

**Ep #375: Reclaim Rest:
The 5 Hidden Types of Rest You Need (Part 3)**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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[Feminist Wellness](#) with B a Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

Ep #375: Reclaim Rest: The 5 Hidden Types of Rest You Need (Part 3)

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. Okay, so this is really fun. So episodes 371 and 372 were all about reclaiming rest, and y'all ate them up. And what's really delightful is I posted about those episodes, and thus about the importance of rest, on Instagram. I give good gram. And the response is basically a collective shriek of more. More examples, more types of rest, more of this. And I mean, honestly, same, because we are all so tired. And we are finally starting to see that we desperately need rest. Real rest. Not BS rest, real rest. 'Cause I mean, the horrors persist, and we need a break. Am I right?

So if you haven't listened to the two previous episodes on rest, pause this right now. Go back and listen to them. Seriously, episodes 371 and 372. Go. Get thee. They cover the foundation of everything I'm about to say. They're wicked important. We talked about physical rest, sensory, mental, emotional, social, creative, and spiritual rest. Seven types. We went deep on why rest feels so unsafe and so uncomfortable when you've spent years or a whole lifetime building your whole identity around being useful. Why you can sleep eight hours and wake up more exhausted than when you closed your eyes. Why your body is not busted or broken, but it's actually been doing a job nobody told it that it could put down. Didn't have to keep doing all that. All of that is in there.

Today is for everyone who listened and came back hungry for more, which is pretty dope. And it really tells me y'all are noticing your own patterns. You're paying attention to what your body's been trying to tell you, and that's pretty groovy. I would say that's pretty awesome. And so, let's go deeper, right? Let's go deeper. And I want to say this up front: The types of rest we're talking about today are harder to name, and they don't have as

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obvious solutions. And they're really vital because these are the types your nervous system has been probably starving for that you wouldn't even think to ask for if someone was like, "I give you permission." Which by the way, I am. So consider this your permission slip, notarized by moi, Beatriz Victoria Albina, in the name of the great state of New York, witnessed by my cat. Wade Elizabeth, where are you? He is fast asleep, and he is therefore very well-rested, and he is frankly a role model.

All right, so before we get into the types, I need to say something that is actually the whole point of this episode and honestly of the last two as well, and I want to make sure you really hear it. Rest is your birthright. It's not a reward. It's not something you unlock after you've been productive enough or good enough or helpful enough to enough people. Not something you get to have once the to-do list is to-done. Because here's the thing about to-do lists: They're never to-done. Right? They were designed to never be done. You're always adding to them. And if you're waiting for it to be done before you rest, you will be waiting until you are dead. And that is not a plan; that is a tragedy.

So with that said, the belief that you have to earn rest, that stillness is laziness, that your worth is in your output, your usefulness to other people, that is not a truth about you. It is a story, a puritanical story handed to you probably very early, probably by people who were handed the same story from the people who handed it the same story, and they had no idea they were passing it along. And you've been running it like it's your own personal operating system ever since, organizing your days around it, your sense of self and worth around it, feeling guilty when you stop, feeling behind when you're still, treating the act of doing nothing as a moral feeling that requires justification.

Is this resonating? I bet this is resonating. And I'll call myself in on this. My dear friend Costa, God, this was so long ago. Over a decade ago, I was working. This was right after NP school. I had a crap ton of student debt,

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and I had a household to support, and I was working 47,000 jobs. Really, I was working so many jobs: a full-time job and then a part-time job on top of it and a weekend job. He turned to me at one point and he said, "You're not a Puritan, stop acting like one." Knife to the heart. That was hard to hear and was so right on.

So, when I give you five types of rest today and tiny ways to practice each one, I need you to understand that the tiny things and doing the tiny things are not the point. They are the doorways. The point is the belief on the other side of them. The point is you learning in your body, somatically. Not just knowing in your head but actually feeling in your body, in your nervous system, in your being, in yourself, that you are allowed to stop. That stopping is not an F up. It doesn't make you less than, that the world does not, in fact, collapse when you put it down for two minutes. That rest is not something you have to steal in secret from the margins of your life. It is yours. It was always yours.

But white supremacy, late-stage capitalism, and the patriarchy just told you that it's not. Do you want to keep listening to those jerks? I mean, I don't. I'm just out here saying I don't. So, let's talk about where rest actually lives, because it's probably not where you think. And let's talk about some other ways, more creative ways, we can access it.

Oh, and one thing that runs underneath everything I'm going to say today that I want to name out loud: the liminal space. The space between things, the commute before you walk in the door, the two minutes after the kids go to sleep, the pause between finishing one task and starting the next. The shower, the red traffic light, the 30 seconds while the coffee brews. Most of us have been treating those spaces like dead air, like transition zones to get through as efficiently as possible, usually with a podcast in our ears. Hi. Love you. Or a phone in our hand or flipping through things.

But I want to invite you to see that those liminal spaces are actually where most of these types of rest live. Not in a dedicated hour you carved out, not

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in a vacation, not in a perfect Sunday morning with a linen tablecloth and a croissant, though, yes, please, to all of that. But most of our opportunities to rest live in the threshold moments you already have and have likely been filling with noise.

And why do we fill our lives with noise? Why do we fill the liminal space? Well, because empty space for so many of us felt dangerous. Because stillness felt like falling behind. Because somewhere along the way, you learned that you are only safe when you are useful. And a woman sitting quietly doing nothing, that does not look useful. And so you filled every gap.

The invitation of this episode, and in a way of all my work, is to stop filling the gaps. Not because you earned a break, but because you were never meant to fill them in the first place. All right? Okay.

Let's get into it. So the first type of rest is relational rest. And I want to be specific because this is different from social rest. So, social rest is about reducing or choosing the quality of your interactions very intentionally. Relational rest is about something more precise. It's the rest that comes when you are not responsible for managing any other person's emotional state. Even temporarily, even just for a few minutes.

For those of us who grew up in households where we learned early on to read the room, to track the mood, to make ourselves smaller when someone else was big, well, the nervous system got organized around relational vigilance. You're always scanning. You're always doing the math. Even in complete silence, part of you is tracking everyone in the room. Is she okay? Did I say something wrong? Is he annoyed? Should I fix it? Or are they having enough fun?

And that tracking, that constant low-level calculation is exhausting in a way that a nap cannot begin to touch. Because you can be lying down with your eyes closed, and you can still be doing it, right?

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So, relational rest, it is what happens when you're with someone or in a space where that calculation genuinely goes offline. Where no one needs you to be the emotional container. Where you can exist and there's, there's nothing to manage here. This is part of why certain friendships leave you fuller, and others leave you depleted, even if nothing bad happened. Some people, the way you interact with them, they give your nervous system a break. And some people, generally without meaning it, are asking your nervous system to work even harder. And your body knows the difference even when your brain is still insisting everything is fine. And why are you so tired? You just sat there for two hours.

Now, I can already hear some of you. You're, let's say, a working mom. You have kids, a partner, aging parents, a full-time job, and the relational vigilance runs from the millisecond your alarm goes off to the second you fall asleep. So, come on, when are you not responsible for someone's emotional state? Okay, I hear that. I do. And listen, I'm not going to tell you to find a weekend alone at a spa. Because that sounds incredible but also completely unhelpful as a Tuesday morning prescription.

And so I want to invite you to notice something. The reason relational rest feels impossible is not just logistical. For most of us, it's because some part of you believes that being constantly available, constantly attuned, constantly ready to manage, that is what keeps you, makes you lovable, valuable, safe. The belief that if you stop tracking, if you stop managing, something will go wrong, and it will be your fault. Because your worth, it's dependent on everything being copacetic. Didn't you get the manual? Didn't you get the eldest daughter manual, the good girl manual, the good wife manual? Didn't you get the manual?

In emotional outsourcing, the habitual pattern we talk about here of reaching outside yourself for the sense of safety and worth and belonging that can only come from within, well, that pattern, when we're living in it, it will keep you from resting even when the logistical opportunity is right in

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front of you. Because my darling, I know you, I love you, you will fill it with something else. Because rest without the belief that you deserve it, it's just guilt with nowhere to go.

So I'm curious. I'll invite you to get curious: How much of your downtime is actually buffering instead of resting? We talk about and define buffering in episodes 14 and 105. Go listen after this one. Buffering is anything we do to not be with our emotions. Scrolling, wine, TV you're not even watching, you're just present in the room with it because at least nobody's asking you anything. Complaining to your group chat about the exact same situation for the 14th week in a row, which can feel like useful venting but is actually more relational labor because now you're managing how everyone responds to you, and also someone always says something unhelpful, and now you have to manage your feelings about their feelings and about what they said about your feelings.

And I am not judging any of this. I've done all of it. Yeah, including the group chat thing. Come on, we've all been there. But buffering is numbing, and numbing is not rest. Your nervous system comes back from buffering exactly as depleted as it arrived to the buffering, if not more. And when a phone or wine is involved, more, more depleted.

And so the liminal spaces are where relational rest actually lives for most busy people. That two minutes after your kid falls asleep, before you just pick up your phone and scroll away. Instead, the invitation is to just sit there. Don't reach for anything. I know, I know, I know, I know. It's so hard. It's so hard at first. It gets easier and easier and easier, I promise. Don't reach for your phone. Orient your nervous system, look around the room. Notice your own breath. Feel the quality of the room when nobody needs anything from you. That is the threshold of it. That is what you're building towards. Yeah?

Or text a friend and say, "I need to vent, but I don't need you to fix it or respond much. I just need to say it out loud. Are you available for that?"

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Yeah? Are you available for it? We talked about this in episodes 27 and 28 on emotional consent if you need more help with that language. But what I'm saying, what the invitation is, is to remove the emotional labor of managing her reaction to your experience. And taking that complication out of the mix, that counts. That's relational rest.

If you have a commute, I want to invite you to spend five minutes, even two minutes, in the car or on the stoop before you go inside. In the car, windows down, on the stoop, just breathing, no podcast, no phone call. And recognize that you are between worlds. Nobody knows where you are, and nobody needs anything from you yet. And that liminal space is a gift. So let it be intentional instead of just dead time to fill or to rush through. Let yourself breathe into it.

The second type is decision rest. Now, I know that sounds like mental rest, which we talked about, but they're not the same thing. So mental rest is about quieting the rumination, the analysis, the loop. Decision rest is the specific relief of not having to choose anything. Because people who carry a lot of invisible load, and I know exactly who I'm talking to right now, we make a staggering number of decisions every single day, don't we? What everyone eats, who follows up on what, whether to say something or stay quiet, whether this text needs a careful response or a softer response or a response that lands in a way that doesn't cause a whole thing.

The decision-making itself is its own drain, and it runs parallel to everything else you're doing. And I haven't even mentioned what's for dinner, which is its own separate psychological event. And yes, I know, if you're the default parent, the default planner, if you are the CEO, if you are the person who keeps the whole operation running, handing off decisions requires someone competent to hand them to. I get that. And sometimes you've tried that, and the handoff went so badly, you ended up cleaning up the aftermath, which cost more energy than just doing it yourself. That's real. I've been there. I see it.

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And I want to ask you something. How many decisions are you making that don't actually need to be made right now? How much mental bandwidth are you spending on problems that aren't today's problems? The liminal spaces between tasks, that brief pause before you open the next email, the moment between putting the kids to bed and picking up your phone, right? Those are the spaces where your brain is most likely to start pre-solving next Tuesday. And that is a choice, even when it doesn't feel like one. For most of us, the belief underneath it is that if you stop planning, something will fall through the cracks, and it will be your fault, and then spiral into, everyone will hate me.

And so rest as birthright means trusting that next Tuesday can wait until next Tuesday and giving yourself that spaciousness to not take on tomorrow's problems today.

So the tiniest version of this kind of rest is to pick one recurring decision and take it off the table for a week, a week minimum. Same lunch every day. Same answer to a particular category of request. Same outfit. Try that whole thing on. What you're doing is protecting a small reserve of choosing capacity and giving it back to yourself. One of the things I've done is reduce the number of products in my life. I have two kinds of lotion: one for the morning and one for the evening for my face. I have two kinds of hand lotion. I have the regular and then the heavy-duty. I have one kind of mousse, one kind of gel. These curls need a lot of product, but I don't need a lot of different products. It sounds so dumb until you do it and you realize that standing there looking at the medicine cabinet being like, which of these 4,000 lotions should I slather on my face right now? It's taking energy. And when you just grab the morning one and then the evening one, you take something off your plate.

And that's a perfect segue into the next one, which is if you don't care, say it. So if someone asks you a low-stakes question and your honest answer is, I just don't care, say that. Like, actually say it. "Hey, no, I genuinely don't

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have a preference. Let's let someone else decide. I'll go wherever you want to go." And notice the specific quality of relief in your body when you do. That's you remembering you don't have to be in charge of everything. You can also make a short list of decisions you are currently pre-solving that haven't actually happened yet. Just writing them down and naming them "not yet" often releases the grip because you don't have to solve next Tuesday tonight. Next Tuesday is not in this liminal space. Only right now is. Right now contains only this podcast and whatever you're doing while you listen to it, and neither of those things require a decision. That was our subtle Buddhism for today.

Third, imaginative rest, which is different from creative rest, which is about releasing the pressure to produce something. So imaginative rest is about giving your inner world permission to be completely unproductive. To not be building towards anything. To be, in the most technical terms available to me, just vibing. So here's the thing about a lot of the women I work with: They are extraordinarily imaginative, creative, brilliant people who've been using that imagination almost entirely in service of anticipating what could go wrong, planning for every contingency, scripting conversations before they happen, war gaming the version of events where everything falls apart. The imagination has, in fact, been working constantly. It's just been working on fear management instead of anything that actually feels good. Like it's a Maserati being used exclusively to drive to the DMV in the great state of Rhode Island.

So imaginative rest is the imagination finally being allowed to wander for its own sake. And the belief that blocks it is the same one that blocks all the rest: that wandering is wasteful, that a mind not working is a mind falling behind, that you, especially you, you don't get to just think about nothing or something beautiful or something delightfully pointless because there's always something more useful your brain could be doing. Beauty, that belief is not protecting you. It is exhausting you.

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Imaginative rest lives in liminal spaces more than almost anywhere else. It's the mind allowed to wander in the shower instead of immediately drafting the difficult email. It's the red light where you put the phone down and let your eyes go soft and your thoughts go wherever they want. It's the space between waking and fully getting up in the morning when your mind is still loose and unguarded and not yet assigned tasks. Protect that space with your life, my beauty. It's vital.

So the tiniest, kitten-steppiest version: Let your mind wander in the shower without redirecting it towards problem-solving. Just notice when that happens and let your thoughts drift somewhere else instead, anywhere else. A pleasant nowhere, an imaginary garden, the plot of a book you half remember. It doesn't matter. Ask yourself, what do rabbits like to have for dinner? Think about that. Knit with a show on. Cook something without a recipe. Do a puzzle. Follow a paper, real puzzle. Follow one instrument through an entire song. Anything repetitive that gives your analytical mind just enough to hold on to so the rest of it can go loose. It doesn't need to be pure or unplugged to count. I mean, I knit while I watch TV, and I will not be taking questions.

Good enough rest that you actually do beats perfect rest. I don't even know what that is that requires conditions you don't currently have. Another one: Next time you're waiting in a line, at a red light, for the coffee to brew, don't reach for your phone. Instead, let your eyes go soft. Let your mind go wherever it wants. Two minutes of genuine wandering in that liminal space is more restorative than two minutes of scrolling will ever be. Beauty, allowing your imagination is never wasted time. It's your soul, your spirit, your being, yourself, breathing.

Fourth, somatic rest. And this is not the same as physical rest. So physical rest is your body not exerting itself. Somatic rest is your body being released from bracing, from the chronic low-level holding that develops when you've spent years in hypervigilance. The tightness in the jaw, the

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grip through the diaphragm, the slight curl of protection through the chest that you've held for so long, you forgot it's not just how you're shaped, right? Because it's not. Because, right, we can sleep eight hours and wake up still holding all of it because it doesn't dissolve through stillness. It dissolves through being met, through warmth, slow breath, movement that attends to itself, being held in ways that signal to your body that it doesn't have to keep guarding.

And here's the belief that can make somatic rest so hard to access: the belief that your body's job is to perform, to look okay, to not take up too much space with its needs, to keep going, to be thin enough, to be strong enough, all of it. So you brace, and then you brace against the brace, and after enough years, you genuinely cannot feel the difference between tension and baseline because the tension has become the baseline.

Somatic rest is not just physical. It is the quite radical act of letting your body be a body instead of a machine. And the liminal spaces are actually some of the best opportunities for somatic rest because they are already transitions, already threshold moments, and your body is slightly more responsive and receptive in them. The moment you sit down somewhere is a liminal moment. Your body just shifted states. That is an opening.

The tiniest version: one hand on your chest, one on your belly, or wherever your body wants contact, three slow breaths before you get out of bed in the morning. Not as a performance or because some wellness person told you to, but as a check-in. Where's the holding today? Right? And you're not fixing anything. You're just saying hello to yourself. Right? Which frankly, you deserve. Hi, I love you.

This is another favorite of mine. When you're washing your hands, actually feel the water temperature. Slow down. Feel your hands against each other. Really make contact with yourself. Feel the difference in texture between the front of your paws, the back of your paws, your nails, the tips of your fingers. Really come into contact, right, with yourself. Five, 10

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seconds of sensation that's not about getting clean. It's not about doing a thing. It's about being in your body. Yeah? And your brain will probably think it's too small to matter, but it's not. It's truly not. Nothing that brings you back into presence and awareness and embodiment in your body is too small to matter.

Or the next time you sit down, actually let yourself land in the chair. Feel the weight of your body being held by something that's not you. That's not your force. Notice if you're still slightly braced, even though you're sitting, which most of us are. That's wild. We are braced in chairs. We're braced on sofas. Some of us are probably braced in our sleep. See if you can let just a little more of that go. And you don't need a yoga mat or anything fancy. You need 20, 30 seconds and your own attention. And you have that in every liminal space you've been rushing through. It already exists. It's already there, I promise.

The last one for today is temporal rest, which almost nobody talks about, and I think it's one of the things we are most starved for. So temporal rest is the experience of being genuinely outside of time pressure. And I don't just mean having free time. I mean having time that has no shape, no next thing it needs to become, no implicit question about whether you're using it well. Because even most vacation is structured. Even a free Sunday with nothing to do has this background hum underneath it and behind it, this low-frequency question: Am I resting correctly? Am I doing enough with this? Could I be more restored than I am right now? Which is ironically exhausting. We're out here trying to optimize our rest and wondering why we're still tired.

So temporal rest is unscheduledness you've actually landed and arrived in. And it's part of why some people feel most alive at the ocean or in the woods. Right? Because those environments don't care about your calendar. The tide is never behind. She's right on time. The trees are not optimizing. The birds are not checking their metrics. And something in our

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nervous systems, in our bodies, in our spirits, when it takes that in, releases in a way it has a harder time releasing in your living room with your phone face down but still technically accessible and buzzing every four minutes.

The belief underneath the absence of temporal rest is one of the most insidious ones, that time belonging to you is time being stolen from everyone else. Let that sink in. We believe that our time, if we're focused on ourselves, we're stealing that time from everyone else. Thereby, that unstructured time is selfish time. That we do not get to exist outside of our usefulness. And that belief will have you rushing through folding laundry, right? Creating urgency around making the coffee, feeling behind when you're sitting in your own kitchen at 7:00 in the morning and nothing is actually on fire. Nothing is on fire. You're folding a towel. And you get to fold it slowly.

The tiniest version: Eat one meal this week without doing anything else at the same time. No phone, no show, no planning the rest of the day in your head, just the meal being present to the meal. That's a liminal space you inhabit multiple times a day. Let it be temporal rest instead of another opportunity to multitask your way through, and in a lot of ways, out of your own life.

Or when you finish a task, don't immediately start the next one. Sit in the completion for 30 to 60 seconds. Let there be a small, wee little gap between things. We are so trained to chain tasks back to back to back that we never feel the satisfaction of having done something, which means we never feel like enough, which means we keep going and going and going and wondering why we feel like a haunted Roomba. The gap matters. The liminal space between done and next is not wasted time. It is where your nervous system registers that something happened.

Or once this week, when you catch yourself rushing through something that doesn't actually need to be rushed, slow down to the real pace of it. Fold

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the laundry at the speed folding actually takes. Walk to the kitchen without urgency. Let the moment be as long as it is. Beauty, you are not late. This is a habit. And habits, with patience and practice and a lot of self-compassion, can change.

So, I present to thee five types of rest: relational, decision, imaginative, somatic, and temporal. And the tiny practices I've given you for each one, those really matter. I want to invite you to try them and tell me how it goes. And I want to remind you of this: The tiny practices are not the destination. They are the proof of concept. Every time you sit in the car or on your stoop for five to 10 minutes before you go inside, every time you let your mind wander in the shower, every time you eat a meal without your phone and you don't die, you are gathering evidence against the belief that you have to earn your rest. You are teaching yourself something vital. You are allowed to stop. Stopping does not make you less than or unworthy. The world does not collapse when you put it down. Rest is not a wellness trend. Rest is not five things to try this week. Rest is the truly radical reclamation of your own time, your own body, your own mind, from a story that was never true to begin with.

The story that your worth is your output, that your value is your usefulness, that belonging has to be earned through endless giving, and you can sleep when you're dead. My beauty, you are not a machine. You are not a resource. You are a human being who belongs to yourself first. And rest is what it looks like to live like you actually believe that.

The liminal spaces are already there. The space between waking and getting up, the commute, the minute after the kids go to sleep, the pause between tasks. You've been rushing through them or filling them with noise because empty space felt dangerous or wasteful, and it is neither. It is where rest has been waiting for you this whole time. Waiting this whole time, so patiently, with absolutely nowhere else to be.

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Emotional outsourcing thrives in depletion. An exhausted nervous system will grab for absolutely anything that makes the feeling stop. Rest is not a retreat from your life. Rest is how you stay in it. Rest is how you come home to yourself, and you, my tender love, have always deserved to be home.

Thanks for listening. I'm so grateful you are here. Please, if you're enjoying the show, share it on socials, tag me, share it with the people you love, share it with your clients, with your patients, with your friends. Share it with your own heart, meaning take this advice to heart and let yourself rest. You deserve it.

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.