

## Ep #336: Why We're Lonely: Unpacking Modern Friendship Dynamics with Anna Goldfarb



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Béa Victoria Albina, NP, MPH**

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## Ep #336: Why We're Lonely: Unpacking Modern Friendship Dynamics with Anna Goldfarb

This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, somatics and nervous system nerd, and life coach Béa 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. We have a really fun guest on the show today, a woman whose work is really fantastic. I just read her book, *Modern Friendship*, and just had to have her on. I'm going to read her like very official bio for you.

Called "The Friendship Explainer," Anna Goldfarb's reporting on friendships has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *Time*, *Vox*, and more. Her book, *Modern Friendship: How to Nurture Our Most Valued Connections*, explores the challenges of navigating adult friendships in a hyper-fluid world. She also publishes *Friendship Explained*, a Substack newsletter that explains the mechanics of friendship through a pop culture lens. And I am so thrilled for her to be here to talk to us.

Friendship can be a really challenging thing in our world when we have been really deep in our emotional outsourcing, our codependent perfectionist, and people-pleasing habits. It can feel like sticky and confusing. We cannot understand how to friend. And if that's landing, I think you know exactly what I mean of like, how much should I do? How much should I reach out? How much should I expect? I don't want to be too needy. Like there's a lot of anxiety and agita and angst that can come up for a lot of us around friendship. And a lot of us are feeling quite lonely these days, particularly in this moment in COVID, in this moment politically, a lot of us are experiencing a lot of loneliness.

And so, this is something we've been talking about a lot in *Anchored*. We've been talking a lot about in the *Somatic Studio*. My clients are really bringing this to the fore. And so I'm excited to have Anna here to share what I think is going to be a very unique take on friendships. And we had a lot of fun talking. So, take it away.

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Beatriz Victoria Albina: Anna, thank you so much for being here.

Anna Goldfarb: Thank you for having me.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: I'm so delighted to talk with you because I've been doing so much thinking about things like shame and loneliness, which led me to thinking about friendship. Right? Loneliness, friendship. And this is your expertise, right? Is talking about modern friendship. So, would you tell us a little bit about your work?

Anna Goldfarb: Sure. I'm a journalist. I've been reporting on friendships, relationships, communication, pop psychology. I've written, I've reported hundreds of pieces for The New York Times, The Atlantic, Time Magazine, Washington Post, Vice, Vox, The Cut. I've written a ton because I'm I'm a feral child. I am like the Jungle Book kid and I've always been so perplexed at these skills that aren't necessarily taught. But we live in a society where the stakes are so high that I feel like if I don't meet the moment with my friends, if I don't know how to comfort them or validate them or support them, people will just move on.

It's such a strange world that we live in where we expect our friends to be like a mother, a sister, and a best friend, and a therapist, all rolled into one. And I realized I just wasn't prepared for like any of those expectations. I just didn't know what I was doing and I just wanted to learn about it more.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah. Will you tell me more about this shift and what you're seeing?

Anna Goldfarb: Well, I think friendships are more confessional. You know, there's a lot more vulnerability expected of, tell me what's really going on with you. And, you know, I studied sociology in college back in the day at Barnard.

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Beatriz Victoria Albina: My sister went to Barnard.

Anna Goldfarb: I love Barnard. I wrote my senior thesis on talk shows. And my senior thesis advisor was like, "This is dumb, Anna." He's like, "You literally just want to watch TV and this is a terrible idea." I'm like, "No, no, no, like, there's something here." And I looked at Jerry Springer, Ricky Lake, and Oprah. And it's been so prescient. It's like, this is our culture.

You know, Ricky Lake was so much about giving underrepresented voices access, this platform, just like how Twitter is. It's like now you have people that are marginalized using their own words and coming up and really shaping culture. I didn't mean to go off on this tangent, but Jerry Springer is a morality play, like, look at these horrible people. And that's sort of what politics is. It's like, you know, look at these, this is entertaining. You can't look away. That's what wrestling is.

And Oprah is really about this religion without God. It's all very much the universe, it's very, you know, spiritual and this perspective of a religion without God. These entities have really shaped our culture and modeled for us of, this is what friendship looks like. It's confessional. Let me tell you all my deepest, darkest secrets. Let me tell you about, you know, my medical issues. Let me tell you what's, you know, not for everyone, but for a lot of people, that has become a new expectation of, tell me what's really going on with you. But we're not always prepared to handle that. We're not mental health professionals. Our problems are so much more complex nowadays.

I mean, even our identity has gotten so much more complex. And of course, our interpersonal relationships are bound to reflect these changes in culture. So even like who are you isn't as easy to answer as maybe it was for our grandparents. Like, who are you? Well, I'm this religion. I was born here, I live here. Now it's so much more complicated. It's not just one identity. And we shift between identities all the time. So that influences who we seek out and why.

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Beatriz Victoria Albina: I guess I'm not sure that our identities have changed. I think we maybe just have more language for it.

Anna Goldfarb: Well, am I a parent or not a parent? That's not even something that women were given a choice about before. You know, in the 1920s, if you're a woman, you're married and you have children. Now, it's, well, am I married or not married? Am I child-free? Am I childless? Am I divorced? Am I separated? Am I a widower? It's like there's all these new categories.

I've referenced this book a lot. It's called *Our Worst Strength* by James F. Richardson. And he talks about individualism in America and how it's shaped our culture, our behavior. And he talks about our this explosion of identity choices from the 1920s to the 1970s. And it's been exponentially more identities.

You know, think about the 1950s in a suburban tract neighborhood. All the men worked, all the women stayed home, all the women had children, all the women had a few jobs they could choose from. There wasn't as much differentiation. And now, if you gathered my neighbors, you would see a range of identities of, well, I'm a divorced dad, well, I'm a single mom, I'm a I don't have any children. It's like, well, what do we connect on? What are our shared experiences? It's just become a lot more complicated.

We're not dealing with the same pressures and challenges. I mean, it's, it's just so different. We have so much more choice now. I could go off on this more, but all of that to say, to come back to friendship is that we have unlimited choice on who we can be friends with and that hasn't always been the case. Even men and women working alongside each other has only been for a few decades. Men and women becoming friends with one another is culturally new. Those are new things to negotiate. Women going to college and having advanced education is culturally new. This all impacts who we seek out and why of, you know, what do we have in common? What do we connect about?

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One of the things I go to great lengths talking about in my book is desire for friendship. Where does desire come from? Desire is the gas in our car. Like if you don't have gas, your car, I don't care how nice it is, if it's a cyber truck or a Ferrari. I don't think cyber trucks even use gas. They're the worst car. Whatever. They need energy to move forward. So where does energy come, where does desire in a friendship come from? And what I learned is that every friendship needs an "about," and the about needs to be clear and compelling for both people to keep the friendship active.

So it's like, all right, things are changing, but it's not unknowable. It's just like you said, we need a language for it. Of this is why some friendships stay active because there's a clear and compelling about. There's a reason to keep it active.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah. We just finished rewatching \*Mad Men\* and so my brain is thinking about how you see that incredible shift across American culture in the like, what is it, span 30 years or 20 years?

Anna Goldfarb: Yes, and way more choices that weren't even considered choices before. Even about like keeping your family close is a choice now. Before, it's like, you know, family has so much influence and your religion has so much influence. And now it's a new choice that's perceived. Well, do I want to follow a church? Do I want to listen to my parents? Do I want to, you know, it's these choices that weren't even perceived as choices. It's fascinating to me that our interpersonal relationships are mirroring these unlimited choices.

And we can become friends with anyone anywhere and it's about our interests. If we're into turtles and we go on a Discord for turtle enthusiasts, there's my best friend in Australia. We've talked about turtles all day. Right, right. But then if you're like, "Oh, actually I like, you know, salsa dancing more than turtles," then your friendship might suffer because it's not as compelling to you to talk about turtles and you're going to go off salsa



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dancing. So that's how we work. That's how we choose who to keep close and why.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah, which makes so much sense. Absolutely.

Anna Goldfarb: Yeah, I've never seen it laid out like that. I've never seen friendships talked about like that before in almost a diagnosis, like a diagnostical way of, well, why does anyone do anything? What, why does anyone do anything? And how do friendships fit into our calculus of what am I doing with my time right now? Who am I yearning to spend time with? You know, who do I prioritize spending time with? Who do I enjoy spending time with? These are all really pertinent questions. So, that's what I wanted to do with this book.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah. And so, we know that there's an epidemic of loneliness, right? That's a huge issue. And I'm curious what you learned about that in your work on friendship.

Anna Goldfarb: Well, I think loneliness is inevitable in a society like ours that's hyper fluid. You know, we move around so much more than any other time in history, than any other generation. What that means is we live in a - our social networks resemble a spoke, like a bicycle wheel where we're in the middle and we have these branches of cohorts reaching out. Children, not children, people from our childhood, people from school, people from our jobs, people in our neighborhood, people from our hobbies, but they only share common history with you, not with each other. And that makes it so much harder to have cohesion.

And we don't have help keeping these relationships active. We have to, the burden has been shifted onto the individual to make a case. We are our own social directors. We have our own clipboards, each of us, of, okay, what is, who am I reaching out to and why? Who am I interested in seeing and why? We all have our own calculus for what that looks like. We don't have, even just a few of our grandparents, they had more help. They had

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help with their institutions putting on events. They had help with their bridge club or you know, they're so part of, they were such a part of society and community. They were part of clubs, they were part of groups. So the burden wasn't on them to come up with reasons to get together. Now, modern friendship is most likely reaching out to a friend, one on one, saying, "Let's get together, let's get dinner, let's get a drink, let's get coffee."

And we have to individually come up with a reason why. Why should we get together? And that can be really challenging when that about is unclear. And that's why we flake and bail and, you know, withdraw from certain friendships. It's because the about isn't clear or compelling.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: So how do we get clear and compelling abouts for our friendship?

Anna Goldfarb: There was a study done in 2020 which found the five reasons people tend to make friends. And the first reason was career, you want people to help with your with your job. The second was meeting. You want to meet people to potentially date. Third is emotional support. Fourth is, this is such a, like a pop quiz. Fourth is hobbies and passions and fifth is sociability, which basically means you want to be out and about. You join a book club just to be with other people.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Social engagement. Yeah.

Anna Goldfarb: Yes. So you can see when your friendships naturally fall off a cliff after 30 and that's because windows start closing. And take career, if you're not in the same field as your best friend, you may not prioritize that friendship as much as someone who can help with your career. You know, for meeting, when you couple up, that may not be as compelling to you to go out partying to meet people to hook up with. So then what are you left with? Emotional support, hobbies and passions, and sociability.



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So now you have three reasons to reach out to friends. But if you have a baby, if you're grieving, if you've just moved somewhere, emotional support may not be as compelling to you to provide other people. You know, if you have a baby who's depending on you and your friend's like, "Oh, I've had a hard day." It's like, I have a baby. It's not as compelling to me to give you emotional support right now. Sorry.

And then you could start seeing windows are closing and closing a little bit more. So we have to negotiate with one another to say, "Well, what are you interested in now? What are your, what can I help with? What's important to you? How can I help you achieve your goals and dreams?" But that's not what friendship is sold to us as. Friendship, you know, in popular culture, is people reaching out to us and saying, "I want to be part of you. I want to be part of your life. Like, I want to throw you a surprise party. I want to be there for you." But the reality is, friendship is us reaching out to people that we admire and care about and saying, "How can I be there for you?" So that, there's a disconnect with, I think, expectations of what friends do for us.

And studies show that people think they'd be happier with more friends, but what actually makes us happier is to be considered someone's best friend. You know, that's a good measure of our inner beauty, our good character, our integrity, than just saying I have friends, it doesn't really point to that. I mean, our friends are, our phone is full of friends that we love, but we don't call them. We don't reach out to them. That's a big question I wanted to explore is, we already have a collection of friends, but we're not reaching out to them.

And people are like, "I want more. I want more friends." It's like, you already have a ton. What's going on with that? How about we manage the collection of friends we already have and work with that instead of, I want new, I want more, I want new. And it's like, do you even know how to handle the ones you have? You know, it's like almost cat hoarding. It's like, well, do you know how to take care of the ones that are in your care before

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you start amassing more? This is, that was an interesting, interesting question to me.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah. I'm thinking about my audience and, you know, what we talk about here is emotional outsourcing, our codependent perfectionist, and people pleasing habits and how we can shift those towards interdependence. And so, I can imagine a lot of people are listening and they're like, "Yeah, except that I'm the only one calling. I'm the only one texting. I'm the only one proposing dinner. I'm the only one cooking dinner." Right? We are the reacher outer. So what, what would you say to us then, who have been the one reaching out and are maybe getting a little tired?

Anna Goldfarb: Well, I think that are you reaching out to do things that you want to do or do things that help your friends? And I think there is, that's a bit of a hard truth of, "Well, I want a glass of wine." So I'm going to call my friend, "Hey, do you want to get together? I want a glass of wine." And your friend will be like, "Well, I'm actually, I don't want a glass of wine. I'm actually really busy. I'm actually having a tough time." Like, I'm actually, blah, blah, blah. So that's the disconnect as opposed to reaching out to a friend, "What's important to you right now and how can I help?" Like, "What are some goals? Do you want to move your body some more?" "Oh, I'll do that with you. Do you want to go..." So then your friend's invested because it's something that they already want to do. I think that's the difference. It's not, I want friends to get together. I want to go out. I want a good time. It's, what do you need right now?

Beatriz Victoria Albina: It's interesting. My brain went to toddlers and parallel play. Right? And what I'm hearing is the problem with how we approach modern friendship in the modern era is we treat it like parallel play. You come to the table and drink wine. I sit across and drink wine. We BS. Good night. But really, it's about actually stepping into interdependence and leaning into mutuality and reciprocity in action, not just in word.

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Anna Goldfarb: Yeah. And it's going back to those reasons why people make friends. What do they care about? If my friend cares about her job more than anything, what I do is I go on work trips with her. I support her job. If she cares about her kids more than anything, I'll go with her to get lunch with her daughter. I want to support her other relationships. And then she's more likely to include me because I see her for all the roles that she plays. I'm here to support all of those other things. If I came with the energy of, "Well, I want a friend to listen to me and my problem. I want you to be available to soothe me."

It's a very different energy to be like, "I love you. I want to be your friend for a very long time. And I see that you care about your dog. So why don't, I'll come with you to the vet to pick him up when he has an operation." That's a very different friendship than come meet me for a drink. Not that we don't do those. Like, we do, do that, but it's the other part. You know, a lot of it is prioritizing. And I spend a lot of time in the book of, you cannot be an outstanding friend to everyone you've ever met in your life. You really need to pick a few. Success is in the container of these are the few people I'm going to practice this with. And I think where people make a mistake is they try to keep every plate spinning and they treat these relationships equally.

And social media reinforces that of like, "Well, here are all your friends flattened in a feed. They're all equal. Your old coworker and your cousin and your ex-boyfriend's new wife, like, they're all there and that's not helping us." I don't need to know this much information about people who aren't in my inner circle. And that's what social media distracts us with.

Once I started learning about how to have more nourishing friendships, I naturally pulled back from social media because I don't need to know this much information about people that aren't the VIPs in my life. I don't need to know this much about anyone. I take it for what it is. It's like an interesting tool to keep track of colleagues and show support, but I don't mistake it for actual friendships. You will, you will not see pictures of me

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with my best friends on social media because we're busy being together. We're busy doing stuff that we care about. And that's the, that's the message that we're not getting. I think people think social media is real life. "Oh, my friend didn't like my thing. What does this mean?" My friend didn't do this. And it's like, "This is a simulacrum of intimacy. This is not true intimacy."

Beatriz Victoria Albina: To go back to something you said a little minute ago about that shift from friends you just have dinner with or do an activity, sort of a neutral activity with versus step up and stepping into someone's life, I think this is going to be mind blowing for a lot of people because I can't imagine most of us are like, "Yeah, I'll come to the vet with you." Right?

Anna Goldfarb: Well, it takes a lot of time. I mean, I, well, so here, let me in the first week.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Sure, certainly. But the point I want to make is like is a different one. Is and yeah, of course, like that's super creepy. Like, "Hi, it's really nice to meet you. Do you want to go to the vet?" That would be weird. Okay. But what I think it takes to be able to do that is real emotional maturity and to not be projecting all of your unmet emotional and attachment needs onto a friendship and to allow your friend to actually be your friend and not, you know, what where we started off with, like a surrogate parent, therapist, right? And so it takes like a real reimagination of friendship to not only, yeah, make the demand that it be in this neutral setting where you can project onto others, right?

Anna Goldfarb: Well, it comes down to the about. You know, with my, with my best friend, one of my best friends, we have several of those abouts. We have career, we have, not so, we don't really do meeting, but emotional support, hobbies and passions, and sociability. We have four out of the five reasons people make friends, easily. So, it's interesting to see this is why we make time for one another because there's so much overlap. This is why she's my best friend.

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So it's interesting when you start looking at what's our about? Why do we get together? Why do we make time for one another? And it's not, it's because we have those, how do I say it? We have those interests, we have those clear and compelling abouts for both of us. Right. Like why does she want to be my friend? I don't think people spend any energy thinking, "Well, why would people want me to be their friend? What do I bring to the table? How am I helping them with their life and their goals and dreams?"

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Well, I would posit that my audience thinks way too much about it. Like way too much in that people-pleasing codependent thinking way where it's an abnegation of self.

Anna Goldfarb: But it's their own anxiety. They want their own anxiety.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: 100%. No, no, no, no. I'm not saying this is a good thing. I'm saying here's an opposite case where it's it becomes the *raison d'être* of everything is to let me please you, let me do for you, let me, but not as your authentic self, but as a projection of self. That's where I was going earlier, right? You're projecting this, "Look at me this way. Think about me this way. See all I did for you?" Right? "Think about me the way I want and need you to so that I can feel okay in the world."

Anna Goldfarb: You are exactly right. It's the authenticity.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Authenticity, which leads to intentionality

Anna Goldfarb: Yes. And, you know, I learned that people pleasing is a form of lying because you're agreeing to do things that you don't actually want to do.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah.

Anna Goldfarb: And lying is one of the biggest friendship killers. There are three: lying, disclosing someone's secrets, and not being there when you're needed. Those are the, that's when someone will usually pull a plug on a

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friendship. And people pleasing is lying because you're exactly like you're saying, you're not being authentic with your needs, wants, and availability. And so then your friend doesn't ever feel like you're fully honest with them of what you can and can't do.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: And I'll remind those listening that all of that capacity to either be authentic or not has to do with the window of capacity in your nervous system. You're not a bad person. You're not, you know, trying to lie and be a meanie pants. I just want to make sure they hear it because I hear them crying on the back end of like, "Ah, this means I'm a terrible person." No, angel. This is your survival skill. You're doing your best. We're going to do it differently now that we understand it.

Anna Goldfarb: We're going to do it differently. And part of the reason is why. And why is because you're lying to your friend and that's not cool.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah.

Anna Goldfarb: And I've started holding myself to a higher standard with my friends. And part of my commitment to my close friends is I will be authentic with what I can and can't do. And that will make your friendships feel more nourishing because you're being honest.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: I can already hear folks feeling like that rubs up against, you said there were three reasons that relationships fall apart, lying, something, and not being there when people need you.

Anna Goldfarb: Disclosing secrets.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Disclosing secrets. Oh, that's so meanie pants, it didn't even land. Not meanie pants, but just like, yucky.

Anna Goldfarb: Yeah. It's a betrayal. You know, these betrayals, like these things feel like betrayals.



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Beatriz Victoria Albina: Oh, yeah. I mean, I've definitely walked away from several friendships when like, "Oh, so and so told me such and such about you." And I'm, wait, what? Yeah, and it's very hurtful. And so the third part was being there when someone needs you. Can you talk a little bit more about that? Because I know what we struggle with in emotional outsourcing, again, is putting ourselves last to be there. So, yeah.

Anna Goldfarb: It's such an interesting question because I can see how this can happen in a friendship, especially if you're conditioned to not ask for help. If you're conditioned, you know, we live in an individualistic society where we're encouraged to not rely on people. Asking for favors from friends can feel gauche. I'm not sure if I'm saying that word right, but it can feel like gauche. I love that I'm trying to sound smart. These are just words. Like, like asking for favors from friends can feel deeply uncomfortable, especially if you're conditioned to just, you know, suck it up and be on your own.

But part of that, the consequence of not reducing uncertainty, you know, I have like eight thoughts going on through my head at the same time right now, but it's really about reducing uncertainty and it's so easy to generate a narrative with what you're seeing. For instance, you know, my dad died of COVID in January 2021. And it was really eye-opening that some friends who I thought I would never hear from called and some of my closest friends, I thought they'd send like a cheese plate, you know, something like - I didn't hear from them.

And I think that in times of tragedy, there's a lot of uncertainty. And I was feeling really confused about what I was seeing. Like, "How come my closest friend hasn't reached out? How come she hasn't been like, 'Let me take you out. Let me...'" You know, some friends did, some friends didn't. And what I learned was that for socially anxious people who aren't sure what to do, they can talk themselves out. Yeah. because they don't want to do the wrong thing. They don't want to say the wrong thing that upsets me.

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She doesn't want to send, maybe I could see her spinning out of which thing should I send? Which would be better? I don't know. And I really had to forgive her and understand that this is most likely what was happening. It's not that she doesn't care about me. I know she loves me. It's that she didn't know what was appropriate and she spun out.

But a younger, more immature version of me could have used that as evidence of she doesn't really love me. She doesn't really care about me. And I could have distanced myself from the friendship and been like, this isn't what I thought it was. And I've, you know, we all do that when we're younger because we're trying to make sense of what we're seeing.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Of course. Yeah, I think you're you're speaking to, first of all, lo siento. I'm so sorry about your pop's passing. Yeah, that's a doozy. It's been a doozy. Yeah, that's really rough. Yeah, I could spin us out into a whole COVID everything. I know. Because that's a whole other theme is like how to make friends now and maintain friendships, especially in cold climates when people aren't being COVID conscious. Because I'm not meeting you out for dinner. I don't eat dinner in restaurants. What are you kidding me? So like, yeah, that's, why don't we do that? Maybe come back and we'll talk about it.

Anna Goldfarb: We should totally talk about it. I mean...

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Oh my god. I actually do, but maybe not now because I'll distract us for too long. But emotional generosity, right, is what you were really pointing towards there. And it really is such a cornerstone of emotional maturity and moving towards interdependence. So when we think about, I talk about the three essential human needs: safety, belonging, and worth. And that when we are not secure in our connection to those needs in childhood, we find ourselves in emotional outsourcing because we're chronically and habitually sourcing those needs from everyone and everything in the world to our detriment.

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So, when you don't feel safe in the world, the slightest misstep from a friend, forget about you. When you don't feel belonging, forget about it. When you don't feel worthy of love, right? She didn't send anything. She didn't send a card. She didn't. But it's such a beautiful, like when you are regulated in your nervous system and grounded in yourself and you have that emotional maturity to say, "I'm safe with me. I know that I have belonging. I belong to myself and this beloved community and I am worthy of good things. I can allow other people to be fallible, imperfect humans who get socially anxious and get stressed out and get like," and who also have nervous systems that get dysregulated, right? And maybe have activation around death or loss or parents, or cheese. What if they're lactose intolerant? No one's considering that.

Anna Goldfarb: Oh, I was just going to say that it was like an evolved way for me to think about it.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: It's very evolved.

Anna Goldfarb: And I was proud of myself for being so mature because it's not always a given. But I also wanted to model to my friends of it's okay to mess up. It's okay to not know what to do. It's okay with to not to know what to do. And when I the first time I saw her after my dad died, she's like, "I think about you all the time." Like, I'm just you know, it took about six months because of COVID, we didn't have vaccines and right.

And I said, "I know, I feel you think about me all the time. I know you do. And I will be, I'm not going anywhere. I will be here with you forever. It's okay." And I could see her shoulders kind of, you know, unclench and that's what we can do for each other. That's the power of friendships. That's what we can give to one another. It's free. And it's really just the flexible thinking of, I, she's like, "I think about you all the time." And I said, "I know, I feel it. I feel you think about me. It's okay. It's okay. You didn't know what to do. I love you."

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Beatriz Victoria Albina: What a beautiful gift.

Anna Goldfarb: It's beautiful. I'm getting teary eyed. I'm like getting emotional.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: But I know, it's very sweet.

Anna Goldfarb: This, I just believe in this, I take my friendship so seriously and I know other people do too. And I really want them to feel validated and empowered of, listen, like, this is how to make sense of what you're seeing.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah. Yeah. And you've you've given us some really great advice and direction towards that end of stepping into emotional generosity and emotional maturity. I added checking what you're projecting, which is super important. And not expecting your friends to meet your needs in your way. Would you say that's fair to your research?

Anna Goldfarb: Yeah, of course. Yes. It's like, oh my god. I'm like, it's, yes. Like, it's just, it's a complicated, busy, unpredictable world. And it sounds like we're both working on being more flexible. Like, working with the waves, surfing the waves, not feeling, you know, taken in by the undertow.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: And to people who are like, "Yeah, but I just, I can't find people to be friends with in my town." Because I hear that a lot.

Anna Goldfarb: Oh my gosh. Yeah, oh my gosh. You know, part of it comes down to your, I would say to your personality. You know, researchers call this trait agreeableness. Agreeableness is, do you fundamentally think that people are good people? Do you think people are trustworthy? I'm a big bird in Sesame Street. I want to meet everyone on the block. I want to talk to everyone. And some people are an Oscar the Grouch and they're like, "Oh, everyone's out to get me." And they don't stick around enough, long enough to make these kinds of friendships that take a long time. You know, studies show it takes 200 hours of shared activities to go from stranger to like best friend. 200 hours.

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So what are you going to do for those 200 hours? What would make you leave your house, put on a coat? Like what, it's not about the friend, it's like what do you do together that you both enjoy? So it's interesting to frame friendship in this way of, well, who do I want to spend time with? Who do I want to invest time with? Who do I want to help and have them achieve their goals and dreams and, you know, have that belonging and meaning? Because if you help people with things that they care about, they'll be much more likely to keep you around. They want people who care about their lives and that's what we can offer our friends.

So to people who say, "I don't have anyone to practice friendship with, there's no one in my town," I would start with, oh gosh, I reach out to people all the time, but I explain why. Hey, I see you live in Philly. We both work in media. Do you want to get a drink? I'd love to hear about your work. And that's a portal and then you could see if you can connect on deeper values of, "Oh, actually we see the world the same way. Like I think there's something here."

I mean, a lot of it's just being open, being open to people and having a reason to connect. I think a lot of people just say, "Let's get a drink, let's get together," but they don't say why. And then you show up, "Well, what are we talking about? What is the point of this? Let's fumble around. Do you have pets? Do you have siblings? Do what do you do?" And that's all looking for a reason. That's looking for an about. Like what are we going to talk about?

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Such a good reminder. Right? To focus on, we talk a lot about values here and we talk about our about, but we haven't in a hot minute. So it's, it's a really nice reminder. It's my reminder. What is your about? What is your why?

Anna Goldfarb: What is, yes. And, you know, "Oh, I love films." "Oh, did you see this film? Do you want to go see the film?" Well, that's very different

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than, "You seem cool. Do you want to get a drink?" Oh, okay. Well, what day? Oh, where? And then it doesn't go anywhere.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Right. There's no there there.

Anna Goldfarb: There's no there there. And it creates a lot of confusion and uncertainty creates anxiety. So then you're like, "Well, why are we getting together? Does she want to sell me a MLM? Like is it a Lululemon recruiting? Right, right. Like why me?" Right. So that's that's absolutely something we can we can give our friends.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Yeah. Anna, thank you so much for coming on the show and for helping us remember these really vital things about friendship. I'm really grateful.

Anna Goldfarb: Thank you for taking an interest in my work. And you've been such a - you ask such great questions and I can tell that you just genuinely want to help people. You genuinely want them to like have an easier time moving through life of like, here's what's going on. And we really share that passion and that mission. So thank you, thank you for having me on. I really enjoyed our time.

Beatriz Victoria Albina: Thank you. It's been really lovely and thank you for that kind reflection. Listen, everyone should go buy your book. How can they do that? Tell them where we can find you.

Anna Goldfarb: Oh my gosh. It's available everywhere. It's called Modern Friendship: How to Nurture Our Most Valued Connections. And let me tell you, my number one mantra of writing this book was, do not be boring. I did not want to be boring. I wanted it to be new information, new, new, not something you've heard a million times. So check it out anywhere. I have a Substack called Friendship Explained. It's at [annagoldfarb.substack.com](https://annagoldfarb.substack.com). I have a lot of fun over there. But yeah, I'm here to, I'm here to help and have us all have better friendships.



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Beatriz Victoria Albina: Thank you.

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My love, I hope you enjoyed that conversation as much as I did. If you're enjoying the show, please take a moment to give us a five-star rating, a review, share it on your social media, share it with your very close friends. Maybe it can be your about. Hey, want to get together and listen to Feminist Wellness and leave five-star ratings and reviews? I'd be into it. I'm available for it.

Thanks again for being here. Truly though, I'm really grateful to Anna for coming on and sharing this beautiful conversation. I'm grateful for her work and I'm grateful to you for coming and listening every single week and sending me sweet DMs and emails and just supporting the work. It really means a lot to me.

So, thank you. 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. Talk to you soon. Ciao.

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 [BeatrizAlbina.com/somaticswebinar](https://BeatrizAlbina.com/somaticswebinar) for a free webinar all about it. Have a beautiful day, my darling, and I'll see you next week. Ciao.