

Ep #380: How to Know If You're Ready for Coaching and Real Change



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. Welcome back to this series we are calling The Work. Last week we started looking at the subtle emotional patterns that shape how we move through relationships and change. And today, I want to talk about something people don't always realize about growth. I know I for sure did not realize this when I started devouring self-help books and really trying to change and better my life so I could step out of emotional outsourcing, our codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing habits.

And that's the difference between wanting change and actually being available for change. I didn't realize that they're not always the same thing and realizing it and then doing the work to get ready to make the change, like the meta work, really made all the difference. Because a lot of people say they want change, but there's such a difference between actually stepping up to the plate and doing the work and just talking about wanting to do the work, if that makes sense. And maybe if you're like, "But I don't really get the difference," then that's exactly why you're here.

You're here to hear about the difference. So if you've ever felt stuck in the same patterns, even while doing the work, what we talk about here in today's episode might be the piece that's missing. I really hope it is. So, let's get into it.

I have done so much work around being grateful to be me and I am so grateful to be in a place where I can ease into that and just feel this peacefulness in my mind, body, and spirit. And it's so beautiful. And as I've been feeling into that sense of inner peace, that somatic, bodily peace, and that sense of greater ease in my mind, which, come on, it's not 24/7. I have my moments too. Let's be very real. But these days life just feels so much

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richer and fuller, and I feel so much more grounded. And I know that it's because of the work I've done to step into greater self-love.

And so for that reason, and because I so often get emails, DMs, questions asking, "Am I ready for coaching? How do I know if coaching is for me?" I want to talk about it. So let's dive in and talk about how you can know if coaching is a good choice for you in this moment. We'll start by looking at five myths around coaching, specifically about being ready to engage with the work I do around reclaiming and deeply embodying our self-worth. That shift from codependent thinking to thinking, feeling, and acting from our integrity and saying, "I am here on this planet in this moment for interdependent relationships, not to continue to pin my feelings on others, not to ask them to read my mind and then get resentful when they don't."

That shift to just being done with judging and being frustrated with others, being done holding yourself to some superhuman perfectionist standard, being ready to embrace your wants and your needs, to speak them out loud, to embrace your humanity and your messiness, to stop thinking and behaving in codependent and people-pleasing patterns, stepping into your power to own you as you for you, which are all things that coaching can help you to live into, mind, body, and spirit, the same way it's helped me.

So myth one: my relationship status matters.

So I hear this one in both directions, either as, "Well, it's not a good time to look at my codependent thinking because it shows up in romantic relationships, right? And I'm currently single, so..." I also hear it in the direction of, "Vic, I am in a very codependent relationship, and I want to get out of it first to work on myself. So maybe I should get out of this relationship first?"

And to both of these notions I will say, no. That wasn't my best English, but we'll go with it. I'm so not allowed to talk to my family back home in Argentina and then record the podcast because then it sort of comes out in

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not Spanglish because that was, those words were all English, but the syntax... Anyway.

So some of the deepest work that I have done on myself was the work that empowered me to leave a very painful codependent relationship where I was being gaslit and mistreated. And I know that working on my codependent thought habits, on my anxious and disorganized attachment, my self-worth while in that relationship was absolutely life-changing, because I was learning how to pause and check in with my body and my mind, so I could start to see what I was doing there from habit, from autopilot, so I could start to make different choices and could start to take my life back. So I could leave that relationship in my integrity, owning my part of what made things not great, with my head held high, with my focus on me and how I had shown up to co-create our problems while also not taking on my now ex's behavior as my fault, my doing, mine to own, because that person made some painful, unkind choices, and that was never my fault. And getting out was my responsibility, looking at my side of it, so I can grow and change and step into relationship with myself in a more self-loving way. That is my responsibility. And getting coached helped me to get there.

And likewise, coaching while single has helped me to know my single self better, to learn what I want, what I like to do, who I am and what I want my life to be like on my own, which was life-changing, coming from deeply ingrained codependent and people-pleasing habits, because I got to see how much of my own emotional life I was projecting onto someone else, how much I was attempting to source safety from someone I was dating and how freeing it is to not give away my peace of mind like that anymore. My darlings, I am just done. And coaching helped me to get to there. And it also made dating a much more pleasant experience than it ever has been because I wasn't taking on other people's crap as though it were my own like I used to. I left it squarely with them, and I wasn't making them into my savior either, which was definitely a favorite subconscious habit of mine.

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So whether you're dating, in a romantic relationship, or single, coaching around your codependent habits can be so helpful because codependent perfectionist and people-pleasing habits don't just show up with romantic partners. They show up with our parents and our children, with our siblings and our friends, with our coworkers, bosses, with strangers. There is always an application for this work, regardless of whether you're dating someone else or not, because regardless of who you're with, your most important relationship is with yourself. Right, my love?

Myth two: I am not ready to do this work.

Okay, so you may not be. And my beauty, that's just fine. I for sure wasn't ready until I was ready. I remember back to when I was like 28, 29, somewhere around there, and then my friend Becca was like, "Dude, you are so codependent." And I was just like, "Qué? What?" And she listed out all these traits, right? She made it very visible and I was like, "Doesn't compute. I... it doesn't compute." I wasn't ready to hear or see it because it was the water I had been swimming in my whole life. Same with my childhood trauma. I just was not ready to deal with it until I was. And that's okay. No shame there, my tender ravioli. None at all.

And I also know in my own life and experience there was a window of time when I was ready, and I let my own fear of change keep me from getting the help I needed, which I also don't shame myself for. It's just what it was. And I'm so glad that I was eventually able to hold space for that nervousness while also moving my life forward by starting to work with a coach.

That myth can also show up as, "I need to try everything else first before I invest in myself with coaching." Many of the people who thrive in my program have been working on these issues of self-worth for years, if not decades. And many just realized that codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thinking being an externalizer is a part of their internal landscape. It doesn't matter how long you've been working on these issues.

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If you're ready to make change happen, then it's the perfect time to work with a coach like me who gets it, who's been there, and who offers you new perspectives from my own lived experience, who shares a new way of looking at and thinking about the issues in your life and how you can change them for the long haul.

Myth three: Coaching is selfish.

So there was absolutely a time when spending money on coaching felt frivolous. And yes, it is a privilege to have the financial access to pay for high-level coaching, without a doubt. And I'm actually talking about something else entirely here. So I was comfortable paying for therapy because it felt like a validation of the fact, well, what my brain believed to be a fact back then, that I was broken, that there was something fundamentally wrong with me, and I needed someone to rescue me, a professional to fix me. And so I was comfortable paying for therapy because it played into my broken pound puppy narrative, which... Those are words I remember literally saying to a date in my 20s that I was a broken pound puppy, so to be gentle with me. Oh, my goodness. Brains.

My mind was telling me that it was okay for me to spend money on therapy because it continued this narrative. But my brain was not okay with me paying for coaching because... I didn't even realize this at the time, right? But coaching was something completely different. It was about me saying that I am worth investing in. The energy with which I thought about and considered coaching was that coaching isn't about fixing you because you aren't broken. And I'm not saying therapy is, I love therapy. But what I'm saying is that my brain had it twisted.

And so my investing and getting coaching was about my saying out loud, "Wait a second, I'm worth it. I want to move towards something better, not just run from all the old bad shit." And making that decision to work with my first coach, Sarah, 1,000 years ago, was all about taking that giant leap forward into declaring just how worthy I am by shifting the narrative away

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from, "I will pay for this because I am broken, and this proves it," to, "I'm going to spend my resources on me because my life being better is worth it."

So when we talk about selfishness, we can go in one of two ways. We can reclaim the word and say, "If being selfish means valuing myself and owning my worth, not being everyone else's pleasing doormat any longer, setting healthy boundaries that honor me in my relationships, if it means speaking my truth, then sure. Okay, let me take that one on. I am selfish." Alternatively, we can pull back and can recognize that taking care of yourself in a real and deep way is one of the kindest things you can do for the people you love. My clients show up as better partners, parents, nurses, doctors, friends, coworkers, teachers, employers, employees, activists, change makers, leaders, when they can see their own habitual thoughts that are keeping them from living in their zone of genius, when they can regulate their nervous systems and become truly anchored in a deep sense of self.

From there, we can take care of ourselves and others without resentment, without guilt trips. We can rest when we need to without guilt, and can show up to a protest march. We can do all of this from a grounded, centered place, and that is an amazing way to be of service in the world. Truly.

Myth four: I've read all the books. I already know what she's going to tell me.

So this one came straight from a conversation I had with a member of Anchored, my six-month program, who continued on into the alumni familia, the community that has grown from my six-month group coaching program. This wonderful human said, "I realized that sure, I could Google the nuts and bolts you convey in the program. I could try to distill it all on my own, but what's magical about coaching with you is how you metabolize it, how you hold space and witness me. Coaching is important because it gives

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you a way to see outside yourself, to have someone skilled and trained help you to break down and understand your own thinking. And I know I couldn't get there on my own. And what is extra amazing about this program is to be witnessed in community."

My darling, I am not here just to teach you skills and tools. A coach is a mirror, a mirror who helps you to see the truths that your socialization, conditioning, and survival skills have kept you from seeing. And while I love self-coaching and teach and believe in that tool, I also know, particularly when we're getting started with these deep and radical shifts in our life, that there are so many thought habits that we cannot see until we're being coached, till our coach calls it all out, lays it all out in front of us, and helps us to connect the dots.

As a coach, it's also my job to help my clients to slow their roll by speaking the truth, to help them see where they're jumping to conclusions, attempting to race impatiently to the finish line, where they're emotionally bypassing without realizing it, where they're using thought work to stay in a painful situation or be unkind to themselves on and on. The beauty of coaching is that I can be straightforward. I can shoot from the hip, be real and direct, firm and kind. I can tell you just how it is. And I am so grateful when my coach does that for me.

Myth five: a group just isn't for me.

Okay. Well, I get that. I used to say that myself not that many years ago, especially coming from a long and dearly held perfectionist framework. I didn't want others to see me in struggle because I was so dedicated to that outward expression of everything being just fine, thanks. And yet, the relational field is where we grow. When we are held in community, when we can see that our struggles are not unique... sure, the details might be, but the felt experience isn't in the best way.

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Listen, vulnerability is scary. And we humans are pack animals. We grow in relationship, in community. And when you're part of a community built by a coach you resonate with, you're in a space with people who are in resonance with that same energy, that same message, that framework for looking at and moving through the world. We need to decolonize our minds and to drop this story that healing happens in some kind of silo. We need to rewrite the stories around getting support and care, around being open and honest together.

And the power of doing that work in community is the opportunity to rewrite those stories, so we can co-regulate together and we can see that we are not alone in our suffering. We don't have to isolate or to go it alone. We don't ever have to tell the story that no one gets us. We can co-regulate our nervous systems in a group, which is so important and knowing that so many of our wounds as externalizers, people who seek external validation of our value and worth, are relational wounds. So while healing on our own... yes, it's important to be heard one-on-one. And the work of healing our relational wounds is best done in relationship.

And the growth... oh my goodness, the growth that comes from watching other humans get coached, it's so beautiful to see one another grow and to practice, actively practice holding space for one another. Because of course, from our codependent habits, we want to jump in to fix each other, to tell one another what we should do. And we don't do that in my group coaching. We witness, we love, we support, and we hold space for the other folks in the familia to be in their own process, struggle and joy. And we experience receiving the same without judgment or shame, often for the very first time in our adult lives, and that alone is wildly healing.

Important nerd alert. I feel like I haven't said the words nerd alert in a minute. It feels good. Can you hear my smile? I love us nerds. What's so amazing about our human mind-bodies is that we can get as much or sometimes more from watching someone else get coached, because when

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you're in that watcher place, your nervous system can relax into it, because you're not in the hot seat. You're less likely to go into sympathetic activation, fight or flight, or dorsal shutdown, freeze, when you're not the one being coached, which is one of the most amazing things of a group experience. It doesn't activate your amygdala, the fear center of the brain, in that same way. So you can stay so much more present and grounded. And from there can start to see your own issues in the experience of other folks in anchored, which is so powerful. And all that resistance that brains offer us as a way to attempt to protect us can fade back because you're not the one being coached. And thus, you can learn so much more sometimes from that experience, which is another thing that makes group coaching so amazing.

And finally, I know I said five myths. I miscounted. What are you going to do? Good thing I've worked through my perfectionism.

Myth six: I don't want to be in a group of people who just complain all the time.

Okay, if this is you and you're like, "That's why I don't want to do group coaching," let me say, I hear you. I've been in group settings where all you hear is people talking about other people and their behavior, complaining and not moving towards healing. So the answer is simple. We don't complain in my groups. We don't focus on anyone but ourselves. Sure, story matters, but it also doesn't. I mean, we can get so wrapped up in our narratives around other people and their behavior that we miss the point, which is to begin to shift our worldview to look at what we are doing, thinking, feeling, the actions we are taking, the results we are creating in our own lives so we can truly anchor ourselves in us.

And listen, healing should be joyful. I mean, it can be super painful, but it doesn't always have to be just that. There needs to be room for joy and laughter and connection and fun. And I always make sure there is in my programs. We dance so often as a group all together. We move our bodies,

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we laugh together, we cry together, we hang out, we share playlists and memes and pictures of babies and dogs. We connect in a deep and powerful way that's so often missing from our codependent lives. So if you're worried that group coaching will just be... Not on my watch.

So my beauties, those are the myths. And here are some times when coaching is and isn't the right call. So sometimes, our trauma response is so heightened that coaching isn't the correct place to go to in a given moment. Coaching is not the right place for trauma recovery work unless your coach is also a trained, skilled, and licensed mental health practitioner. If you're having daily panic attacks or are making suicide plans, if you're more depressed than not on most days, if the activities of daily living, things like feeding yourself or showering, are a challenge on the regular, not just on a relaxed Saturday, then coaching is likely not the right choice. Therapy is. And yes, I'll be doing a show soon on the differences between coaching and therapy, so make sure you follow or subscribe to the show so you don't miss it.

My darling, my sweet, magnificent love, if you are thinking of harming yourself, please know that you are not alone, not at all. My dear hermano de crianza, as we say in Spanish, my chosen family, took his life in October of 2020. And I've lost many others to suicide along the way. And baby, baby, baby, coaching is not for you if you are actively considering harming yourself. Once again, therapy is. And I want to encourage you to reach out for help. I know how challenging that can be. I've been in that deep, dark pit of despair before, and I want to say it clearly. Your life matters. I know it may not feel like it at the moment, but it does. I'm going to put several suicide hotline phone numbers, including the text ones, which are so great, in the show notes. So please, please reach out. Please connect if you're thinking of harming yourself, my sweet love.

And I'll also say, if coaching isn't right for you in this moment, I'm still here for you. You can listen to Feminist Wellness every week, can follow me on

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the gram at Victoria Albina Wellness, can come to my webinars. You can attend to your trauma work, your regulation work, and can keep checking in with your therapist and yourself, and can come to coaching when you're in a stable place for it, but not before. Okay?

So you know you're ready for coaching when you've done all the things you know to do and you still feel... well, like shit's just not right in your life.

I can remember back like it was yesterday to right before I hit the point where I was ready for coaching work and I was sitting in my car and I was just screaming and hitting the steering wheel and just felt wild because I was just so frustrated with my life as it was, my relationship mainly, and I felt so stuck and so ready for something major to shift, to get my hands on the protocol, the method, the algorithm that would help me to lift myself out of the quagmire I felt so lodged in. And my life looked great on paper though. I got to say, newly minted master's in public health from a great school, great international job working with indigenous communities in Mexico, Nicaragua, and Cuba. And because I didn't know how to manage my mind or my codependent habits, I was also so depressed and so anxious. And my IBS was a hot mess, and I remember both feeling like nothing would ever get better. And like I was so ready, ready to do whatever it took to change my life, to find my joy and my spark again, to find a sense of satisfaction in life. And I'm so grateful that is when I found coaching and changed my life forever.

And you, my love, are likely ready for coaching when you're ready to stop living in the same old ways you've always done, when you're ready to think, feel, and act differently to create different relationships, different outcomes for yourself. When you can see that glimmer of hope and know that you just need support, tools, skills to help you get to there. On that note, you are ready for coaching if you understand that while yes, I will be holding judgment-free space for you, I will hold that mirror up, I will lovingly challenge you on your bullshit. I do not provide silver bullets or magic pills.

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I'm plum out. As an actual Argentine, I get to say, my darling, it takes two to tango, lo cual es la verdad. So I will share tools like the thought work protocol, somatics, bodily practices, journaling prompts, coaching calls, and you have to show up and do your part of this work for it to work or it just... it doesn't work. So you're ready for coaching when you're ready to put the time, effort, and energy in.

And I want to say, "Baby, my love, my darling, it is normal to be scared, to have doubts." That is so, so normal because when we start to see ourselves, our patterns, our mental habits, change happens, which makes me think of that old saying, "The only person who likes change is a wet baby." And sure, that change might mean, well, we invest in new relationships and learn to be openhearted and vulnerable in a way that is quite uncomfortable at first. And that change might mean that we leave relationships that don't serve us, that we learn to see our thinking in new ways and learn to live in our bodies, not just in our minds. Perhaps it means we learn to set boundaries and start taking our lives back from our conditioning, from the patriarchy, from our socialization. And I get it, that can seem like... scary. Not a lie in there, in fact.

And I will tell you this. I was ready for coaching when I got to a point where I didn't like my life and knew that there was more for me in this lifetime. I didn't like my patterns and wanted to create new ones. I didn't like how I was and wasn't showing up for myself in my relationships, at work, and I was ready for change and was ready to feel supported in changing for the first time in my life. I was a parentified child, as so many of us with our thought habits were, and I spent a lifetime giving and giving and giving, not realizing I was doing that to keep the spotlight off me. And I knew I was so ready for coaching when a little voice inside me said, "Baby, you're ready to begin receiving."

Healing, growing, evolving, showing up as our most authentic selves is a lifelong practice, and coaching is a powerfully feminist tool because it's

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about you learning how to manage your own mind. Coaching gives you the tools, skills, love, care, support you need to not be dependent on coaching. As you learn how to step into being your own watcher, how to connect somatically, as you learn to coach yourself on the daily, you won't feel like you need coaching because you know and trust and believe you can do it on your own. My darling, coaching teaches you to ask yourself challenging questions with deep self-love and self-compassion. Coaching helps you to stop putting your life on hold, to stop saying, "I'll be happy when I'm married, I'm divorced, when I gain the weight, when I lose the weight, when I get the job, when I quit the job." Coaching helps you to ground into the present, to ask yourself what you need to think, feel, and do to be happy now, and helps you to choose that, to choose you, to choose your life for you each and every day.

Listen, to go all former hospice nurse on you, life is too long to live a life you don't love, and it's way too short for the exact same reason. You're ready for coaching when you're ready to live a life you deeply and truly enjoy, and when you're ready to look at some really hard shit. Because life can be super challenging sometimes, and when you have the thought work protocol and when you have somatic practices and a loving community to work it all through with, life is just so much more vibrant, joyous, and just plain amazing.

So I will say this, you're worth it. Your well-being is worth it. Your joy is worth it. The change is scary, but what is scarier than things staying exactly how they are? And if you're not ready yet, let me say it once more. That's okay too, my darling. What is always the very most important is that you honor you and your truth. Just don't let fear get in the way of living your dream life.

My love, when you start becoming more available for change, one of the first things that shifts is how you show up for other people. And that's where things can get uncomfortable because not everyone responds the way you

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expect them to. And that's what we're getting into next week. So make sure you're following the show, subscribe to the show. I don't want you to miss a darn thing because this is - it's a really good series. So, yeah, make sure you don't miss it.

Alright, my love, 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.