the more you can practice direct, honest, loving communication, the more your relationships can deepen and grow as you and the people in your life deepen your authenticity and your interdependence. Thanks for listening, my darling.

As always, if you're enjoying the show, I'd be so grateful if you head on over to the Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your shows, and leave a five star-rating because come on, it's a five-star show. And a written review, which really can be just like, "show is good." It can be as short as you want it to be. And submit that, it really helps to increase the likelihood that folks will find the show on search. And that's all I want to do, is be a free resource for everyone out there.

If you've already done that, thank you, thank you, thank you. And please take a moment when you're listening to the show, do a screenshot, snap a picture of your car, what do you call that? The screen. I forgot the word screen. The screen where it says Feminist Wellness podcast, post it on the gram, post it on the – I don't really go on Facebook. But post it on social

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media, tag me at Victoria Albina Wellness and share the show with the people you love. With your patients, with your colleagues, with your friends, with other parents, with other people. It really, really helps to get the show and more ears.

Okay, *basta*, enough. *Ya te di la lata* which translates to I already gave you the can, and it's what we say in Spain when someone is going on and on about something. It's like *ellas me estan dando la lata*, they're giving me the can. It doesn't make any sense. But as many ESL kids also enjoy, I love direct translation.

My love, 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. I'll talk to you soon.

Thank you for listening to this episode of Feminist Wellness. If you want to learn more, all about somatics, what the heck that word means and why it matters for your life, head on over to [VictoriaAlbina.com/somaticswebinar](https://VictoriaAlbina.com/somaticswebinar) for a free webinar all about it. Have a beautiful day, my darling, and I'll see you next week. Ciao.