

## Ep #277: Embodiment (Part 2)



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Victoria Albina, NP, MPH**

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## Ep #277: Embodiment (Part 2)

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. Ooh, how am I? Let me check in real quick. I'm good. There's so much transition in my life right now. And, yeah, I'm just feeling into my body. In this moment, as I feel into it, I feel really grounded. Let me take a pause.

In my work we feel into the soles of our feet a lot and connect with the earth that way. And as I do that, yeah, there's this feeling of groundedness that comes up through my feet, up from Pachamama, Earth Mother, through my feet into my calves, up into my body. Sigh. Really grounding. Oh, it's so nice to pause, especially when we're talking about embodiment again. It's so nice to pause and come back into my body to talk about embodiment.

I was in a training, in one of the final level trainings for Somatic Experiencing, the other day, this past weekend. And one of the women in my group, in my small group was like, "Well, everybody hates change." And it's so funny, because I love change. I find it so exciting. If you've heard the episodes where my charts have been read, and my Human Design has been read it, it all makes sense if you look at that stuff. Yeah, I'm excited.

The thing that happens for me is, because I spent so long in functional freeze and so long not embodied, I can get so wrapped up in the doing. And I'm also really good at getting things done, this is one of my superpowers. But I can get to a point where I'm moving so fast I'm doing it unembodied, not grounded in my body or the present moment. And then, I forget to eat. I forget to drink water. I forget to follow my biological impulses. And that's not good for anybody.

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That's not... I was going to say 'a great choice'... but it's not a choice, right? Because what we don't have when we're not embodied, we're not present in our bodies, is real choice.

Alright, I'm diving into the material. But this is not just hypothetical for me. It's not theoretical. It's not just nerdy book learning. It's the way I live my life. And this is new for me in the last decade, for sure. It's been profoundly life changing.

So, if you're listening to this episode right when it came out, I'm so excited to tell you that I'm doing a three-day Somatic Challenge, where I will teach you all of these exciting somatic practices. Well, they're not exciting. I'm excited about them. They're mostly calming. But I will be teaching somatic practices. Head on over to [VictoriaAlbina.com/challenge](http://VictoriaAlbina.com/challenge) to learn more about that.

And if you're ready to work with me, if you've been wanting to work with me, maybe Anchored is not... a big, six month intense program... is not what you're looking for. The Somatic Studio is 12 weeks. It's an amazing program. It's a nervous system education, somatic education. We do practices, there's Q&A; you can ask me all sorts of questions. It's a blast and it's such a beautiful community.

Every time these communities convene it is so heartwarming. Everyone supports each other. Someone asked me what my communities were like, and the first thing that came out of my mouth... because I didn't even think I just talked, like I sometimes do... was, "It's a teddy bear convention." I stand by that. It's just the sweetest, most amazing group of humans coming together in my programs, and I'm just so grateful.

I shower you with love. You shower each other with love. You get showered with love. It's just phenomenal. So, The Somatic Studio, you can learn more at [VictoriaAlbina.com/tss](http://VictoriaAlbina.com/tss), The Somatic Studio. Learn about the

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challenge at /challenge. Yeah, so much somatic goodness coming your way.

And apropos of that, let's dive in. Yeah? We are in Part 2, of three parts, applying embodiment in daily life and healing. So, last week, we talked all about embodiment. And if you're just tuning in for the first time right now, I'd highly recommend listening to Part 1, it was a good one, where I talk more about the sort of groundwork around embodiment.

Because it's a big buzzword these days for sure, and a lot of people are throwing it around. And I'm not sure a lot of people are understanding either what they mean when they say it, or what others mean when they say it. So, it's important if we're going to use these words colloquially and in our healing work. We've got to know what the heck we're talking about. Right?

So, this week, we're going to talk about it within the context of our emotional outsourcing, our codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing habits. And in this wee series, we're going to be talking about how to reconnect with our capacity to be at home with and in ourselves.

By way of a reminder, I think of being disembodied, or unembodied, as losing touch with our somatic... Soma means "body" in Greek... our somatic presence, and the intricate dance between our body and the bodies around us, the world around us.

When we are not embodied we are stuck in our heads, more engrossed in our mental loops and mental gymnastics than we are grounded in our physical selves. We are disconnected from our bodily sensations. We are not in conscious movement. And we are out of awareness of how our body relates to others in the world.

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So, maybe you're in a big important conversation... I used to do this all the time... and you're leaning forward into the side, in this super uncomfortable way, and your back hurts and your hip hurts and your neck starting to hurt, but you sort of stay in that posture because you're not fully present in your body. You recognize the pain, but don't fully, and you're just thinking and thinking because you're in a big convo, right?

When we're not in our embodiment we get stuck in our heads. We ruminate. We get tangled in the incessant flow of thoughts. And we get so accustomed, inured really, to this incessant and rarely actually helpful mental chatter that we forget there's a whole other way to exist in the world. When that's deeply connected to present moment sensory experience.

When we lose our connection to our bodies it's like switching off a vital channel of awareness. Disembodiment happens when we tune out the present moment signals from our body, including our biological impulses, and get lost in our inner world.

Picture this, you're sitting at your desk completely engrossed in a mental debate about a disagreement you had earlier, likely beating yourself up. Let's be real, my tender ravioli. Meanwhile, there's a sweet cool breeze moving through the office. The aroma of fresh coffee wafts from the kitchen, and the distant hum of city traffic floats through the open window. You have to pee but you don't even notice.

Even though these sensory cues are all around you, begging you to be present in the here and now, your mind is loop-a-looping, oblivious to the environment, both external and internal. Suddenly, a text message dings asking, "Did you remember to lock the door?" And you snap back, realizing you've been mentally elsewhere for quite some time, not doing anything that moves you forward towards your goals but just looping out of habit.

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Disembodiment also skews our perception of time. #science, right? As we lose touch with our sensory and interoceptive fields, we also lose our sense of being fully present. When we're mentally replaying that work argument, we're not here now, we're stuck back there then. That's what happens in the nervous system. You're not here and now. You're there then.

This focus on thoughts, memories, anticipations, imaginings, draws us away from the immediacy of the present moment. Over time, our capacity for somatic attention, tuning into our bodies and being present with them, diminishes. We become numb to the sensations below our neckline. Disconnected from the rich sensory world our bodies inhabit. And all of that is a wicked bummer when safer embodiment feels so darn good.

So, if you're still asking, "Hey, wait, why do we want to cultivate embodiment? I think I'm just fine, thank you." I'll say we went way deeper into this in the last episode. So, again, make sure you listen to that. And I will add three things today.

One: Somatic intelligence and resilience. When we are more able to actively step into embodiment and somatic presence, we build our somatic intelligence. The superpower to chat with, hear and decode our body's signals and messages with ever greater ease. Oh, and speed, right? Which is helpful in conversations and relationships.

Have you ever had that experience where you're talking to someone and whatever, and then an hour, or a day or a week or a month later, you're like, "Oh, I wish I had said..." We've all been there, right? "I wish I'd done... I wish I'd moved..." The more somatic intelligence we have the more we can clue in to our body saying, "Oh, hey, they're being mean," or whatever it is, and you can be speedier.

I've actually noticed that in my life, it's been pretty wild. I thought I was getting quippier because I was watching *Veep* on repeat. And sure, maybe

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we can give some credit work where Julia Louie Dreyfus credit is due. But I think it was really from more somatic intelligence. That I was more present physically, which opened up all this space for cognitive quickness. Right?

So, this kind of intelligence is a game changer for emotional regulation and resilience, helping us navigate our emotional landscapes with extra finesse and adaptability, and less Vesuvius-like explosion.

Imagine this. You are in the school pickup line. You've got your kids and four somebody else's in the car, and somebody said something or some driver does something and you start noticing the signs of sympathetic arousal. Maybe your heart's doing a little tap dance, or your breath's starting to go rapid fire, like, high up in your chest. I get sort of an empty, spacey, sparkly feeling in my body when I'm starting to get worked up.

So, through somatic intelligence, you start to notice it on a 0-10 scale when it's a .5, or a one or a two. And that can then be your cue to dial into some self-soothing magic to spark up that parasympathetic response, to bring back that calm, cool collected vibe, because you're not going to start screaming and road raging with your kids and four others in the car. Right? Right.

This work that we do around embodiment isn't just about putting out that immediate fire. Though, absolutely it helps with that, which is incredible. It's really about building up your body's resilience brick by brick. Not so that you don't get angry... I love sacred anger. Have it, please... But rather, so that you can be choiceful about when you Vesuvius and when you don't.

I just made "Vesuvius" a verb, and we're going to work with that. We're going to rock it out. You're going to be hearing it from me all the time.



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And what that does, is it makes you a powerhouse at riding the waves. My dad was a surfer. My mom was a beach bunny. That's how they met, for real, in Mar del Plata, Argentina, many, many moons ago. Isn't it so cute? But anyway, I digress as usual. We're actually changing the name to The Digression Show. No, just kidding.

But really, what this does when you focus on somatic intelligence, resilience, it makes you a powerhouse at surfing the waves of stress and trauma, in the long run. Because you can have more choice in the moment, which shows your nervous system it doesn't have to go back into the old, habitual freakout that something else is possible. How friggin' cool is that?

Two: When we disconnect from our bodies, we lose access to a profound and unique type of intelligence. Our bodies, like the earth, possess an innate, nonverbal wisdom that's often overshadowed by intellectual thinking. The body intuitively knows when it's hungry, when it needs movement, what it needs to flourish, when something isn't safe, when it's time to speak up, when it's time to leave the room. It just knows.

And it shares this wisdom through sensations in the experience of the present moment. Without this connection, we miss out on truths that our minds alone cannot grasp. Wisdom beyond our socialization and conditioning in the patriarchy, white settler colonialism and late-stage capitalism.

Lastly, being disembodied pulls us away from our sense of connection to the earth and all its creatures, who are our relations; our little primos, our little cousins. I know some of our cousins are very large; I'm looking at you right now. It alienates us from the reality of our animal nature. By paying attention to our bodies, we're confronted with the truth of our existence as animals, our place in this fragile and beautiful ecosystem, and our mortality.



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All of which should, in my humble opinion. When actually deeply felt make us better stewards of the land, gentler on one another, more loving and kind overall, and should empower us and encourage us to speak up.

So, how's the human to know if they're not embodied? I bet that's what so many of us are saying. Like, "Wait, do I has it? Do I not? Is it me?" Well, that is a totally understandable thing to ask. But it's also a silly thing to ask, you silly goose. Because we're all embodied. It's not just an on/off switch, it's a spectrum.

We can have different levels of embodiment and self-attunement at different times, in different settings. And I would posit that it's not always the actual best thing for us to be super internally focused all the time. I don't think it serves us, for realies, to be so keenly aware of and to fuss over every little internal and external experience. Just like I don't think it serves us to be checked out or dissociated frequently.

And shocking news for longtime listeners, this gal is a huge fan of what the Buddhists call "the middle path". Which means, well, it means what you think it means, it's the middle path. Not the extreme of always scanning my body, always present, always, always. Or wicked checked out, right? Middle path.

The middle path walks hand in glove with intentionality. Which I talk about constantly because it's the thing I want the very most for us, to live from choicfulness and not habit. Herein to be able to say, "I want to be super present in my body right now." To feel all of this joy, all of this pleasure, all of this grief, all of this anger. And to not choose that at other times, like when you are at TSA.

Or when you're getting a shot. Do you want to be wicked embodied while you're getting a shot? No, I'll check out a little bit. That's fine. I don't need anybody for that.

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Now, with that said, that this is more like a volume dial, it's a spectrum, who doesn't love a checklist? Right? Come on, they can be useful, right? So, I'm going to give you one. And I'll caveat that any of these things on their own isn't necessarily evidence of anything much. And most of these can absolutely 100% be evidence that you are you tired, or hungry or sad or need a little nap or some water, or you're jetlagged, or you have bubonic plague or ADHD, right? Come on.

So, as always, patterns, patterns, patterns, my nerds, patterns. Patterns are the thing to look for, my darling angel love. Not noticing a one-off thing and jumping to both a conclusion and a diagnosis, but rather looking for patterns over time. Okay? Okay.

Let's explore some more subtle signs that you might not be as embodied as you could be. Nobody said "should", but could be. Signs that aren't as extreme as dissociation. Because that's dissociation; being fully checked out, being catatonic. Those are the extremes. But these are middle path things that tell us something's off kilter, and are worth doing the math on to see what adds up to up.

And if you're like, "It me," for every single thing, no judgies. Promise yourself, maybe, no judgies. It's just more information, and not evidence that anything has gone wrong, or that you're wrong or that you're broken or busted or need to be fixed. It's just more information, mi amor. Just more information. Tranquilla, everything's okay.

Okay, so we're going to start broadly, and then we're going to do something wicked specific thing.

One: Numbness or lack of sensation. So, this can range from not feeling physical sensations to an emotional numbness, where one finds it difficult to connect with their own feelings, like we see in emotional outsourcing and functional freeze.

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For example, someone might realize they haven't felt truly joyful or sad in a long time, and they've been living in a constant state of neutrality. Or they might find themselves unresponsive to touch. Not feeling the deep warmth of a hug, or the discomfort of a tense muscle until it becomes severe. This is also the camp of folks who are in the, 'I feel mad, sad, glad.'

I was definitely there when I was deep in functional freeze. Ooh, I could get pissed off. But "glad" is not happy or overjoyed. It's like, "Oh, I'm glad." It's the sort of circle right around nothingness. You know what I mean? It's like a 1 or 2 of sensation and not like, "Oh my God, I'm so happy." Which on a scale of 0-10 is like a 274. You know what I mean? For those of you who wanted me to say 473, I've said it.

Two: Chronic physical tension. So, persistent physical tension. For example, tight shoulders, jaw clenching, stomach discomfort; like muscular tense discomfort, not like gas. That's a whole other thing. It could indicate a disconnection from more subtle bodily signals. Tension, like persistent, intense tension can reflect underlying stress. I mean, that's kind of "duh". And emotional suppression.

So, imagine a person who always has a stiff neck and tight shoulders by the end of the workday, but never considered how stress might be affecting their body because they're not really clued in to the tension. They just know it's there, but they're not feeling it, but they're feeling it. If this is you, you're like, "Mmhm, I get that." Because that was me, and that description, thought it sounds vague and weird, I was like, "Oh, yeah, that was it."

Or maybe you wake up with a clenched jaw and you don't connect it to your constant worrying, overthinking, ruminating. You're like, "Well, I guess I just have TMJ." Rarely is TMJ, just TMJ. In my experience, lo these 20+ years, there's usually something emotional back there.

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Three: Difficulty identifying emotions. This, again, is the mad/sad/glad. Without the ability to tune into bodily sensations it's super challenging to identify and name your emotions. Emotions are felt in the body, and disconnection from these sensations can lead to a lack of emotional clarity.

For instance, someone might feel overwhelmed and irritable without understanding that they're actually feeling anxious or scared or sad. Or they might feel a heaviness in their chest but not recognize it as sadness. Leading to frustration, or their inability to snap out of it, which is impossible when it's a feeling you're not feeling. You can sort of move on the surface, but you're not moving through.

Four: Reliance on others for emotional regulation. When disconnected from one's own body, there's a tendency to rely on others to regulate our emotions. This can manifest as seeking constant reassurance, approval or validation from others.

For example, someone might constantly text friends or family for advice on every minor decision, because they're unable to trust their own judgment. Because their judgment is in their brain, where conditioning and socialization are, and our survival skills. Like, "I don't know how to make good decision. I'm not trustworthy." That all lives in your brain, not your body.

Or someone else might frequently ask their partner if everything's okay, that sort of emotional monitoring. Needing constant affirmation to feel secure because they don't feel it in their body. Specifically, this can look like mindless eating. So, if you find yourself munching away without even realizing it, only to look down and see the bag of snacks is empty, that can mean that you're really checked out.

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Because when we eat without tuning into our bodies, we miss the cues of hunger and fullness, and it's a sign we're disconnected from our physical experience in that moment.

Fidgeting or restlessness. So, if you're constantly unintentionally tapping your foot, twirling your hair, getting up to move around without a clear reason, these little behaviors can be your body's way of signaling that it needs your attention and connection. And so, the root cause of that fidgety, that can be you're taking too much B-2, you're having too much coffee, you're exhausted. There can be one bajillion reasons. But irregardless, it means your body, it's waving a little flag saying, "Excuse me, look at me."

Next: If you notice you're holding your breath, especially during stressful moments, if your breathing is shallow and rapid, that can mean your body needs a check in. Our breath is a direct line to our nervous system, and when it's out of sync, it's a sign we're not fully present in our bodies. Or we're in an activation or disconnected state.

Losing track of time is next; hours slip by without you realizing it. You look up from your work, your phone, your book, and you wonder where the day went. This can happen when we're so wrapped up in our heads and our to-do lists and our doing, not being, that we lose touch with the physical flow of time.

Bumping into things, tripping, knocking things over more than usual, can be common when we're not embodied because our spatial awareness can diminish, leading to these wee, little mishaps. Raise your paw if you're constantly covered in little bruises. I used to be, for sure. I'm not anymore, because I'm actively doing somatic practices, actively coming back into embodiment, into presence and awareness. But man, my shins were a mess, like most of my life.

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Unexplained aches and pains, tension headaches, tightness in the neck, shoulders and jaws, are your body's whispers saying it needs some TLC and your conscious presence. Note, that hyper awareness of painful body sensations is the flip side of the 'not checked in' coin. Distraction during physical activity, whether you're exercising, doing yoga, taking a walk. If you find your mind wandering instead of being engaged with what your body is doing, that could signal some clear disconnection from your embodied experience.

Skipping meals, not drinking enough water, ignoring the need for a bathroom break... we've been sort of peppering this throughout... those of your biological impulses, right? And so, these small acts of checked-out-ness can accumulate and can be signs that you're not tuned in to what your body needs. Also, that your hormones are wonkers. But again, like I said, it's rarely one thing, it's a combo.

Ooh, this one: Difficulty relaxing and resting. So, even when you have the time to rest, you find it hard to actually let go, actually relax. Your body might feel tense, or your mind might keep racing, preventing you from settling into a state of ease. This is a big one for folks in both Anchored and The Somatic Studio, so we talk about it a ton.

I'll do a whole show about resting and how it's so challenging for those of us who grew up in emotional outsourcing. Those of us with a history of stress, distress and trauma. Ooh, it's just challenging for so many of us. Right? Right.

As always, I do want to pass the mic. Tricia Hersey is incredible. She is the head reverend. I'll look it up for the show notes, but she runs The Nap Ministry. That woman is phenomenal. If anyone knows Tricia, and she wants to come on the show, the mic is yours, please. I'll just hush. Share your brilliance with the people. She's incredible. Check her out.

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But yeah, it is challenging for us to rest and relax. I would sit down on a Friday night to watch a movie and be like, “Oh, let me get some snacks,” for everyone but me right? “Oh, I'm just going to throw some things in the dishwasher. Because if I start it now, then it'll run while we're watching the movie, and then it'll be done. And then, I can put it away before we go to bed. And then, I can fill it back up. And then....” I would do that instead of resting.

Oh, you know what I would also do? We were talking about this in Anchored the other day. People were like, “Oh my God, I do that so much.” You're on your phone on Instagram, because you're allowed to do that because you're an adult, or you're playing a game. You're doing something fusty and not watching TV.

You're doing the things that your perfectionist habits tell you aren't good enough or worthy, or things that will be praised in perfectionism, and then you hear someone's keys in the door, or someone comes into the house, and you immediately put your phone away or open a spreadsheet. Yeah, I used to do that all the time. It's that fear of being caught resting. That, “I'll be judged. I'll be told I'm not good enough. I'm not working hard enough. I'm not perfect enough.” That one's a kick in the teeth. Yeah, embodiment.

There are so many layers to all of these, right? But anyway, finally, I'll often have clients, in both Anchored and The Somatic Studio, tell me they came to work with me because they know they're not present in their bodies. It's just a knowing that they have. They know that they're living from the neck up, and that so much more is possible when they're fully present in their lives, through their bodies.

And maybe, just maybe, because you listened to all of Part 1, and you're here listening to Part 2, maybe it's you. Maybe, just maybe. Remember, having read out this quite long list I compiled, like we talked about in Episode 105, buffering versus conscious distraction. It's not only okay to be



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disconnected from your body sometimes, it's healthy, normal, to be expected.

It is not the most supportive thing for a human psyche mind/body/spirit to be 110% checked in and conscious of our bodies all the time. Oh, no, no, we're not built for it. By nature, our bodies, our nervous systems, they pendulate. Think of a pendulum, or like a little metronome. Tick-tock, tick-tock.

So, sometimes we're wicked checked in, and sometimes we're not. Sometimes we're washing the dishes on autopilot, or zoning out in a hammock in the sun, and then we're tapping back in when a loved one calls your name. So, don't go to extremes. You're doing great, and maybe you want to bring some more conscious embodiment in sometimes. Maybe you want to check that out, middle path, my angel, my tiny, perfect teddy bear, middle path.

I'll pause here, lest I get way too long in the tooth. I'm so bad at euphemisms in English. It's funny, my English is decent, right? It's decent for it being my second language, not lousy some might say. But the euphemisms, the American sayings, I feel like I'll never get them.

I just learned very recently that it's not "Let's jump off that bridge when we get to it. Let's jump off that bridge when we get to it," which is how my mom says it. Apparently it's "cross that bridge." I don't know, my mom's jumping off. So, there you go. Oh, my goodness gracious, brains and culture. Right? Funny.

Anyway, thank you for listening, my love. If you're thinking, "I want to be more embodied, that sounds so rad and also dope. But for reals, I need it," then I sure do have a treat for you. As mentioned, I'm offering my 12-week program, The Somatic Studio, once more. We start July 1st. I'd love to have you there.

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You'll learn practical, applicable, nerd-tastic science, somatic practices you can start using ASAP... While you're driving carpool. While you're at TSA. While you're at the supermarket. While you're having an intense conversation with your partner, your boss, your cousin, your neighbor... so you can stay grounded and present and aware, and really there in the moment.

So you can have all of your wits about you, and you don't need to ruminate about nothing, because you were actually there and said what you wanted to say, responded how you wanted to respond. Right? You didn't go all Vesuvius.

And so, the other half of that, of course, is learning somatic practices that hold space for you to freak out, to have the huge reaction, to let it all out. So, we're going to do both. We're going to learn all the nerdy science. We're going to learn some smart somatic practices. We're going to support our nervous systems, regulate. It's going to be amazing.

We're going to do it in community. We're going to have a teddy bear convention. I can't even wait. [VictoriaAlbina.com/tss](http://VictoriaAlbina.com/tss). And if you want to join The Challenge, that's [VictoriaAlbina.com/challenge](http://VictoriaAlbina.com/challenge) But if you're ready to go in TSS, join us. I'll send you some little treats. It'll be a good time. I can't wait. Oh, we're going to have so much fun.

Alright, my beauty. 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 heal, 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](http://VictoriaAlbina.com/somaticswebinar)

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for a free webinar all about it. Have a beautiful day my darling, and I'll see you next week. Ciao.