

Ep #359: Values-Based Living: The Alternative to New Year's Resolutions



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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

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This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, somatics and nervous system nerd, and life coach B  a 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. Today is, in some calendars, New Year's Day. And so, I wanted to share a message about values and reclaiming our values so we can move beyond this silliness that is resolution setting, which is really not kitten stepping. So if you're new around here, kitten steps are what we take in this family. My tender raviolis, baby steps, enormous. Resolutions, ridiculous. Let me explain what I'm talking about.

So, we are all inundated with a story that we have to change our lives in these huge ways, but immediately and now and yesterday and you already fail. And they set us up to fail in grandiose ways. Understanding the neuroscience, understanding how brains work, how hearts work, how humans work, I want to invite us to slow our roll and to not set us up for failure, to not say, "I'm going to do all the things. I'm going to do huge changes." And then a month or two or three into the new year, you find yourself not doing the thing and beating yourself up for the not doing.

And so, I want to talk to you about values and a way to shift our framework for change to be one based in compassion, curiosity, and care. This is the central tenet of *Feminist Wellness*, of my book, and emotional outsourcing, of the work I do with my clients in Anchored and the Somatic Studio, and the way I seek to live my life day to day.

My beauty, I hope this episode from the way back machine is helpful for you. I hope it's supportive, and I hope you go into 2026 feeling renewed, supported, rested, or at least a little more clear on your values and what truly matters to you. Take it away, past me.

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Today, we're going to shake things up. Because it's that time of year again when we get absolutely bombarded with messages about New Year's resolution, self-improvement, and goal setting as though the world was moving towards goals versus moving towards rest right now. But anyway, this is the time when the world out there tells you to fix yourself, to shed the weight, emotional, metaphorical, and definitely physical, to hustle your way into some shiny ideal of who you are supposed to be.

But let's get real, my darlings. I'm not here for that. I'm not here to hand you another to-do list to disguise self-improvement. I'm not here to cheerlead you into over-functioning your way to worthiness. I'm certainly not here to give you a set of rules about how to finally be good enough to be lovable. Oh no, no. No, no. Instead, I'm inviting you into a different kind of conversation for the new year, one that's about reclaiming the parts of you that have been quietly set aside. The parts of you that got buried under layers of self-doubt, fear, and the relentless pressure to be what others needed you to be.

I'm talking here about your values, the core grounding principles that make you, the values that got buried when you were taught explicitly or implicitly that your safety, belonging, and love, and lovability, were conditional, that they could only be earned by contorting yourself into someone else's idea of enough. This year, I'm inviting you not to change who you are. Instead, I'm inviting you to come home to yourself, to stand firm in the truth of what matters to you, to reclaim values like honesty, trust, compassion, integrity, those values that feel like a deep exhale, like settling into your favorite chair after a long day, like a nice hot cup of cocoa after being out in the snow, those values that feel like being seen.

Because here's the thing about resolutions, my love, they're often just another set of icky, exhausting expectations, another chance to prove yourself, another whisper from that old tired story that says, "If I just fix this one thing, then I'll be happy. I'll belong. I'll feel worthy." But all of that is

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predicated on this story that there's something wrong with you. But the truth, the only truth you're going to hear from me is this, you don't need fixing because you were never broken. And your worth isn't something you earn by hustling harder, doing more, or being better. Your worth is. Full stop.

So as we stand together at the threshold of another calendar year, let's leave behind the noise that tells us to chase perfection. Let's reject together the idea that your enoughness or mine is somewhere out there waiting to be earned. Instead, let's step into something far more meaningful, far more lasting. Let's step into reclamation, reclaiming what you value, reclaiming who you are.

And I want to invite you to take a moment to breathe into what that might mean for you. What values have you set aside? Maybe they were traded for approval, for a sense of safety, for temporary belonging. Maybe you didn't even realize they'd slipped away. I hadn't. And what matters now is that you can choose to center your life on what truly matters and to reclaim those values for your everyday life. Because when you live in alignment with your values, something incredible happens. You don't just feel better. You reconnect with the you who you've always been. You come home to yourself. You step into an ever more powerful, more embodied belief in your inherent goodness.

So this year, instead of resolving to be better or different, I invite you to reclaim, to reclaim your honesty, trust, compassion, integrity, truth, reclaim the deep, unshakable knowledge that you are already enough, just as you are. This isn't about self-improvement, my loves. This is about self-remembrance, and that is the shift that we all need this year.

So, before we talk about how to reclaim our values, let's do what we do. Let's take a nice deep breath in. Let your belly expand, hold it for a moment, long, slow out. Feel into your body. Notice what shifts. Notice where your body's holding tension. Notice what softening may become with

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a conscious, present breath. And this is where we start, by coming into the body, into the now, into the truth of this moment, to get present with what is.

And as always, here on *Feminist Wellness*, we honor that the things we want to change now were once survival skills. So let's look at why we drifted away from these values in the first place. So my beauties, it starts early for most of us, often in childhood. Listen, as human mammals, we're wired to seek safety, connection, belonging, right? Our nervous systems are constantly scanning the world, asking the one most vital question, am I safe here? This process, known as neuroception, is automatic and unconscious. It's how we keep ourselves safe, and it's deeply rooted in our survival mechanism.

For kids, safety isn't just about physical survival. It's also about emotional safety. Sure, they're linked for all of us, but when you don't know how to drive or use money so goodly, or how do I get to the grocery store? I'm 6. They're even more inextricably linked. So questions like, will I still be loved if I tell the truth? Will I still belong if I'm myself? Will they still feed me? Will they still need me if I'm me?

If we lived in environments where love and connection were conditional on us being agreeable, quiet, or good by someone else's standards, our nervous systems learned really quickly. Expressing our true selves, speaking honestly, asking for help, showing vulnerability, all those things were dangerous and downright dumb. And you're not dumb, so you stopped doing them, right? Maybe little you tried to be honest. "I don't like that," or, "That hurt my feelings." And it wasn't met with kindness. Maybe it was met with punishment, anger, silence, shaming words like, "Why are you so sensitive?" Maybe you learned that pleasing others, keeping the peace, being good, being agreeable was the fastest way to feel safe, loved, and seen. So you adapted it. Your brilliant nervous system did exactly what it was designed to do. Hear me. Nothing went wrong within you. Yeah? Your nervous system protected you. You folded up your values one by one

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like precious little treasures you couldn't afford to lose, and you tucked them away so no one could see them.

Honesty got replaced with silence because speaking up didn't feel safe and maybe really wasn't. Trust got outsourced to everyone else because you learned to doubt your own voice. Compassion flowed only one way, and that was for sure outward because taking care of others earned you love, but taking care of yourself, that got labeled as selfish, which is wrong and bad, especially for humans socialized as little girls. We learned that suppressing our needs, dimming our light, and performing for others' approval was the fastest way to ensure we wouldn't be abandoned. But this survival strategy comes at a cost. When we suppress our values, we lose touch with who we really are. We lose touch with the parts of ourselves that are alive, that want to be seen, heard, and held. Life becomes a performance, an act we put on for everyone else while the real us sits quietly in the background, waiting for permission to show up.

The thing is, my love, you're not that child anymore. You don't need to trade your values for safety anymore. You get to reclaim them. You get to come home to yourself and to recognize that any relationship you're still in that requires you not be you to be loved may not be a relationship that serves you to stay in. Right? Right.

So, before we dive into reclaiming honesty, trust, and compassion, which are the three values we're going to focus on today, we'll do a quick somatic check-in because values aren't just concepts in our minds. They live in our bodies as well. And so, as you do this work on your own, I want you to do it as safely as humanly possible. And so these three steps are super valuable before doing this work and all the work we talk about here on *Feminist Wellness*.

So, step one, ground yourself. Feel your feet on the floor, wiggle your toes, press your heels down, and notice the support of the earth beneath you. Step two, and you can do this while doing step one, orient to safety. Let

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your gaze move slowly around the room. Find three things that feel comforting, familiar, or beautiful. Maybe it's a plant, a picture, a nice soft light. Let your nervous system take in the safety of this moment. And if your brain starts telling stories, come back to this moment. And if there's nothing that feels comforting, familiar, or beautiful, simply look at your own hand or feel the texture of your sweater and let your nervous system orient to felt experience.

Step three, which you can do at the same time as steps one and two, place a hand on your heart, should you feel so moved, and take a deep breath and say, "I am safe to come back to myself." Feel the warmth of your hand, the rhythm of your heartbeat. If that statement feels too much, too far, a bridge too far, then give yourself a little bridge. I am learning that it can be safe to come back to myself. Beautiful.

So these patterns of stepping out of our values can be really quiet and invisible even until we consciously, actively work to start to notice them. Living out of alignment with our values rarely begins with big, obvious betrayals. It starts small, the tiny compromises we make every day in the name of safety, belonging, worthiness, acceptance, right? Our core human needs, the lack of which leads us to live in emotional outsourcing or codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing ways.

So, maybe you value honesty. It feels like a core part of you until a friend says something hurtful and you smile and nod. It's not worth the fight. Or you say, "I'm fine," when you're anything but. Maybe you've spent so many years shrinking your truth that silence feels safer than speaking up. Your nervous system knows this pattern well. Honesty requires vulnerability, and vulnerability is inherently risky. When you were young, maybe truth-telling was met with punishment, dismissal, ridicule, so you learned to stay quiet to protect yourself. And now as an adult, your body responds the same way. It registers confrontation as a threat. That tightness in your throat when you hold back, that's your nervous system signaling danger.

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Speaking up feels like a risk to connection because in the past it has been, and it may actually be now as well. So you stay silent. But silence, my love, doesn't make the discomfort go away. It doesn't improve the relationship either. Instead, it festers. You replay the moment in your head, wishing you'd said something different and that buzzing in your brain, the endless exhausting, ruminating loop is your body's way to try to resolve the dissonance that came from trying to push the discomfort away instead of staying with it, which we talked about in episode 275, all about embracing safety.

Maybe you value compassion. It's one of your deepest, most treasured values, but you give it to everyone else, leaving yourself running on empty. You're the one who shows up, who says, "Don't worry, I've got it," even when you're drowning. And this isn't because you don't matter to yourself. It's because somewhere along the line, you learned that care and love are transactional. Maybe you were praised for being so helpful as a kid, for being the one who never complained. Maybe you absorb the message that taking care of yourself was selfish, and selfishness was unforgivable. So compassion started to flow only one way, which was outward. The result, exhaustion, resentment, a simmering anger that you can't quite name because you convinced yourself that being tired is just how it is. But your body knows otherwise. The tight shoulders, the heavy chest, that grumble in your belly, that moment when someone asks you for one more thing and it feels like you might snap, that's your body saying, enough.

Maybe you value trust, trusting yourself, your instincts, your decisions, but when it's time to choose, you find yourself second guessing. You ask five friends for advice. You play out every possible scenario. You spend hours, days, maybe weeks stuck in indecision, convinced that if you get it wrong, disaster will follow. This too has roots in survival. As a child, maybe you were told you don't know what you're talking about, or you're too young to understand. Maybe the adults in your life dismissed your feelings, your insight, your perspective.

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I grew up with an adult who would often like sort of seem to get a glee in proving that I was wrong. "No, you don't know what you're talking about." So you learned to outsource trust. You learned to look to others for the answers because trusting yourself didn't feel safe. And now, as an adult, you struggle to hear your own voice. Your nervous system reads decision making as a threat, so it sends you into a state of anxious hypervigilance because of course it does. You scan for answers everywhere but within. That endless mental buzzing, that's your survival system working overtime to avoid the pain of failure.

When you drift from your values, your body knows and always knows because values aren't abstract concepts. They're embodied truth. And when you stray from them, even in small ways, your body registers the dissonance as tension, discomfort, and ease. The tightness in your throat when you don't say what's true, the heaviness in your chest when you agree to something you don't want to do, the buzzing in your brain when you replay a moment, wishing you'd spoken up, wishing you'd chosen differently, that is your body saying, "Something here isn't aligned. My love, pause. Come back home to me."

Because living out of alignment with your values isn't just uncomfortable. It's unsustainable. The work of reclaiming our values, of noticing where you've drifted and gently, compassionately coming back isn't easy, but living out of alignment with your values isn't either. So in my opinion, in my experience, when we realign with our values, it's always worth the effort. As honesty becomes a path to deeper, more authentic connection, as compassion flows inward as well as out, and as trust grows, you can learn to hear your own voice and honor it as the wisdom it is.

And so, my love, we need to take kitten steps. New Year's resolutions are often these big leaps into the abyss of perfectionism. And in this family, we say, "Oh no, no. I will not allow that shame spiral to pull me under. I will take kitten steps." Kitten steps are small, tender, imperfect moves in the

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direction of growth. They have room to falter, built right in. That room is what allows us to practice, to make mistakes, to keep showing up. Kitten steps are nervous-system friendly. They respect where you are. They don't demand transformation overnight. They invite you into gentle, sustainable change. And here's the key, kitten steps are kind. They re-pattern perfectionism by showing us that progress isn't about flawless execution. It's about compassionately trying again and again and again and again and again.

So, as we reclaim honesty, compassion, trust, and any other value you've lost sight of, let these steps be so small. Let them be gentle because this is not about becoming someone new. It's about remembering who you've always been and doing it with love. So, honesty is one of the first values to go and for good reason. Speaking our truth often feels risky. When honesty wasn't met with safety in the past, when it was punished, dismissed, or met with anger, our nervous system learned to equate truth telling with danger and silence became the safer path. But silence has a cost. Every time we swallow our truth, we disconnect from ourselves. We tell our bodies, "My voice doesn't matter."

So, kitten step one is to start with yourself. And before you can speak your truth to others, you need to know it. This sounds simple, but it's often the hardest part because years of silence can leave us out of touch with what's real. The next time you feel the urge to say, "I'm fine," pause. Take a breath. Maybe hand on heart and ask, "What's really true for me right now?" Maybe you're tired, maybe you're overwhelmed, maybe you're hurt. My beauty, you don't have to fix the feeling or gloss over it, just name it. Naming your truth, even silently, is a vital act of reclamation.

Kitten step two, give yourself permission to rest. For those of us conditioned to believe our worth comes from what we do, rest can feel terrifying, selfish. But compassion means honoring your limits, recognizing that you can't actually be of support or care, interdependent connection to

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or with anyone else if you're not allowing yourself to be a human. So start small. Take a one-minute break in your day. I know, I said one minute. It sounds like nothing because maybe nothing is all your nervous system can handle. Listen, if you're like, I can do five minutes and do it, sit down. Breathe. Have you been sitting all day? Stand and stretch and ask yourself, "What do I need right now?" If you're feeling drained, give yourself permission to start saying no. "I can't take that on right now, but thank you for thinking of me." Rest isn't a reward you need to earn. It's fuel for your mind, body, and soul.

Kitten step three, speak to yourself with love. And this, I know I get so much pushback from folks who are like, "I don't like the cute pet names on your show." I know, I know, but it's so intentional. It's science in a way, my beauty. Speak to yourself with love. The next time you feel overwhelmed or make a mistake, pause. If you want to borrow my voice calling you a sweet little tender ravioli, do it. Place a hand on your heart and say, "In this moment, I'm doing the best I can, and right now that is enough."

Imagine you're speaking to a younger version of you, one who's trying so hard to be loved, to be good enough. Let her know she's already enough. And through this process, re-reclaim trust. We rebuild the foundation because self-trust is like a muscle. It weakens when we don't use it. If you spent years outsourcing decisions or doubting yourself, trust can feel impossible, but it's not. Trust is rebuildable. And of course, we're going to start small. We're going to start with listening to your inner voice and honoring it in the smallest ways. I want the blue sweater today, not the gray. I'm craving cereal, not toast. I want to stay home tonight, not go out. Each time you take that small, tiny kitten step of starting with small decisions and following through, tell yourself, "My choice, my voice, it matters."

Kitten step four is to celebrate your choices. When a decision feels good, when you pick the cereal you wanted or cancel plans or make plans and feel relief, affirm it. I listened to myself and it felt right. Celebrating these

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small wins rebuilds confidence in your ability to choose. If your brain should start, "But what if, but what if?" that's when I'll invite you to take a breath, orient your nervous system, ground in the here and now. "I listened to myself, and right now it feels right. If that changes in the future, I'll deal with it in the future."

And step four, hold yourself through mistakes. Trust isn't about perfection. That one has nothing to do with the other. It's about believing you can handle the outcome, which you can, I promise, even when it doesn't go perfectly because what even is perfectly? When something doesn't work out, practice saying, "I made the best choice I could with what I knew. I'm still learning." Mistakes aren't evidence that you can't be trusted. They're evidence that you, yes you, are human.

So this year, my beauty, let's reclaim ourselves. Kitten steps may feel small, but they are in fact radical. They are the opposite of shame. They are how we reclaim honesty, compassion, and trust not all at once, but one choice, one moment, one breath at a time. This isn't about becoming someone new, which is the whole resolution thing. It's about remembering who you've always been. This year, we're not chasing perfection. We're not setting ourselves up to fail with resolutions that demand too much, too fast for those little kitten feet. Instead, we're reclaiming our values, one kitten step, choice, and breath at a time. Because the truth is you don't need to become someone new. You just need to come home to yourself. And you, my love, are already enough.

My beauty, this is your year. Declare it so. It's your year not to hustle, not to prove, not to attempt to become someone you're not. This is your year to remember, to gather up the pieces of yourself that have been scattered and bring them back home, to let your values, those quiet, steady truths within you, be your compass. Reclaim your honesty because your truth matters. Reclaim your compassion because you deserve your own care. Reclaim your trust because your inner voice is wise and worthy of being heard. This

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year, we eschew striving for someone else's idea of success. We're shifting. We're coming back step by step, breath by breath to the version of you that's been there all along. Whole, powerful and profoundly enough.

So I'll invite you to take a deep breath with me, my darling, and to know this, you don't need fixing. You don't need to earn your worth. You are worthy. And this year, this beautiful, messy human year, you get to live that truth to come home to yourself. There's a whole episode on values waiting for you, episode 255, where I break this work around values down even further. Go listen to it when you're done with this one. Until next time, my sweet, perfect, tender love, be gentle with you. You are so very worthy of this reclamation and so much more.

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All right, my love. Thank you, thank you for listening into that episode with me. Thank you for sharing it on your socials and tagging me, sharing it with your friends, leaving a rating and a review for the show and the book. Thank you for being part of my world. I'm so grateful to be a part of yours. 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. Happy New Year. Feliz año nuevo. Ciaos.