

**Ep #368: Channeling Rage for Liberation:
End Emotional Outsourcing to Live Your Values
(Part 2)**



Full Episode Transcript

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 B ea 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. My tenderoni, last week we talked about how emotional outsourcing can keep us frozen, how the fear of disapproval, that feeling like we need to manage everyone else's feelings, it can paralyze us right when we need to act. But I know some of you listened and thought, that's not my problem. I'm not frozen. I'm on fire, and I can't seem to stop burning absolutely everything down.

So this one's for you, firebrand, for those of you so done, so fed up, so full of righteous rage that you can't sit at that dinner table without erupting. Can't hear your coworker say something ignorant without going off. Can't watch one more person perform concern while doing nothing without letting them have it. And I want to say that I get it. I'm a Leo with a lot of fiery placements, and I'm an Argentine. We're going to tell you how we feel. Don't. You never need to worry where you stand with us, for better and for worse.

And, you know, studies show that I do have a history of going off, but like going off. And so I get it. And so I felt really compelled to share this episode because I have very much lived it, and I have found a way that works better for me and for things like science communication, politics communication. I went on a hike with a new hiking group yesterday, and some dude was going on about how the initial response to COVID was too much and overwrought. And I felt that desire within me to rip his human skull off his body and scream at it. But I didn't. I went science and epidemiology, and by the end of the hike, he was like, "You know, you're right. I'm going to start masking again."

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So, that took a hot minute to get to. Let's talk about what happens because, well, there's some complexity and nuance, and I want you to understand my point of view. So, let's get into it. Okay. Here's what happens. You ready?

You speak. You tell the truth. You let that fury out. And what happens to everyone around you and their nervous system, their sense of self, their everything? They shut down. And they shut down. Your aunt's face closes, your coworker walks away, your friend gets defensive. Nothing actually changes except now they're talking about how angry you are instead of what you're angry about. Now, you are the problem. You're the one who made it awkward, who couldn't just let it go, who always has to make everything so intense. And you walk away feeling righteous. Like at least you said something. At least you didn't stay silent like all these complicit cowards.

But you also feel really isolated and alone, like nobody gets it. Like you're the only one who cares enough to be this upset. And that isolation makes you even more rageful. It confirms your belief that everyone else is asleep, everyone else has chosen comfort over justice. And like, there's validity here, but it's not doing what I think you want it to do.

So let's talk about secret anger, which we talked about in episodes 206, 207, 208. Let's talk about rage. And let us start here. Your rage, oh, it is valid. Your rage is appropriate. Your rage is a completely sane, understandable response to living in a world actively harming people you love, harming communities, harming the planet, harming the animals. If you're not enraged, you're not paying attention. Rage is fuel, power, life force, energy. Your body is saying, "This is wrong, and I will not accept it." But fuel without direction just creates heat, not light. And if you're burning so hot that everyone around you can't stay close, if you're so activated that people shut down the minute you start talking, then your rage isn't actually

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serving liberation. It's just discharging your nervous system activation at whoever's closest.

And oh my goodness, I'm not tone policing you. I'm not saying you need to be nice or calm or palatable. Oh my goodness, no. Take to the streets and scream it all out. Then do it tomorrow and the day after. No nicety politics here, not for one frigging New York minute. No, thank you.

And when it comes to talking one on one with folks, I am offering the suggestion that you do catch more dragons with fresh knight's blood. Meaning, of course, as if it wasn't obvious from the metaphor, that it could be wise to learn the skill to be strategic so that you can use it when you want to. You see how I'm phrasing this? This is an option, right? Because you get to always decide what's best for you, but what are your goals?

Because empire doesn't care if you're right, if nobody can hear you. Empire doesn't care if you have the moral high ground, if you're so flipped out and foaming at the mouth at all times that you can't build coalitions. You can't have conversations that actually move people. You can't sustain the relationships you need so you can do this work for the long haul. Capisce?

Like, please, I'm not saying don't be angry. I'm saying to think through when your internal flamethrower is set to 10,000 and when it behooves both your wellness, right, you not burning out, and the movement to contemplate chilling out and breathing through and speaking in a way that can be heard.

So that's what we're talking about. And first, of course, let's focus on you with a nerd alert. Let me tell you what's happening in your body when you're in that constant activation I used to be in, because understanding the neurobiology helps us work with it instead of being at its mercy. And as always, I am using polyvagal language as a helpful metaphor, nothing more.

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So when you are in that rage where you want to just scream, your sympathetic nervous system is running the show. Fight mode, full mobilization, adrenal glands pumping out that adrenaline, cortisol, heart rate up, blood pressure elevated, muscles tense, ready for combat. You're in it. And crucially, your prefrontal cortex, that smarty-pants part of your brain that does nuance and strategy and reading social cues, it's not fully the most online. Blood flow gets literally directed away from it. You're operating from amygdala, your threat detection center. And your amygdala just does not care about strategy. It doesn't care whether this person is reachable or being reached. It doesn't care about long-term goals or building movements. It just wants to eliminate the threat. Fight back, defend, survive.

So everyone who says something you disagree with becomes the threat. Everyone not as activated as you are gets coded as complicit in your mind. Everyone trying to have a nuanced conversation becomes the enemy. Everyone not matching your intensity becomes suspect, and you torch them all.

Here's the emotional outsourcing piece you might not have connected. It's this one might hurt a bit. Okay. This doesn't look like people-pleasing, right? Because you're making everyone uncomfortable. You're causing the disruption. You're speaking the truth. You're refusing to play along. Nobody is pleased. And yet, emotional outsourcing isn't just about managing feelings to get approval. It's about your nervous system being so enmeshed with other people's responses that you're constantly reacting to them instead of acting from your center.

So when you're frozen, you're reacting to other people's potential disapproval. When you're on fire, you're reacting to their ignorance, their complicity, their comfort, their refusal to see what's right in front of them, their just not knowing, their having been lied to by their government or by a

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whole bunch of influencers trying to sell them things because hashtag wellness. Listen.

Either way, whether you're in the freeze or in the volcano, what you're not is centered in yourself. You're not choosing your response based on what's going to be most effective. Mais non, my darling. No, no, no. You are just reacting, discharging, letting your nervous system hijack your capacity for strategic thinking.

And the aftermath feels similar too, right? That same loss of self-feeling, that same confusion about what you actually think underneath all the reactivity, all the isolation. You're just on the other end of the dysregulation spectrum. So instead of disappearing to keep the peace, you're exploding to release the pressure.

But this isn't, it's not freedom. It's not power. It's not liberation from emotional outsourcing or a move towards liberation for anyone. Because real power requires you to be regulated enough to be strategic. Like to know when disruption serves your goals and when to throw the brick and when it just makes you feel better for a hot second. To read the room and make conscious choices instead of just reacting to your own activation. To tell the difference between righteous anger in service of real change and rage discharging because holding it feels unbearable because you don't have the skills yet to be with your feelings. And no shade if that's you. I didn't know how to be with my feelings for a long time either. It's literally why I do this work, right? It's what you're here to learn about.

So let me give you an example. You're at that dinner table again. Somebody says something like subtly a little racist, and your whole body lights up. You can feel that rage rising, that heat in your chest, that tightness in your throat. Your hands might start shaking, jaw clenching, your heart pounding. And you have choices in that moment. Even though it's

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never felt like it before, it may not feel like it in that moment, even though every cell in your body is screaming to lash out.

And listen, you can go off. You can tell them exactly what you think of their racist BS. You can make them so uncomfortable they never want to talk to you again. Let that fire burn hot enough that they feel the heat, feel the consequences. Sometimes that's exactly the right move. Sometimes that relationship isn't worth preserving, and what they've said is so egregious, go for it. Sometimes the important thing is to draw a line in the sand and say, "This is not acceptable, and I am not going to sit here and pretend it is, because then I'm a party to it." Sometimes burning the bridge is the whole freaking point.

But sometimes there's a different calculation. Sometimes the person saying the slightly racist off thing is your nephew who's 19 and is an all-around good guy who maybe just started watching some f'd-up videos and still has a chance of not going all the way down that pipeline if he has a comrade on the other side. Sometimes it's your coworker, and making them your enemy makes your job impossible, and your ability to organize in that workplace evaporates if they're mad at you. Sometimes it's someone in your organizing group, and you need them for the campaign you're running. Sometimes it's your mother, and you've got three kids under 10, and you need her help. And cutting her off isn't actually an option right now that will lead to the best and highest good.

And so in those situations, I get it. Going off might feel like justice. It might feel like you're honoring your rage and your values. And I get it. And if it makes them shut down, if it pushes them further into the ideology you're trying to counter, if it destroys a relationship you actually need and blocks any chance of slowly educating them and helping them see another more compassionate, empathetic way to think and live and be, then strategically, what did it accomplish to yell at them? I mean, you discharged your

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nervous system. You felt powerful for a minute, but did anything actually change for you or the world?

And of course, I'm not saying you should manage their feelings. I'm not saying you owe them patience or education or gentle guidance or no. I'm not saying their fragility is your responsibility. What I'm asking and thus saying is, what's your goal? If your goal is to discharge your rage because holding it in is making you sick, then fine, go off. That's a legitimate need. But be honest that's what you're doing. If your goal is to actually shift something, to move this person, to create an opening for them to see differently, to maintain a relationship that matters or serves your larger strategy, then you need to be regulated enough to know what approach is going to work.

Maybe that means you take a breath first. Press your feet into the floor, feel your sit bones in your chair. Let your nervous system settle, orient, and ground just enough so you can access your thinking brain, not just your reactive brain. Just enough that blood flow can return to your prefrontal cortex so you can think strategically instead of just striking out. And then you can choose how to engage, like the adult that you are, like the emotional adult that you are.

Maybe you ask questions instead of making statements. "Hey, help me understand what you meant by that. Ooh, where'd you learn that?" Maybe you get curious about how they got to this belief, not because you're giving them a pass, but because understanding their entry point tells you where the crack in their logic might be. And so maybe you share your own experience. "Hey, when you say that, here's what happens for me. Here's what comes up for me. From my education, here's what I know."

Maybe you name the impact without attacking the person. "Hey, that's a harmful thing to say, and here's why." Maybe you do call it out and directly, but in a way that leaves a crack open for them to hear you instead of just

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defending themselves and doubling down. Or maybe you decide, "Listen, this just isn't worth it." Maybe your nervous system capacity right now is better spent elsewhere. Maybe your rage is better directed towards the systems causing the harm than towards this one person's ignorance. Maybe you excuse yourself, go outside, shake out the activation, come back later when you're more resourced. You know you have limited energy because we all do, and you're choosing strategically and thoughtfully and carefully where to spend it.

Because my beauty, you can't change minds from a dysregulated on-fire nervous system. When you're in full fight mode, you're not in a state to be effective. You're in a state to discharge. And those are not the same thing. And I know you're tired of people telling you to calm down, to be reasonable, to be more civil. Listen, I've heard it my whole life, so I am not saying that. Your anger and rage are justified. And I'm asking you to consider what you actually want your anger to do in different moments and different settings with different people with different capacities to hear you.

Do you want to push people away? Sometimes we do. Do you want to make yourself feel better by dunking on someone? Or do you want it to actually move something, to shift hearts and minds, to be part of building the world you want? Because the thing is, when you're on fire all the time without investigating it, without inquiry, without curiosity, when you're on fire all of the time in every setting, everyone looks like they need to be burned. Everyone's ignorance feels intolerable. Everyone's lack of urgency feels like violence. And I'm not saying it's not. I'm not saying you're wrong, but you're also not effective.

Listen, your rage is pointing at real things: children being bombed, climate catastrophe, fascism rising, genocide funded with your tax dollars, the very existence of ICE on stolen land. That rage deserves to be channeled as

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fuel for liberation. But fuel without direction just creates heat, not light, and we need both.

So how do you channel your rage instead of just discharging it? First, get to know your nervous system. Notice when you're dysregulated, not because it's a bad thing, but notice when you're not thinking anymore, just reacting, when your brain has gone offline as it were, and you've crossed from righteous anger into pure discharge. Because when you notice that, you have tools: orienting, breathwork, grounding, movement, shaking, whatever helps your nervous system settle just enough that you can access your thinking brain again. Not to suppress the rage, but to give yourself choices about how you express it.

Second, get clear about your goals. What are you actually trying to accomplish in this moment with this person? Not writ large on the massive scene of global crisis. Do you want to change this person's mind? Then stay regulated enough to be strategic. Do you want to draw a boundary? Be clear and firm without being so activated they can dismiss you. Do you want to build a movement? Work with people at different places on their journey. Or are you just trying to discharge because holding it feels unbearable? Okay. I get that. But be honest about it. Don't confuse discharge with strategy.

And third, learn the difference between people who are reachable, open, available, and people who are not. Some people are so invested in their ignorance that spending your energy on them just exhausts you for nothing. It's like trying to set fire to water that isn't the Cuyahoga River. Walk away from those people. Let them sit with their BS without your participation. Sometimes the bridge needs to burn, and that's legit, but take a breath and think it through. Because some people are actually curious. They're actually willing to learn. And those are the people where strategy matters. You need that heat. You need that flame. You need the intensity that burns away

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what's not working. But if you just dump gasoline on everything, you're creating destruction, not transformation.

And sometimes that's what's needed. Sometimes we need to burn it all down, and sometimes what's needed is a sustained burn, right? A fire that lasts, a fire that can warm people up and help them see in the dark. Your rage is fuel, darling. Don't let anyone tell you to put it out, but learn how to direct it. Learn the difference between fire that transforms and fire that just consumes, because my beauty, we need you in this fight for the long haul. We need your passion, your clarity, your refusal to be silent. But we also need you regulated enough to be effective, connected enough to build coalitions, strategic enough to actually move people.

You get to decide which fire you are building each and every day, my love. So decide from your center, decide from your values, your goals, not just from your nervous system's need to discharge. Because empire is happy to let you burn yourself out screaming into the void. Empire benefits when we turn on each other instead of organizing together. Empire wins when your rage makes you so isolated you can't build coalition, community, or power. Take a breath. Connect in with yourself. Orient your nervous system. Ground yourself and make thoughtful choices so that you, my perfect little firebrand, don't burn all the way out. Stay angry, stay awake, stay aware, and stay strategic. I think there's a place for both, for sure.

Thanks for listening, my love. I'm so glad you are here. Let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart should you feel so moved. And remember, you are safe. You are held. You are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my beauty. I'll talk to you soon. Ciao.