

# Ep #381: The People-Pleasing Trap: Keeping Everyone Happy but You



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Búa Victoria Albina, NP, MPH**

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Búa Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

## Ep #381: The People-Pleasing Trap: Keeping Everyone Happy but You

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. So, we've been doing this little series called The Work. And in this series, we've been looking at the emotional patterns that are keeping us stuck, even when we are trying so hard to grow. One of the most uncomfortable parts of change is realizing that not everyone benefits from the healthier version of you, which means not everyone's going to like it. And people are going to push back.

So, one of the biggest fears that comes up when I talk to people about change and making change, like when people are interested in joining Anchored, I often ask, like, what might keep you from saying yes? Not just to Anchored itself, Anchored if you're new here, Anchored is my six-month deep dive coaching program, but what might keep you from saying yes to doing this work to overcome emotional outsourcing, to end emotional outsourcing in your life? And what I often hear back is, I'm nervous about what my people are going to say. Right? Like, what happens when I stop showing up the way people expect me to? The way I always have, the way yeah, I've just always over-functioned, over-given, over-done, just over, over, over, over, over, over for everyone. What's going to happen when I stop?

And the truth is, when you stop people-pleasing, when you stop doing every project at work up to your like ridiculous perfectionist standards, when you stop living in that codependent over-giving for everyone else, yep, people are not going to like it. Right? And it makes sense that feels uncomfortable. It makes sense that might give you the squirmies, and it's not a reason to not do the work for your own growth, for your own life, for

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your own everything. So, let's talk about it. Let's get into it because it's a very real thing that comes up a lot, and it matters. Let's go.

People-pleasing can play quite the role in the perpetuation of racism and racist thinking. And it's important to me, as a white passing Latinx, to speak up about racism in this country. And we can apply the following to any and all instances of someone saying something that is racist, as well as misogynist, homophobic, transphobic, classist, xenophobic, ableist, etc. So, as a recap, the truth about people-pleasing is that it keeps everyone pleased with you. Well, everyone other than you. And it can keep you out of integrity with yourself, and it can keep you from being an ally, accomplice, or co-conspirator with BIPOC folks. And BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. And because it's June, and happy Pride y'all, Stonewall was a riot led by Black and Latinx trans women. It can keep you from being an ally and accomplice for LGBTQ+ folks.

And in terms of our perennial themes here, our wellness as humans socialized as women, as humans working to heal our codependent and perfectionist thought habits, seeking to please other people more than we seek to please ourselves keeps us stuck and trapped in those old thought habits and ways of being.

One way people-pleasing can show up around race and racism is the fear of doing it wrong. And nerd alert, so many studies show that when your brain is full of shame and guilt, you literally cannot make change. And there's functional MRIs to evidence this. So, listen to that episode. Get right on that.

Another way people-pleasing can show up around race and racism is the fear of getting told by either Black folks or non-Black allies that you misspoke or having this worry that other people, those who are not allied with an intersectional feminist worldview, may think or say something about you that is disapproving. For example, your racist boss or racist cousin, they might have some thoughts about you speaking up and saying, "Black

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Lives Matter." The worry that people would critique you or think you shouldn't talk politics or should stay in your own lane has kept folks silent for way too long, kept us from stepping into the fray and can keep folks from living into their integrity.

Again, do take a moment after you listen to this episode to go back and listen to episode 69 if this resonates for you. So, this people-pleasing thought habit, and always make note, my angel, I always talk about thought habits, not traits. These things were survival skills when we were young, and they simply don't serve us anymore. So, this people-pleasing thought habit keeps us wanting people to be happy with us because it's linked to survival in our brains and can lead us to allow those small-seeming racist comments along with moments of cultural appropriation, homophobia, etc., to pass on by, unchallenged, to not speak up, not to pause, to step into alignment with our integrity and to say something when something is racist or otherwise problematic.

And whether you're focused on keeping the peace, or you're worried you'll be seen as not a good enough ally or too radical or whatever, that framing will keep you from learning and challenging yourself to grow and learn about your own racism, and it will keep you from being in your integrity as a human who cares about Black folks and about other humans, about equity, equality, access, freedom. So, when you call people out or call them in for being a part of enacting white supremacy, of prejudice of any kind, they are unlikely to be pleased with you. Sure, some folks might say thank you. But many are not going to like hearing your opinion, your thoughts and feels on things like that joke they told, that critique of the Black Lives Matter movement, that story with racist undertones.

And that's where the proverbial rubber hits the proverbial road, in saying enough to the propagation of harmful, hurtful opinions, to speak up and talk back and speak the truth about prejudice and racism. So, my darling, why is this so challenging? Well, my nerds, let's always remember that as

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human animals, we are wired to care about what other people think of us for our own physical and emotional safety and survival, to not get cast out from the village. That thought, oh, they will cast me out, can send a person right into sympathetic activation or dorsal collapse. And you know you are not in your power in either place.

And the work is not to try to completely sever that part of our brain that cares about the village as a whole. It's just not possible. And I'll say not the right goal. Instead, you get to get grounded and loving and ventral vagal with yourself, to honor yourself, and to find the place of deep self-love within you where you can connect in with your true beliefs, can regulate your nervous system, and can speak what you believe to be true. Herein, that Black Lives Matter. And in a broader context, for my beautiful loves working to manage our minds around perfectionist and codependent thought habits, that you matter in your own individual life, in your interpersonal connections. My love, this work is vital.

And I want to be very, very, very, very clear to say here that having dysregulation in your nervous system is super real, and you get to bring your attention to it, you get to bring love to your inner child who's scared to speak up. You get to bring so much care into your own bodily system. And I'll implore you to not use these things as a wall to hide behind, right? As a way to say, I can't do this work, or I won't do this work right now because of my trauma responses. Instead, you get to learn to attend to your body, your inner child, your nervous system, to manage your own mind so you can hold these things in parallel. That duality. I am learning to heal in these ways and I am learning to speak up. I'm learning to educate myself. I am reading, I am supporting Black women. Right? I am taking action. Duality. You can hold it all, my darling. You really, really can. I have that faith in you.

Speaking of duality and parallels, one of the things brains really appreciate sort of pedagogically, right, to support our learning is to hold new information alongside information we've been working with. So, let's

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broaden the conversation to talk about how people aren't pleased when we stop people-pleasing in general and how that's so important to be real about. So, my beauty, people will not be pleased when you stop doing things for others they can do for themselves, when you stop saying yes when you mean no, when you tell your mom not to triangulate with you and talk badly about your dad. When you tell a coworker you're no longer engaging in gossip, when you set a boundary for the first time, or repeat the same boundary for the 14th. People tend to hate it when you stop putting their comfort, their happiness, their desires, and wants above your own, especially when they're used to seeing you as a person in the role of yes person. And when they've seen you as historically putting people ahead of yourself, namely them.

It takes dedication to self to stand in your power, to take back your life from your own codependent and perfectionist and people-pleasing thought habits. And because I know you can do hard things, I know you can do this too. And it starts with getting real about the thoughts you have on autoplay in your mind, those old cassette tapes, and recognizing that they're just that. Thoughts you were taught along the way. They aren't facts. And nerd alert, from there, you can engage your prefrontal cortex, the executive function part of your perfect mind, to decide two things.

One, you're going to shift those thoughts that say that keeping people pleased with you is vital, important, or even a worthy exercise. And of course, there are tons of details on how to do this way back in episode 68. Two, you get to decide with your smart, evolved brain that it's not a problem if folks aren't pleased with you and your self-care choices. That you're not going to call yourself selfish or bad or anything harmful to you for taking care of you or for speaking up about racism.

You get to decide ahead of time how you're going to think and thus feel, and you get to do the work to really retrain yourself around this new thought, to bolster you when someone inevitably has a criticism of you.

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Again, it's not the goal to be a sociopath who doesn't care at all about what others think, but rather to not let it mean anything about you that someone else is having a thought. Because it doesn't. It literally never does. Their thoughts are just sentences in their own mind. And nerd alert once again, my love, remember, your thoughts are always changeable because science. Brains are amazingly plastic, moldable, changeable, and you can rewrite your own mental and somatic bodily stories about yourself and the world. You can put yourself first, and you can let other people have their own reactions, their own feelings, their own experience.

You can remember that your thoughts create your feelings and so too, their thoughts create theirs. And if they're upset that you will no longer, for example, drop everything you're doing to take care of them, that's okay. Truly. It really is just fine if they're upset. And I know, I know, it takes lots of work and practice to put it into action. And I know you can do it.

And as always, my darlings, whenever we talk about these things, I always remind us that when we're talking about things like stopping people-pleasing and people being upset with us and that being okay, I must always give the caveat that if you are in a situation of actual abuse and where there's a threat of violence or aggression, that may not be the moment to stop people-pleasing. Right? Like it may actually make sense. And people-pleasing is a survival method. We talked a lot about this in the last episodes, but that is likely not a smart moment in which to stop people-pleasing an abuser, but rather to recognize that you are doing it and to work with a counselor and support folks one-on-one. So, my beauties, the thing to know when we're talking about changing our brains is that you can use the thought work protocol to give yourself a new thought to work on believing. Remembering that a belief is a thought you have thought over and over again until your neurology decides it's real and thus is a belief.

So, some new thoughts to consider include, I can put myself first, other people second with love. What other people think of me is none of my

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business. And episode 6 is an episode of the same title about that theme. I get to attend to my own healing. I can listen to others with love while staying in integrity with myself. I can speak up against injustice while staying in integrity with myself. I can set healthy boundaries for myself. And when I do, I am saying yes to loving both me and that other person. And I am saying no to their request, not to them as a human. I can detach from other people's opinions of me. They're just their opinions, not fact. And they have no meaning in my life until I choose to give them meaning. I am getting to know myself and to honor my imperfections, my slip-ups. I am learning day-by-day to radically love and accept myself, to learn and grow, and to honor myself just as I am.

The way we turn these kind of thoughts into beliefs in our brain is by thinking them on repeat. So, I would suggest you pick one thought, maybe two to practice, and write it out in your journal. And I do recommend writing longhand versus typing if your abilities let you. If typing is what is available to you, go on, rock on. That's great. If handwriting is physically available for you, I would highly recommend that. One to two thoughts, write it out. When I'm practicing a new thought, I'll write it out 5, 10, 15 times, once, twice, three times a day. Really helps to make it concrete in my brain.

My beauty, my perfect darling love, I know you can value yourself in these ways. I know you can use your voice for your own good and that of Black folks and all marginalized peoples. I know you can be okay if someone is upset with you or displeased and can focus on staying true to yourself and what you believe in. I know you can release your desire to people-please, to engage in the false control fantasies we discussed in episodes 59 and 60 of thinking you can control how other people experience you, think about you, feel about you.

And in so doing, you can learn to fully step into your power, your wholeness, your truth. You can speak your mind and let the rest go. And you can remind yourself, you can say into your own heart that you matter.

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Your healing matters, not just in your life, but for the world. Collective healing is the healing we need, my beauty. Start within yourself, speak up as you're able, learn to get more able, and let it all ripple out to change the world. You got this, my love. One little kitten-sized step at a time.

So, when things get uncomfortable, when people don't respond the way you hoped, the question becomes, what do you do with yourself in that moment? What do you want to do with and for yourself in that moment? Right? Because this is where most people either grow or go right back into old patterns. Right? We need to have a plan for what happens when we enact change and someone says, "Change back." And that's what we'll be getting into next week. So, make sure that you are following the show, that you subscribed to the show.

And hey, if you haven't left a five-star rating and a written review, I'd be so grateful if you did. It's the way we get the show to rank higher in the search on Apple, Spotify, wherever you get your shows. And thus, it gets into more people's ears. And this is a free resource that I pour a ton of heart, of soul, of energy, of money, of time into because I want to help as many people as possible. So, I'd appreciate your help so we can all help as much as possible.

All right, my love. Thanks for being here. I love you. You're doing great. 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.