

Ep #385: The Shifting Sands of Confidence



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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. So well. I'm so excited. It's getting warmer out. I am a sunshine baby, even though I was born in the depths of winter. I was born in August. I was born in South America, thus the depths of winter. But you know what? I'm a Leo through and through. I'm a sunshine babe, and I got to tell you, I just feel really done with winter forever. No more winter. Not ready to move to San Diego, but I'm ready for summer sunshine. Bring it on.

Listen, this week here on *Feminist Wellness*, I do not want to talk about sunshine. I mean, I do want to, but I'm not going to. Instead, I want to talk about something that came up in an Anchored breathwork integration session recently. Let me actually make English of those words. So, Anchored is my six-month deep dive coaching program. It is my favorite place on earth. It is freaking incredible. It is a small community of women and AFAB non-binary folks, and we gather multiple times a week, every week for six months to deep dive about our emotional outsourcing. And it is, it is spectacular.

It is one of the few things that I kind of like, I'm a woman of many words. I was recently on a trip and Billey, my wife, was saying how quiet the house was, how she could like hear herself think more than usual because I wasn't here, and I don't even realize how much I vocal stim, but I walk around like singing and talking to the plants and just like, I got a lot of words. And when I think about Anchored, it's one of the few times I feel almost speechless because I love it so much. And I love the good people of Anchored. I love getting to know them. I am beyond honored and grateful to get to coach them and the community we build and they build with each other, the support they give each other. It like cracks my heart open more and more and more every single session. And we are years and years into

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Anchored and I revise it every year and make it even more better, and it's just incredible.

This podcast is not about Anchored. It's actually, well, it's about confidence. Drum roll, please. It's about confidence. Way to bury the lead. Breathwork. We do breathwork at least once a month. I use a methodology that is loosely based in pranayama, and it is a really beautiful way to regulate the breathing that can help you have a psychedelic-like experience, have a, you know, a transcending experience, or just really just open up this meditative space to get closer to yourself. The breathwork we do is a really potent place to process, to be with yourself, to let things move, to move things. It's magical.

One of the big things I'm prone to say is catharsis is cute, integration changes lives. I have a number of episodes coming up. Make sure you're following or subscribed to the show that touch on or are directly about that saying and what the hell I mean by that. But integration is everything. If we have this peak experience like we can have in breathwork and then we don't integrate it, meaning we don't bring it into the whole of our lives, then you know, we do breathwork on Friday and snap at our kids on Saturday, or, you know, do breathwork on Monday and then on Wednesday, we're berating ourselves for being human again.

So integration is when we begin the work of taking what we learned or how we're growing in the practice and integrate it into our lives so that we can be the changed version of ourselves we want to be, not just on the mat, not just in the practice, but ongoingly, if that's a word or not, it's just not my business. So, there was context for you. We were in an Anchored breathwork integration session recently, and something that came up there is what I want to talk to you about here, my perfect little lionfish.

So, we were sitting in that like really tender, very wide open space that lives after breathwork. It's this really liminal zone where things that you've been carrying and had felt so heavy finally have room to surface and speak and you feel really held. And one of the women named something I think a lot of

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us have quietly carried without ever really knowing how to frame it. She said something like, "I used to feel so confident. I knew who I was. And then I got married. And then my marriage ended. And now I don't." And the thing that's so disorienting is that I remember knowing. I remember feeling solid. So why do I feel so shaky now?

And it's a really important question, and there's always some flavor of it in Anchored, in all of my courses, in my short courses as well. This comes up in the Q&As there because this is a theme for us, right? Where we step into roles that are not ours, and when those roles go away, who are we? So if you listen to last week's episode on role confusion, you might recognize something in that question because for a lot of us, the roles we're playing, the emotional manager, the one who held everything together, the person everyone depended on, those roles came with a particular kind of confidence, right?

A confidence in our capacity to do the role. Not always like a super healthy kind, not always one that was really ours, but at least it was a legible sense of self, right? I know who I am. I am the one who handles things. And when the life that organized around those roles ruptures, or when we start intentionally and courageously to put those roles down, we can find ourselves standing in unfamiliar territory going, okay, so, yeah, who am I now? And that's what we're talking about today. Confidence after rupture. What happened to it? Where it actually went and how you get it back in a way that is genuinely yours this time.

So first, rupture. I am not only talking about the end of a marriage. Any container that held your sense of self that has now cracked open or dissolved entirely or begun to dissolve counts here. So, a career you built for 20 years, a friendship that was load bearing in your identity, a move that took you away from everything familiar, a diagnosis that rewrote the story you were telling about your body and your future, a role, mother of young children, caregiver, the person everyone depended on, a role that has

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shifted or ended. Any life that had a particular shape that you had a particular self inside of that no longer has that shape.

Here's what I think we miss about confidence. We talk about it as if it is purely internal, as if it is a fixed quality you either have or you don't. Lives somewhere in your personality independent of context. And sure, yeah, there's something true in that. And there's also a you whose confidence was built in relationship to a specific life, specific roles, specific people who reflected you back to yourself in a particular way. The confidence felt internal. A lot of it was also relational. A lot of it was the mirror other people held up, the structure, the container provided, the identity that accrued around the life you were living. That confidence was real. It was yours. It's real. It was also at least in part built by and for a life that no longer exists. Right? Right.

So when the life ruptures, the story ruptures, of course the confidence wobbles. Of course you reach for the solid ground of knowing who you are in the before times, and you find it shifted. Of course you look in the mirror and you see someone you don't quite recognize. And the thing that is so disorienting about that is that it feels like loss when it's actually an opening. Our culture teaches us that confidence means you've arrived and wobbling means, well, something's gone wrong. That framing has caused an enormous amount of unnecessary suffering, and I want to offer you something more accurate. She has baby Bambi legs. That image came up in our circle. I wanted to share it here because I think it's exactly right on. And it gives me a giggle, which you know, I'm always going to go for the giggle.

Baby Bambi legs. That particular combination of earnest effort and spectacular wobble, the reaching for the ground, the finding it and losing it and finding it again. There's nothing wrong with Bambi. Bambi's not lacking confidence in any meaningful sense. Bambi is new, new to walking, and the newness is the whole point. And the wobbling is the mechanism, and the ground catching her every single time she reaches for it is the whole

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architecture of how this works. Our culture sees Bambi and immediately wants to fix her. Give her a confidence hack, a power pose, a five-step morning routine to manifest her best self, which she should do before 6:00 a.m. while drinking celery juice and journaling in a handbound leather notebook that costs seventy-four dollars. A new relationship to step into so she can borrow someone else's solid ground for a while.

We are so profoundly uncomfortable with the wobble that we've built an entire industry around helping people skip it. And I say this as someone who works in that industry and loves some parts of it dearly, challenges a whole other part of it. But listen, you cannot skip the wobble. The wobble is itself also load bearing. You cannot build new confidence on top of an unprocessed rupture anymore than you can build a house on a sinkhole and expect it to hold. Real confidence, the kind that does not require constant external validation to stay upright, the kind that does not collapse the moment the container it was built inside disappears, that confidence, it is built in the wobble. It is built through the accumulation of evidence that you can reach for the ground and find it. Not the ground of another person's approval or another role to step into, because those are fleeting, but rather your own ground, the internal anchor that exists regardless of what is happening around you.

In somatic work, we call this resourcing. The capacity to locate yourself from the inside rather than waiting to be located from the outside. And we talked about this in episode 373. After a rupture, building that internal anchor is the work. Everything else is furniture arrangement. Here's what that actually looks like in practice, because there is a meaningful gap between find your internal anchor as a concept and find your internal anchor on a Wednesday when you feel like a stranger to yourself and you have three things to do, and the 3:00 a.m. thoughts came back last night.

So practically, it looks like very small things done with a great deal of commitment to self, aka consistency, and almost no drama. Things like, you ready? Let's go through a wee list. Pausing and feeling the weight of your

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body in your chair. Putting your hand on your chest and taking three deep breaths to echolocate yourself in relation to yourself, in time, in space, in the world, before you get out of bed, and especially before you grab your phone. Asking yourself several times a day, what do I actually notice right now in this mind, in this body, in this moment? Not what do I think or fear or wish or regret, but actually setting reminders on your phone three times a day minimum, or let's call it maximum. Let's kitten step this, right? Minimum baseline. Three things. What do I notice? Yeah, because this is that work of becoming your own north star that we're always talking about, right? This is that work in action. And episode 148 is all about becoming your own north star.

My beauty, I get it. These things feel almost like insultingly small when you're in the middle of a rupture. You're trying to rebuild your entire sense of self, and I'm telling you how to feel your feet on the floor. I know. I know. I know I hear you. And I'm going to keep telling you anyway because the confidence you're trying to rebuild cannot simply be thought into existence. It must be felt into existence. It merges through contact with the present moment, through the accumulation of small acts of turning towards yourself rather than away. It is, to be frank, the least photogenic recovery process in the history of recovery processes. Nobody's going to make a movie about it. I mean, like what's even going to happen, right? Emma Stone just like sits in a chair and notices things for several months. Roll credits. Oscar, please. I would actually like to thank all the little people.

In Anchored, in The Shift, in everything inside The Somatic Studio, in all of my work, we talk about the difference between practice and praxis. So practice is vital. It's making a time to do a thing. You show up. You do the body scan or the breathwork or the resourcing, the nervous system stuff, the somatics. You close your journal, you go make dinner. Practice has edges. And those edges matter because that's where it all begins. Praxis is when the practice becomes you. This is what we do in Anchored. When you're no longer doing regulation, you're just regulated. When you don't

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have to like remember to turn towards yourself because turning towards yourself is simply what you do.

The confidence that grows from praxis is a different animal entirely from the confidence you had before. It does not need the container to stay intact. It does not evaporate when the life changes shape. It is yours, built from the inside out, which means it moves with you. It has, if you will forgive me, earned its legs. It has been Bambi, and it has wobbled, and it knows the ground holds. Thing is, there's no timeline for this. Our culture is relentless about timelines, especially when it comes to our healing, and I want to name that directly. The deadline you feel, the sense of being behind in your own healing, the comparison to how quickly someone else bounced back, none of that's coming from your actual body, your actual nervous system, your actual need. It's coming from a culture that is deeply uncomfortable, especially with women in transition, and would very much like for you to get this resolved and get back to being useful.

But baby, time isn't real. It's sloshing. There's no linear time. And your nervous system is on its own schedule. The confidence that is emerging is on its own schedule. That schedule does not care about how many months have passed, and it will not be taking questions. What it needs is not speed. What it needs is your presence. And this is where emotional outsourcing, the habitual pattern of reaching outside of yourself for the sense of safety and belonging and worth that can only come from within, becomes most seductive in this phase.

Because when confidence is shaky, the pull towards borrowing it from outside yourself is enormous. Another relationship, another person's approval, another role to step into, another identity built around someone else's needs, someone else to care for. Each of these offers what feels like steady ground and solid ground, and each of them is, I say this with enormous love, my favorite metaphor of all, it's a haunted Roomba. It appears to be doing the job. It bumps into the same freaking wall over and

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over. It runs out of battery at the worst possible moment and you find it spinning in a corner at 2:00 a.m. making a noise that should not exist.

Borrowed confidence requires constant maintenance and collapses the moment the source shifts. You cannot build lasting confidence on borrowed stability. My beauty, you can only build it on your own. The work after a rupture is itchy. It's scratchy. There are days it is tedious and unglamorous, and you would very much like to have your confident self back, the one who knew what she was doing, the one who had a life that made sense, a role that provided containment. And that's real. I'm not going to tell you otherwise. Inside that itch, though, something extraordinary is happening. You're meeting someone. You're meeting the self whose confidence is not contingent on a particular container surviving, the one who has different needs than the one you knew, different desires, maybe a different sense of what safety feels like and what aliveness feels like.

My beauty, my sweet tenderoni, she's in there. She's always been in there. The rupture did not create her. The rupture finally made enough space for her to be visible. So stay present for her. Not rushing her into confidence she does not yet have, not comparing her to the version of you that felt solid in a context that no longer exists, not pathologizing the wobble. Keep showing up. Keep turning towards her with curiosity. Because she will find her footing. Bambi learns to walk. And listen, then she runs. And eventually the running is so natural and so hers that she does not think about it at all. But first, before the praxis, she had to wobble, and she had to not rush the wobbling, and she had to have the ground be there to catch her every single time she reached for it.

My darling, you are the ground and you are Bambi. You are the one reaching and the one being reached for. And the most countercultural thing you can do right now in a world that wants you to skip the wobble and get back to being productive and useful, get back in your role, little lady, is to stay with the wobble. The confidence you had before was real. The confidence you're building now is real too. And it is newer. It's not lesser or

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more. It's finding its footing, not losing its way. It will not need the container to stay intact in order to survive. It will not need anyone's approval to remain standing. It is going to be more yours than anything you have felt before. Give her time. Give her your presence. Give her the same patience you would offer without hesitation to anyone you love, especially someone small. And then watch what she does when she runs.

Oh my beauty, if this episode landed somewhere in you, if you recognize yourself in the wobble or the 3:00 a.m. search for ground that keeps coming up empty, this is exactly the work we do in Anchored. Not the skipping the wobble work, the building confidence from the inside out work, the kind that actually travels with you that lasts a lifetime. Six months, small group, find out more and get on the wait list now, BeatrizAlbina.com/anchored. Cannot wait to have you join us.

Thank you my love. Thanks for being here. Thanks for being kind to the wobble. 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. I'll talk to you soon.