

Ep #373: Self-Resourcing: What It Is & Why It's Key to Healing Emotional Outsourcing (Part 1)



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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. I want to begin to answer a question I guess asked all the time from listeners, from people who find my work online, from friends, and especially from folks inside Anchored, my six-month group coaching program. And so the question, it sounds like some iteration of, "Bea, if I learn to resource myself, to take care of myself, to be focused on me, doesn't that mean I don't need people anymore? Isn't this going to make me more isolated? Because I actually want more closeness, not less. And I'm worried that this work points in the wrong direction. Help."

That question is the premise for what we're talking about this week and next week. Today is part one. What is self-resourcing really? What are you actually talking about? And what is actually happening in your nervous system when you practice it? What does it look like on any ordinary moment of your ordinary life, like a Wednesday at 11:42 p.m.? And why does building this skill matter so much for the relationships you care about most?

Next week is part two, as often follows part one, where we go all the way into that question about isolation and connection and what it actually means to be anchored in yourself while also being close to other people because it's not an either or, right? We've talked about this before, cutie pie. The opposite of codependence is not independence. It's not rugged independence, mais non. It is interdependence. So we're getting into another aspect of that interdependent question today and next week because, I mean, it's really important.

Okay, my nerds, let me give you a frame. In Somatic Experiencing, the trauma healing modality developed by Dr. Peter Levine PhD, a resource

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names something humans have always done. Of course, a white guy put a name on the thing we've always done, right? And it's a helpful name. Anyway, it's something, anything that helps your nervous system to find more capacity, more settledness, more ground. Levine gave the practice its clinical language, but the thing itself is ancient. A memory, a sensation, a breath, a blankie, a place in your imagination, a binky, a toy, a doll. Anything that when you bring your attention to it helps your system move towards regulation rather than away from it.

Self-resourcing is developing your own internal access to that, building a relationship with your own nervous system such that you can move towards more stability when you're activated or overwhelmed or spinning. A quick thing to name before we go further. Self-resourcing is not a mindset shift. It's not positive thinking, not telling yourself to calm down, not finding the silver lining. Oh my God, we do not do that around here. Not deciding to choose joy and meaning it. Those are cognitive strategies, useful sometimes, sometimes a little bypassy, but useful sometimes. And they are operating on the wrong floor of the building.

Self-resourcing lives in the basement. It lives in the body below the level of conscious thought, which means you cannot think your way into it. You practice your way into it. Slow, repetitive, patient practice. And over time, something actually changes.

And so I think the best way to really illustrate this is through an example. I also have heard your feedback. You love when I share an example and it's a composite of clients, not any one person. So, Daniela. Oh, Daniela. Well, as I say her name, the "oh" is I'm thinking of the dozen or probably two dozen women Daniela actually is.

Daniela is thoughtful, self-aware, genuinely kind. She's been in talk-only therapy on and off for years. Like so many of us, she can tell you exactly what her attachment style is, exactly why she learned to people please,

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exactly where it came from in her family of origin. The woman has done the reading, okay? She's got the vocab, she knows the theory. She's got it.

And yet, when her partner comes home in a bad mood, her body is on high alert before he's even taken his shoes off. Chest tight, mind scanning. Did I do something? Is he upset with me? I should fix this. Within minutes, she's asking if he's okay, offering to talk, quietly reshaping her entire evening around her presumed reading of his emotional temperature.

Daniela's nervous system learned at some point that someone else's dysregulation was her problem to solve. And that's because when she was small, it was. Her safety may have genuinely depended on it. So her system did exactly what a good nervous system does. It adapted. What she doesn't yet have is the capacity to feel that activation, so the tightening, the scanning, the urgency, the inhale, and have somewhere to go with it inside herself. A somatic anchor would let her pause, feel her feet on the floor, notice that she is okay even if he's having a hard time. And she could then choose how to respond rather than just react.

That capacity, that pause, that internal landing place, that is what self-resourcing builds. This practice, it involves a few layers. The first is somatic awareness, learning to notice what's actually happening in your body in real time. Now, this is important to point out. For so many of us living in emotional outsourcing, own body? Say what? Oh no, that's okay. I'm tracking everybody else. We are so distanced from, detached from, disconnected from our bodies, right? Our bodies are not our north star and haven't been in so long that knowing what's happening in our bodies in real time, just to notice it, just to be present with it, it's a big ask for a lot of us.

And so I just want to start there, right? If you're like, "Yo, what? What? No, I don't. What's in this body? I don't know. Sensation? I don't forget about it." Right? So, I want to say if this is challenging, that's to be expected, right? Nobody on this side of the mic is shocked. I've run many, many Anchoreds over almost coming up towards a decade, right? It's really common. Most

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people who come into Anchored aren't present in their bodies. They are generally speaking by the time they leave Anchored, right, six months later. But if you're sitting here and you're thinking, "Oh, okay, in order to resource my nervous system, I need to be able to feel my body. I have no idea how to feel my body. Well, I'm effed," I want to invite you to take a breath. Let that go. It is a process and you're starting where you're starting, right?

And so that's the work is to just notice. To not expect fireworks or some big story, but to notice there is tension here. There is heat here. There is a kind of hollowness in my chest while I talk about getting laid off. There is a type of burning in my ears when I talk about how angry I am about the state of the world. There's a kind of, yeah, like an ease through my chest the second I see Wade Elizabeth. If you're new to my world, Wade Elizabeth is my son. He's an all black cat and he's a great source of joy in my life. So yeah, there's a whole exhale in my whole body when I wake up and he sleeps between us, between me and Billey in the bed, and it is the sweetest, most beautiful thing to wake up to his little paws and that cute little snout.

So, notice it. Notice it in the easiest places, right? So if noticing when it's related to something challenging is too challenging, don't do that. That's not a kitten step. Notice, ooh, here's a good one. Most people can feel this. Whatever your morning beverage is that you're like, "Yeah, I want that," notice what you feel in your body as you reach for it or first smell it or first hold it. Coffee, tea, mate, whatever, smoothie, whatever. I feel a release in my chest, a little sigh. And just start to at least two to three times a day, right? To really get in touch with the sensations in your body as a way to start to build that presence because most of us have been trained to fully override our physical experience, to push through, to perform okay-ness, to stay in our heads. This noticing alone is a genuinely radical act. Just, oh, there's something here.

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Right? And we'll as always name, who doesn't want us present in our bodies? Who doesn't want us noticing what it feels like to be alive in our bodies? Aliveness is antithetical to patriarchy. Aliveness is antithetical to white settler colonialism. Aliveness is profoundly antithetical to late stage capitalism. So, keep breathing, keep getting present in slow, tiny ways that won't overwhelm your nervous system, legit about a cup of coffee. Start to come home to your body. It's a radical act. It really is.

So, from there comes what Somatic Experiencing calls pendulation. So moving back and forth between activation and resource. You notice a tightness in your chest. You bring your attention to something that feels more neutral or even positive if that's available. So, that feels lousy, so I pendulate. I move to the feeling of my back against the chair, the temperature of the air on my skin, a memory of genuine rest, or my sweet cat's eyes. So you're not trying to make the hard thing disappear.

You're showing your nervous system that it can move, that activation is not a life sentence, right? That we can hold the space to be with the challenging and then be with something easeful, and they can coexist and co-create a life where you're available for and present to and alive within all of it. Within the lousy and the, geez, that sucks and ugh. And alive within, oh, kittens. Oh, best friend. Oh, mate. Oh, beautiful plants, sunshine, bright colors. Oh, I can hold both experiences at the same time.

That's the work we're doing when we're self-resourcing. I am in a moment that is challenging and within me, there is the energetic of hummingbird. My friend Kara's dad has a lake house. It's so beautiful and we'll often go there in the summer and the porch is just loaded with hummingbirds. It's so magical to watch their little wings. So I can be with what's hard and with hummingbird. Pendulation. And when my nervous system comes close to overwhelm or exhaustion or, whoa, too much, I can, hummingbird, Wade, my favorite cake or my favorite steak.

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The third layer is what I call internal orientation. So learning to ask yourself in the middle of whatever is happening, what's actually true for me right now? Not what the situation requires, not what would make someone else more comfortable, not what you think you're supposed to be feeling or doing or experiencing. What's actually here in your body in this moment? So this is the layer that most directly interrupts emotional outsourcing, right? And most of us aren't doing it and we get to begin to step into this habit.

For those new to my world, emotional outsourcing is the habitual pattern of sourcing your sense of safety, belonging, and worth from outside yourself rather than from within. It shows up as codependent behaviors, people-pleasing, perfectionism, all the once amazing strategies we learned to manage how other people feel about us because at some point, their feelings about us were load-bearing for our survival. When you've been living in emotional outsourcing for a long time, self-resourcing can feel almost, I dare say, conceptually impossible. So it makes sense, right? Safety has always lived in other people's approval, in whether the room feels okay, whether my partner seems happy, whether my boss seems pleased, right?

The idea that you could have a direct relationship with your own nervous system, that your body could be a place of refuge. Well, that can feel genuinely foreign, like being handed a map to a country you didn't know existed. You learned exactly what you needed to learn to survive what you survived, to get through what you got through, whether it was chaos and wildness or whether it was a house where there were no emotions. Stiff upper lip, suck it up buttercup, or a thousand places in between, you learned to get through what you got through. Full stop.

I want to stay here for a moment because if you've done any other work around these patterns, you may have run into frameworks that prescribe something that sounds a lot like, well, checking out or detachment, pulling

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back, creating distance, stop focusing on other people. And listen, in a way, those approaches aren't entirely off base. There are moments when creating space is exactly the right move. But detachment as the organizing principle of our healing and our growth and our wellness and our interdependent community building. So that's not what I teach, and I want to clearly say why. What I've found is that the antidote to emotional outsourcing is moving towards yourself. And that's a different philosophical and actual orientation than focusing on detaching from others. Instead, we move deeper into our own experience, our own body, our own knowing. And when you build that relationship with yourself, you become more capable of real connection, boundaried, thoughtful, real connection, not a diminished version of it. The path inward is the path towards people, not away from them.

Let me tell you about another composite client, about four months into this work. I'll call her Priya. She had described herself for most of her adult life as highly sensitive and anxious by nature. She had accepted that her nervous system was just this really reactive, easily overwhelmed, always a little on edge kind of thing. She managed it as many of us do, especially those deemed highly functional, through productivity, staying busy, keeping her external environment controlled and predictable because the minute it wasn't, she'd feel that familiar unraveling start.

Four months into doing real somatic work with me, not just reading about it, not just intellectually endorsing it, but actually practicing it in her body with witnesses, in Anchored, every day, even when it felt like absolutely nothing was happening, something shifted. She shared that she was on a phone call with her mother, a complicated relationship, as mothers often are. And her mother said something critical, the kind of thing she'd said a bajillion times before, a majillion bajillion times. The kind that used to send Priya into a spiral lasting days. The familiar contraction started in her chest, and then something different happened. She remembered her anchoring skills. She felt her feet on the floor. She oriented her nervous system, took a

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breath, not a performative breath, a breath. And she had this thought which she described to me as almost shocking in its simplicity, "I'm okay right now. What she said is hard to hear and I'm okay right now." She didn't say that to her mother. She didn't perform groundedness. She just had it, quietly, for herself.

That is self-resourcing. Not a breakthrough, an epiphany, a catharsis, a transformation montage, just a quiet internal shift one Tuesday on the phone while her feet were on the floor. Beautiful, right? I think we all dream of that. I think that's what we all come to this work for, right? There's a part of us that's like, "I want the big reveal," but really, we just want to stay chill on a Tuesday on the phone with our feet energetically, emotionally, but also physically on the floor.

Two more things worth naming because they sure do trip people up. Self-soothing in the problematic sense. And I have a whole, I have an episode coming out about self-soothing soon, so make sure you're following the show, subscribe to the show so you don't miss it. Self-soothing is about making the feeling stop, getting yourself out of discomfort as quickly as possible through scrolling, food, overworking, substances, whatever exits the feeling fastest. Self-resourcing is about building enough internal stability to actually be with what's happening, not escaping it, not shutting it down, but staying present without being completely taken over. It tends to increase your capacity to feel over time because you're no longer bracing against your own experience. Spiritual bypassing is a related thing that trips people up. So that's using mindfulness or spiritual practice to float serenely above your feelings rather than move through them. And it's baloney pants, it's what it is. Self-resourcing doesn't ask you to transcend anything. It asks you the opposite. It asks you to stay present and intentional. It invites you to stay on the ground, not floating above it.

Now, building this skill takes time. It takes repetition and a real willingness to stay with discomfort long enough for your nervous system to learn

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something new, which also looks really different from white knuckling through it and it feels really different too. And it also takes, and this tends to surprise people, other people, at least at first. So listen, our nervous systems are social organs. We are pack animals. They regulate in relationship. Humans have been co-regulating since eons before we had language for it. Mamas and babies, elders and communities, bodies in proximity, finding settledness together.

We borrow regulation from each other, and that's how self-regulation develops in the first place. We don't grow out of this need. We carry it with us into every room we walk into. We build self-resourcing capacity by being in relationship with someone who is regulated or grounded, a therapist, a coach, a trusted friend, and having our system borrow that regulation enough times that it learns to build its own internal version of it. This is why groups are so vital. It's why Anchored is a group. It's not just information transfer. It's nervous system transmission happening in community over time.

There's a myth that runs deep in wellness culture, self-help culture, a lot of sort of modern new agey spiritual traditions that the goal of inner work is to need less, to become so regulated and whole that you're essentially self-contained, a beautiful, serene, unbotherable island. That can sound a whole lot like self-resourcing. Careful now. They share the same vocabulary, but they are pointing in opposite directions.

So self-resourcing is about being able to be in relationship more fully, to show up for people without losing yourself in the process, to receive care without the floor dropping out, to stay present in conflict without shutting down or going supernova. Self-resourcing is what makes real intimacy possible. And that's exactly where we're headed next week.

So let me offer you one small practice to close. At some point each day, morning, a moment of stress, right before bed, take 5 to 30 seconds, orient your nervous system, and that simply means looking around. When we're

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freaked out, our nervous systems don't know when we are. So we orient our nervous system by looking around, taking in our surroundings. I'm here and now. It can take two seconds that you just literally look around where you are. You're showing your nervous system there's no lions in the room, okay? Okay.

So, orient your nervous system, feel your feet on the floor, let your weight settle into whatever's holding you. Take one breath. Not a special breath. Just take the breath that your body takes and ask yourself, "What is actually true for me right now in my body?" Not what you think you should be feeling, not what you think you should be thinking, not what the situation is calling for or what you project that it's calling for, just what's actually here. You don't have to do anything with the answer. You're practicing the noticing, and that's the work. That's enough. It's where we're starting. That's where we're ending today.

Practice the noticing, practice being self-referential. That's the key to self-resourcing, is learning to be your own reference point, your own guiding North Star. We don't do that in emotional outsourcing. So start. Set a reminder. I vote for three times a day. Have a little emoji pop up on your phone and stop. Feel your feet, practice noticing yourself.

Thank you for being here. If this landed, share it with someone who needs it. Leave a review. If you're moved to, share it on your socials. Give me a tag, so I will reshare it and I can also thank you. You might get a silly, giggly little voice note from me if you reshare the podcast to your socials and give me a tag. It's so fun. All right, my beauty, make sure to come back next week. We're going somewhere good. I will see you then, but first, 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.