

Ep #355: Burnout and Chronic Self-Abandonment



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With Your Host

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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. This week, as we start closing in on the end of the year, which just feels completely bonkers to say, we need to talk about burnout. And I don't just mean work burnout or caregiver burnout, though those are super real and I do mean those as well. But I also mean like that bone deep exhaustion that's become the background noise of so many of our lives. The kind where your body feels like it's moving through wet cement and your brain can't hold on to thoughts. And everything feels like not just too much but like way too much. The texts, the laundry, the questions, the news alert, the needs, the noise, the news. Did I mention the news? The economy, the ecology, the news, the everything.

You start to wonder if this is just who you are now. Tired, irritable, uninspired, going through the motions, just making it through the next day and the next and the next. Here's what I want you, and I think for all of our wellness, need you to understand. This isn't who you are. This is what happens when you have been brought up, trained up, expected to abandon yourself. Here's the thing that makes it worse. Everyone's out here talking about burnout like it's only a work problem, right? Like that's the main framework where we hear about it. Like if you just took some PTO, like took a little vacation, or if you just set better boundaries with your boss, which always comes with a finger wag, like it's your fault somehow that there's no work life balance, well then you'd be fine. You'd be fine, really. No, it's totally like you'd be fine. But that's not it, right? That's not it at all.

Because I've seen people burn out on maternity leave. I've seen people burn out in retirement. I've seen people burn out while doing things they genuinely love, things they choose and continue to choose, things that by all accounts should feel good. So if it's not about the job or the hours or the

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workload, what is it? Well, I think it's about something we don't talk about enough. Something that starts way before you ever filled out a time sheet or answered a work email at 10 p.m. Burnout is what happens when your body finally says, basta. I can't keep doing this. And by this, I don't just mean your job, whether that's in the office, in the C suite, work from home, or stay at home mom. I mean the chronic, relentless abandonment of yourself in the name of keeping everyone else comfortable, of being good enough, of belonging, of feeling safe enough in your body, in your skin, in your world.

Let me say that again, because it is so very, very, very important. Burnout is the body's response to chronic self abandonment in the name of safety, belonging, and worth. And so this is where emotional outsourcing comes in. Because it's the invisible engine that keeps burnout running even when you are desperately, desperately, desperately trying to stop. Here's what emotional outsourcing means. It's when we chronically and habitually source our sense of the three vital human needs, safety, belonging and worth, from everyone and everything outside of ourselves instead of from within, at a great and profound cost to self. Safety, belonging, worth. The three things every human being needs in order to feel okay in the world. And when we emotionally outsource, we unwittingly hand the power to give us those things to other people, to their approval, to their comfort, to their validation, to their okay, their atta girl, their perception of us.

This is what keeps us trapped in the burnout cycle because when you depend on other people's approval, their comfort, their harmony to feel okay, safe enough, good enough, you literally cannot stop tending to them. You can't rest until everyone else is comfortable. You can't say no without shame twisting through your gut. Set a boundary? Get out of here. You can't let someone be disappointed in you without feeling like you're about to be exiled, abandoned, kicked off the island, left to die cold and alone on a mountain top. And your body reads all of that as life or death because somewhere deep inside, in the most primitive parts of your brain, it still believes that belonging equals survival, that if you're not needed, you're not

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safe, that if you're not good by someone else's standard, you'll be left behind. This is emotional outsourcing in action. And it's why you keep doing, keep fixing, keep proving, keep performing even when your body is screaming at you, begging you, please, please, please stop.

The thing about emotional outsourcing is that it keeps you moving long past the point of depletion because stillness, oh, that feels genuinely unsafe. Even when you're finally sitting on your own couch, your body forcing to rest, your mind keeps spinning. Did I forget something? Should I check on them? Gosh, maybe I picked a not a great movie. I should change the movie. Maybe I should check in with them to see if they like the movie. Maybe I should get a head start on tomorrow. Did I respond to that text? Are they upset with me? Oh God, they're mad at me. They all hate me.

That restless, vigilant energy isn't a personality trait. It's not who you are. It's physiology. It's what happens when your nervous system never learned that rest and safety can coexist. When you were taught that your value is tied to your output. When you learn that love is conditional on how much you give. When you learn that love is predicated on what others think of you. This is how you think. This is how you move through the world. This is the bedrock of your sense of self and your identity. And all of that is what needs to shift so we can end emotional outsourcing, so we can step out of this habit. Because that's all it is. It's survival skills. It's habit. Again, it's not who you are, it's how you do.

So how do you heal from this? How do you stop the cycle when every cell in your body has been wired to keep going? It starts with something that sounds almost too simple to work. You start showing your body that rest doesn't mean exile. Now this isn't just about like taking a spa day or going on vacation, though obviously do those things if you can. It's not about quitting your job or cutting your to do list in half overnight. It's about something really much more fundamental. It's about letting your nervous system know in these smallest, most consistent ways that you are paying

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attention, that you are here with you, that you matter even when you're not producing anything.

Gasp, I know. I know, but like all joking aside, it is, it's revolutionary, right? It's hypothetically liberating, but it's also really scary that you can matter even when you're not producing anything, doing anything, caretaking someone. Right? I know so many people, largely humans socialized as women, who are so locked into that caretaker role that they can't put down the burdens for trying. Right? They feel this profound sense of obligation to caretake, caretake, caretake. They almost seek out the next person or thing to caretake without even realizing it.

So let's get practical. Your girl's many things. I'm a woman of many credentials, but at the end of the day, I'm a nurse. Right? So let's get practical and let me give you one practice that you can start using today as an antidote to emotional outsourcing, but first a quick message.

Okay, my beauties, let's step into this beautiful remedy that I'm so excited to share. To support us in sourcing safety internally. In emotional outsourcing, our entire identity is based on our reflection off of someone else. We're not actually looking in the mirror and seeing ourselves. We're seeing self as bounced off others and bounced back into our own eyes. So we really need to do the work of becoming our own North Star once more, becoming the guiding force in our own light, becoming self referential, really. Like, you know, when you're asking yourself, do I look pretty in this dress? Your first thought isn't, well, my husband or my wife thinks I look pretty. Right? It's do I like the way I look? Not, oh, you know, somebody else thinks my thighs are too big. It's like, what do you think of your body? What do you think of your smarts? What do you think of your preferences, of your wants, of your needs? We lose touch with all of that.

And so, of course, we burn out. We're outside of self constantly. And so this simple sounding exercise is profound because it's about becoming your own internal reference point once more. We talked about this way back in the day, episode 149, and that's called Building Trust and Letting Your

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Wants Guide You. Just quick note, you can always find an episode by going to my website, BeatrizAlbina.com, the episode number. So that would be 149, and you can listen to that there. So this is the work. And I get that it might sound wicked simple, which to translate of course for the West Coast is, hella simple, but it really, really matters.

So once a day minimum, but I like it if you do it three times a day. Pause, orient your nervous system, place a hand on your heart if that feels safe. If that doesn't feel safe, just don't do it. Who cares? Move on. And ask yourself, what do I need right now to feel safe enough? Right? And so let's pause for that language. To feel safe enough. We're not aiming for to feel safe because that's like a bridge too far for most of us most of the time, right? So what do I need right now to feel safe enough? What do I need right now to feel like I belong to myself, first and foremost, to those around me, sure, but to feel like I belong. What do I need right now to feel worthy? Right? Not what does someone else need from you? Not what would make someone else happy, but what do you need?

Maybe, listen, and we're going to keep our answers to this simple. And also if you hear nothing from your body or your mind or whatever, cool, whatever. We're not doing this for the answer. We're doing this for the asking. We're doing this for the experience of being so important in our own lives that our answer matters. It's pattern interruption, right? We're interrupting the pattern of looking outward by looking inward. And so if the first 27 or 47 or 473 times you ask, you hear crickets, cool, who cares? Keep asking. Because someday you might hear water. So you get yourself a glass. And then you get the glass and you're like, actually I want to go look at water. So you go to the courtyard and look at the fountain. Maybe it's three minutes of quiet, so you close the door and you set a timer. Maybe it's permission to feel sad, so you let yourself cry. Maybe it's someone to talk to, so you text a friend. Whatever it is, see if you can give it to you, even if some like really small way.

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This is how you start building internal safety and this is how you stop constantly, chronically knee jerk outsourcing your worth. And again, I know this is really hard at first. I know that honoring what your body needs instead of what everyone else expects can feel almost like wrong in your bones. But every single time you choose yourself, you're repairing something ancient. You're reminding your system that your value is not up for negotiation, that you don't have to perform to be worthy, that you can stop without disappearing. And so what I've noticed in my own life and that of hundreds of clients is that over time something shifts.

And it's subtle at first. You start to notice that you can leave a text unanswered for a few hours without your chest tightening, or you can take a nap in the middle of the day and wake up without guilt like completely gnawing at your gut. You can move more slowly through your day and you can still feel like yourself. And maybe even more like yourself than you have in years.

And all of those subtle shifts are your nervous system remembering its own rhythm. Remembering that you, my love, were never meant to run on fumes. That rest isn't laziness, that your worth was never something you had to earn in the first place. Burnout isn't a sign that you are broken or weak or failing or busted or nothing. It's your body finally insisting on balance. It's a sacred request for reconnection. It's an invitation to stop performing your worth and start remembering it. This is the heart of the work we do in Anchored, my six month community coaching program. We help you rebuild that internal sense of safety so that rest becomes possible, so that you can find ease in your own pace again. We help your body learn to trust that you can stop without disappearing, that you can say no without being abandoned, that you can be imperfect and still be loved.

So if you've been living in that fog, the one where you're exhausted but can't rest, tired and wired, but wired and can't focus, moving but not really living, come do this work. Not because there's something wrong with you, never, ever because of that, we're not buying that, but because you

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deserve to remember what it feels like to be in your body without it feeling like a burden. Take a breath. Let your shoulders drop. Let the air move through you like an apology you didn't know you needed. You've done enough for today.

My beauty, you are enough for today and every day, always. Learn more about Anchored at my website, BeatrizAlbina.com Anchored, and know that you deserve love, support, and care. You deserve to live a life you're not burned out by. 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. Ciao, ciao. I'll talk to you soon. Ciaos.