

Ep #26: Reparenting In Action



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Reparenting ourselves is a daily dedication to living our lives in alignment with our goals; lives we can be proud of by learning to soothe and comfort ourselves versus asking someone else to do that for us, lives in which we set goals and meet them, where we learn to respond to life from a calm grounded centered way versus reacting from anger, upset, or sadness.

This week, I'll be sharing my favorite ways to connect in with your inner child and to gently, lovingly begin to reparent yourself so you can spend your days tuned into your own needs, your own wants, your own desires, and can find the power and agency that comes with living a life aligned with your truth and knowing that you are your most powerful, dedicated, loving parent and you're right by your side every step of the way.

You're not going to want to miss this culmination of several weeks of teaching on our powerful, amazing inner child. So stay tuned, my darling, my top tips for reparenting your perfect inner child are coming your way.

You're listening to Feminist Wellness, the only podcast that combines functional medicine, life coaching, and feminism to teach smart women how to reclaim their power and restore their health! Here's your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine Expert, Herbalist and Life Coach, Victoria Albina.

Hello, hello my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. I am so happy with how this mini-series on our inner child has gone and the responses I've gotten have been overwhelming, in the delightful sense of that word. Thank you to all of you who have reached out and shared how helpful these episodes have been.

And to the listeners who asked me to do a breathwork group specifically in this topic, your wish is my command. I'll be offering exactly that later in 2019, so make sure you're on my email list. Sign up right on my website at victoriaalbina.com so you don't miss a thing.

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So, in the last few weeks, we have talked about what our inner child is, that remainder of our child self that stays with us as we age and who may be keeping you from meeting your goals, going on dates, taking that big leap at work, speaking up for yourself or doing whatever else those children find scary or upsetting or worrisome.

We talked about the idea of emotional adulthood, which is when you're taking responsibility for your thoughts and the feelings they create and not blaming or shaming or guiltting others for the outcomes in your life and the decisions that you have made. And we talked about emotional childhood, which is, well, to put it succinctly, the opposite of emotional adulthood.

And that brought us to the concept of reparenting ourselves, which is when we do the work of actively showing up for the child selves within us, asking them what they want and need and supporting those parts of ourselves with love and attention and without judgment. Reparenting is when we choose to wildly and courageously accept ourselves and our child selves just as we are.

We don't seek to change us or make us different, but rather we show up with a full open heart for the scared, sad, lonely, or worried parts of us, the angry irritated grumpy parts of ourselves, the joyous, happy, and free parts of ourselves.

We learn to be a loving accepting parent to every single child within us; the joker, the clown, the sad sack. My brain just went to Snow White and all of her dwarves. Understanding that we are them and they are us, we are those kids because they are our past and we get to love ourselves deeply and show up in new ways, the ways we may have wanted our caregivers to show up for us when we were actual children.

Not doing this healing work, not reparenting ourselves is always an option. You don't have to do this work, my angel. But it leaves our shadow side

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spinning, leaves our inner children wanting and begging and demanding so much from us. Doing this work of reparenting ourselves is a free and beautiful way to find, cultivate, and create peace for ourselves. Note that I said free and beautiful, not necessarily easy.

This work is challenging. And as always, I want to remind and encourage you to be gentle, loving, and patient with yourself throughout this process. Don't quit before the magic happens. And you're learning to be a parent, and that can be a challenging thing to take on.

And the benefit, the benefit of learning to reparent yourself and to choose, each and every day, to show up for your full self, with your full self, it's so liberating. It's so beautiful. And it's been so healing for me. And I wish and hope for the same for you, my darling. And I know you've got this.

So, without further ado, what follows are my 12 favorite ways to show up and reparent myself. This is not an exhaustive list, but I really could have written an entire book about this concept, so I had to cut myself off at some point. So I went with lucky number 12 – not really known as a lucky number, but here we go.

One, making promises to yourself and keeping them, whether it's your morning ritual or routine, daily future self journaling, which is episode nine, exercising, intuitive eating, episode 11, or doing daily breathwork. What matters is making the promise to yourself for yourself and showing up for you in the way we may have wanted our parents to show up for us and to be dependable, responsible, and reliable.

This is how we heal, by being that dependable adult for ourselves, whatever that looks like in your own life. Maybe it's going outside at your lunch break, taking a five-minute stroll, eating your meal at a park bench, looking at pigeons. It really almost doesn't matter what you do, but make those promises to yourself for yourself and keep them.

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Another part of keeping promises to myself is establishing firm healthy boundaries, which I talk all about in episode five, and sticking to them, not just with other people but with myself, and remembering that healthy boundaries means saying, if you do X, I will do Y. If you yell at me, I will leave the room. If you call me names, I will not hang out with you anymore.

The boundaries I keep with myself are about my own time, often about my bedtime, when I wake up, and what I do with myself throughout the day. My inner child will want to buffer in all sorts of ways and will bring all these perfectionist stories into my life if I don't show up as her loving parent to let her know that we're not doing that tonight.

So, for example, she may want to scroll through Netflix for an hour looking for, like, that perfect movie to watch. And I just get to be firm with her and to lovingly say, okay kiddo, I know you want to scroll, I know you have this story about perfect, but we're going to just watch this or we're going to do that. And I get to show up as an adult, as a parent for her when she's spinning in indecision.

Three, show up for your feelings, whatever they may be. The first step in the thought-feeling-action self-healing protocol I teach is to feel our feelings all the way through, not to push through them or ignore them, not to shove them under the rug or under the couch, but to show up for our emotions. And sometimes, those emotions we feel as adults are sparked by something that our inner child is upset about or hasn't gotten closure on, like something that our parents did or didn't do for us, ways they weren't able to show up for us because they had their own wounded kiddos within that they maybe didn't know how to support or show love or be a parent to.

So when I feel a big cry coming on or feel upset about something, I let myself feel it. I find a quiet place and feel all of my feels all the way through. I let my inner child sob or get angry or whatever she needs. And when I'm crying, I hold myself and tell my inner child, baby girl, I'm here for you. You're safe. It's okay to cry. It's okay to be sad or upset or angry; feel it.

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And I encourage myself to feel it deeply knowing that my adult self is holding a safe space for those big feelings. I talk about this as well in episode 17 which is all about the stress release cycle. When we feel stress in our bodies, we need to complete the cycle and crying or screaming into a pillow or shaking our bodies out are great ways to move stress or anxiety or disappointment or other feelings all the way through us so adult us can pause, catch her breath, and can look at the thoughts that sparked these feelings within us, the thoughts that keep us stuck in these childhood patterns of reactivity.

No better way out than through, my love. Let your child self feel her feelings and remind her that you, a loving adult, a loving parent, are there for her.

Four, be gentle when you make mistakes. Own them, apologize, make amends, and please don't beat yourself up. So you spilled the proverbial milk, it's an oopsie and that's okay. Make it right. Be kind to yourself and others and allow yourself to move on versus spinning in blame or shame or firing off that second arrow right into your own heart.

Five, allow yourself to rest. Pushing yourself too hard is not only stressful for your adrenal glands, which puts more cortisol in your system which F's with your digestion, mood, energy, sleep, hormones, fertility, thyroid. And it also repeats the harm that may have happened for your inner child if that kiddo was pushed too hard or told that their worth was related to an external measure like doing well at sports or getting good grades or taking care of younger siblings or working a job early on or whatever the case may have been.

You don't need to be harsh to get things done. Be loving, tender, and firm with yourself. Let yourself rest when you need it and attend to things you said you would do when you said you would do them. Find that balance where you're giving yourself a break and also adulting when appropriate.

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Take a lunch break at work. I hear this all day from clients that folks don't take the lunch break that they're not getting paid to not be working through anyway. Spend a weekend day reading. Take a bath. Go for an adventure. Kids want to play and that includes your inner child. So be the loving parent who lets your little one play in the sand or go down the slide or draw or color or make a mess. We all need that. Give yourself permission to do it and to rest when you need rest.

Number six is to be rigorously honest. In my life, this means being an emotional adult and showing up and taking responsibility for my thoughts, feelings, actions, and the outcomes of those actions. And when my inner child feels that an emotion I'm having may be dangerous or scary, she can start to spin some detailed subterfuge.

She can start to make all sorts of excuses, can try to explain it all away, and I get to be her grownup, her parent, her loving adult and I get to say, it's okay, it's just feelings, there's nothing to be scared of here. No one ever died of feelings.

And I get to recognize that because feelings were not something that was talked about or that felt okay or safe to have in my own childhood, my inner child can want me to bypass them, to push them down in a way. And when I feel her trying to do that, I get to give her some love, to go do some breathwork meditation, to get more deeply in touch with my feelings and can then show up for myself with the complexity of an adult mind, recognizing that this is scary for little me, and that's okay.

I get to be honest about it. I get to own the fact that having feelings doesn't always feel easy and I can be honest with myself for myself about the feelings that I'm having. And I get to give my inner child a ton of love and comfort and she can hold space for me to feel my feels, like I can hold space for her to feel hers. And we talk about this a lot, as you can imagine.

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Similarly, as someone who is a parentified child, meaning I felt like I had to be my own parent for myself for my actual parents and my sister, I can take on a lot more than I'm actually able to do, and especially more than I want to do. And then thoughts like, I'm overwhelmed, I don't have time, I'm busy creep up and can overtake me.

So I've learned to be honest with myself about my capacity and my goals and what I want to put on my plate. Sometimes I can do 473 things for my business in a day while roasting a chicken and doing all the dishes and all of the laundry at the same time. And sometimes I'm just pushing myself to live into some perfectionist fantasy in which I'm a superhero. And that doesn't serve me. So I'm thoughtful about what I say yes and no to.

And on that note, number eight, I let my inner child play. I say yes to play. I am so silly inside and adult me doesn't always get to let that out, particularly if I'm putting an overwhelming amount of things on my plate. So I connect in with child me and let her let me know when it's time to color or draw or make art without caring about the outcome.

Nine, I also embody my strong adult self and show up for my child self. I often do this about painful experiences in the past. So here's what I do; I do my breathwork and I get really grounded in my own adult power and agency. And then I sit quietly and, in my mind's eye, I go back into a stressful or difficult childhood situation that I feel may be influencing me now as an adult.

And I monitor myself. I watch myself. I watch how that child me acted, reacted, showed up for herself in whatever that difficult childhood situation was. And after I watch her and how she lived through it, I swoop in. I stick up for my kid self. I talk to her sweetly and I relieve her of any blame or shame or guilt she's feeling for being herself, for messing up, for not understanding the rules because she was a child and that was developmentally appropriate then.

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I hold her, I hug her, I take her on my hip and I take us together to sit with her best friend – okay, this is like the most immigrant kid thing and I don't think I've talked about this, but if I have, here we go again. My best friend when I was a kid was a rabbit. I love that now. I used to talk about that with some shame like it was kind of weird. And yeah, it's weird, and that was my life. And his name was Rabbito.

Yes, that is the English word rabbit, with an O on the end to somehow magically turn it into Spanglish. Oh, the genius of immigrant multilingual child brains, truly. So, anyway, I take that sweet baby and I take her to go sit with Rabbito. Sometimes we go sit outside under Rabbito's favorite tree and I soothe her. I give her love and I let her know that, in that specific situation where she felt cold or sad or unseen or alone, I'm here for her now and we don't have to keep suffering over that situation.

And number 10, which feels incredibly important, is that before I physically reach out to my inner child, I ask for her consent. For so many of us, consent was not an active thing in our youths. We were told what to do, when to do it, what to eat or wear, what to say to grandma and to let that creepy uncle give us a kiss on the cheek. Even if our intuition was screaming no.

Many of us may have had experiences of unwanted or inappropriate touch as children or teens and your inappropriate child holds all of that. One beautiful way to empower yourself and your inner child is to have a seat, connect in with smaller you, and to get that person's consent for touch, for a hug, for a high-five, to snuggle, to cuddle, to take a little nap together, or to otherwise physically connect.

My inner child loves hugs, but only with appropriate consent. So I'm thoughtful about asking her to give me a firm yes before I put my arms around her. And showing up like this, really, really embracing her autonomy, her sovereignty over her body and getting her consent, that has been so healing for me.

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Number 11, celebrate your inner child. Maybe you didn't feel truly seen, heard, or appreciated as a child. Past is past, my love, and while you can't change it, you can show up for yourself as that loving parent you wished you'd had.

I was talking recently with my dear friend and intuitive coach and medium Jessica Pepler the other day and we were talking about this topic and she was saying that she and little Jessica are celebrating those daily wins so hard right now. And I loved that, that she tunes into little her on the daily and hears that her younger self wants to feel big and seen and applauded. And I just felt this wellspring of love and joy in my heart to hear that she's doing this work for herself.

In my own life, growing up there was this constant refrain that I was too much, too loud, too enthusiastic, too big, both energetically and physically. And I was literally told, in my childhood by my parents, that I was too weird. And as a big loud enthusiastic excitable gregarious weirdo of an adult Leo, I love being all my weirdness.

I love showing up for my life as my true and authentic self. And I've learned to own my weirdness as a special gift, my witchiness too. But child me learned to hide that all away, that it was safer that way. And her desire to keep all of that hidden will show up for me, for sure, in this adult life.

I mean, to be real, those stories kept me from starting this podcast for about a decade or so. And so I show up for that little me who thinks she's too much as her adult, her loving parent. And I do it really often.

I revel in her big loud witchy weirdness. I praise all of it. And I tell her how loved she is and how loved I am for being exactly ourselves and no one else.

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And finally, number 12 of 12, if all of this feels less than accessible, if you're like, wow this is all super new and confusing and I'm feeling overwhelmed or stressed, you can release all of that, take a deep breath, release those shoulders from up by your ears, unclench your jaw, relax your back.

What you can do today, if you're new to this or if this is all old hats, is to show up for your inner child and to listen more than you talk and to take what you hear from that person seriously. Don't write that kiddo off or dismiss what you hear. The often frustrated primal needs of our perennial inner child, for sweetness, love, kindness, understanding, acceptance, abundance, protection, and to be deeply nurtured are the same today as when we were children.

So show up and listen in. You don't need to start off by giving her a sermon on anything in the world. You get to show up and to ask your own perfect inner child to tell you a story, to show you her favorite place to play, to remind you of a joyful time or a painful time, and to experience that together.

Just listen. Hold space. Let her feel the love you have for her and for adult you by being her witness, like a loving parent would, much like she is your witness. What a beautiful exchange and what a beautiful way to show up for inner you as that loving parent.

I know that when I show up for my inner child, I show up for all the people in my life. Without healing our childhood wounds, as creatures in adult bodies, we will try to get what our inner child needs from others if we aren't getting it from ourselves, if we aren't showing up and reparenting ourselves, sometimes on the daily.

We'll want others to make us feel loved, feel safe, cared for, seen and heard, when the truth is that all of that is an inside job. Only you can make you feel anything at all and there is no quicker way to create drama in any

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relationship, romantic, friendship, work, whatever, than to ask someone to meet the needs you didn't get met as an infant or a child.

It's not fair or loving to yourself or to the other person and it's not ultimately going to get you what you need, to know that you can meet your own needs and can show up to reparent yourself and to live into your own power and your emotional adulthood, that is a beautiful thing, my love.

By holding space for an ongoing dialogue between yourself and your inner children, you can reparent that hurt part of yourself, can show up for you in a mature and loving way, and the new relationship you form with your own self can be such a beautiful and beneficial thing, which can afford you such gorgeous entre to doing the work of changing your adult life.

When you connect in with your inner child and learn where your habitual thoughts come from, you have one more avenue for starting to shift those thoughts that don't serve you so you can rewrite those stories and can have feelings that lead you to take the actions you want and need to take for your adult life, so you can meet your goals, live with the health you want, find love, get that job, launch your business, or travel the globe with a renewed sense of connection with you.

I love this reparenting work and I hope it is so supportive for you. It's really been amazing for me. Give it a try, my darling. Start simple, start easy and keep doing the homework from the last few week's episodes. Keep checking in with your inner child and bringing your awareness there and, when you hear her speak, listen in and give her some love. It's you you're loving on after all, and that's magnificent.

Alright, buttercup, that's it from me today. My love, this has been such a pleasure. Let your little ones know that I say hi, that I'd love to play, let them write me a comment on my website or on the Instagrams. Be in

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touch. I love getting emails and DMs and just feeling connected with you all.

And please, remember, you are safe, you are held, you are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Take care, my love, and I'll talk to you soon.

Thank you for listening to this week's episode of *Feminist Wellness*. If you like what you've heard, head to VictoriaAlbina.com to learn more.