

Ep #38: Courageous Action



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Courage. It takes courage to look at your life and to say, “I want to do this thing differently,” and to then take the steps needed to get you there. Because without taking new actions, how can you live the life of your dreams? Same old thoughts, same old feels, same old actions, same old life.

If you feel stuck, frustrated, overwhelmed, stagnant, resentful, or if things feel good but you know they can feel better, than thought work and courageous action are the prescription you need. Best prescription I ever filled, to be sure. Keep listening my love. We’re going to dive on in to this concept of courageous action and it’s going to be a good one.

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 loving these warm sun-drenched autumn days in New York City, where the air is a little cold and crisp, but the sun is so powerful and bright and feels so good on my skin. It’s heavenly.

And as you know, if you’re a regular listener or follow me on the Instagrams, which I recommend, because I give good ‘gram, you’ll know that I’ve been traveling a lot this fall. Mostly for work, and yes, of course I always mix some pleasure and relaxation in there and it’s been a delight.

Last week, I posted a PDF I made just for you loyal podcast listeners with my top tips to stay healthy while you travel. And I’ll include a link to it and a recipe for elderberry syrup, one of my favorite daily cold and flu prevention tools in the show notes for this episode too because I really want you to have all of this delightful free stuff that I love making for you.

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So head on over to victoriaalbina.com/38, which is the number for this episode to grab those handouts. Alright, so today my beauty, we'll be looking at action, the final step in the think-feel-act cycle in a slightly different way.

So we talked in the last few episodes about self-care and the framework of asking, am I doing this self-care action from a place of true self-love? Because my perfect mind, body, spirit needs some rest? Am I working out because I love myself and how I feel when I work out, and I want to be strong in all of the ways?

Am I eating this way, say, no or low gluten, dairy, sugar, whatever, from a place of love and a desire to reduce inflammation, have less joint pain, less GI upset, less IBS symptoms, less inflammation, less depression, less anxiety? Or am I eating this way from a restrictive, deprived place? From a story that I don't love my body as is and want to change it through this behavior? From a place of not loving myself, not loving my body today as is?

And we talked about how beautiful it is to practice self-care from that self-loving place, how different that feels, and how different our actions and results are. If you're trying to take self-care action from a place of not loving yourself, you're unlikely to feel self-love after taking the action because that's not how brains work.

And all of this led us to talk about the think-feel-act cycle in detail. The understanding that you have a thought, a sentence in your mind, often a historical old one your brain calls up from the vault of your history, your trauma, your social conditioning, et cetera, and you think it again. And thinking it again produces a feeling. A sensation in your body.

And because science, you take action based on your feelings. Your feelings drive you to take action. If you feel fear, you may get small or you

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may lash out, or you may freeze. If you feel anxious, you might demure. If you feel joy, then you might laugh or smile or want to give someone a hug. Get consent first, please. Every action has a result because physics.

And this week, I want to talk more about action. Like, not just thinking about and being philosophical about the concept of action, and in doing so, I believe we should start by talking about courage. It takes a lot of courage to do this work. To engage with your own healing, when you always have the option of staying just how and where you are, no matter how miserable or stuck or unhappy you feel.

You always have a choice, my darling. But before we get started, I want to invite you to take a moment to take a deep breath in and out to ground yourself in your body, to feel your fingers, your toes, your seat in your chair, or your feet on the floor. To feel the sway of the subway car, to feel yourself walking.

If you're driving, please do not close those beautiful eyes but still, feel your hands on the wheel. Look around, notice the color of the sky, the color of the car in front of you. Get present. Ground yourself. And from that grounded place, give yourself some love and thank yourself for showing up for you. For listening to this show and challenging yourself to grow.

That is courage in action. And if you'd like to carry around a wee little meditation, a grounding meditation of me helping you to step into that grounding, I made one for you. It's for free and it's on my website, victoriaalbina.com/38. The number for this episode.

So my nerds, we love definitions, so here we go. Webster's Dictionary defines courage as the ability to do something that frightens one, or strength in the face of pain or grief. Brené Brown writes, "Courage is a heart word. The root of the word courage is core. The Latin word for heart."

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In one of its earliest forms, the word courage meant to speak one's mind by telling all one's heart. Over time, this definition has changed and today, we typically associate courage with heroic and brave deeds. I also think of this quote from the amazing and profoundly inspirational black lesbian poet and author Audre Lorde. "When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."

And today, I'll be talking about the concept of courageous action. The actions we take to make our lives better each and every day in the face of old self-defeating stories, fear, and worry. In the face of the stories so many of us were taught by our family of origin, society, our culture, the patriarchy, capitalism, about what it means to be a good human of any gender, of every gender in this world today.

And humans who are assigned female at birth and those socialized as women are often taught to put ourselves last. To take care of others first, to not prioritize ourselves because that's selfish, and being selfish is wrong and bad. That our goal should be to get married and have children, and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm just saying it's a thing that we've been taught to value with some intensity.

And can be a really challenging thing to wrestle with if it's not what you want or hasn't happened by some magical age, like, I don't know, 30. Many of us have been taught to deny our emotions. You wouldn't want to have feelings at work, god has forbid. And that things like thinness and beauty should be our priorities, which once again, always and forever, I'm not opposed to beauty. I'm a huge fan.

But often, we're taught that if we don't measure up to a specific social norm around looks, figure, et cetera, we're failing. And that the focus of our self-care should be to meet those standards. And humans socialized as men

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are often taught these really problematic frameworks about masculinity and what that means, which is often something quite limiting.

Again, not to show emotion, to not cry or be sensitive, and to have a specific body as well, and to prioritize and act in our social norms of masculinity above all else. Above the true desire of your heart.

And I bring this up to say it can be challenging to take action in the face of all of this. To take action that puts you first in a different way than what you were taught, and I want to encourage you to breathe into it and to begin to make space in your heart for living in a different way. A way that is aligned with your true dreams and desires for your life. Not just what the patriarchy or your family or whatever tells you is the most important.

And doing so takes courage, and courageous action is our theme for today. So courageous action is possible when we live a life grounded in powerful thought work. When we use breathwork to connect in with our feelings, to connect in with and move old stuck energy in our bodies that keeps us from moving forward. When we recognize that our thoughts create our feelings and we take action based on those feelings.

You can take the action of letting life pass you by, of not living into your confidence, of not speaking up or snapping at folks from a place of annoyance or irritation. You can take the action of spinning in stories like I'm overwhelmed and don't know where to start, or you can get clear in your thinking and can take courageous step after courageous step to live the life you dream of in every realm.

Family life, relationship, work, nutrition, self-care. This is applicable everywhere. So in my recent musings about courage and action, I've been thinking about the courage it takes to say, I'm going to start an online business. I'm going to be a life coach. I'm going to ask my boss for a raise.

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I'm going to tell my partner or partners - I see you, poly babies - that I have these boundaries, these limits.

And it takes courage to know in your heart, in your body, not just in your mind, that you are valuable and worthy and to live like you know it. It takes courage to begin to heal yourself. And all of these actions are moving you towards the life you envision for yourself and taking courageous action means you are operating from a place of empowerment, where you run your life instead of letting fear run it.

And in my own life, it took a lot of courage for me to begin the process of healing. To say, none of these 1000 doctors I've been to are helping me. No one is giving me the answers I need and I know another way is possible. I believe that my perfect body can heal from IBS, SIBO, depression, anxiety. So I learned how to heal myself.

It was scary sometimes, for sure. I had all the same worries so many of the people I've worked with have, that I'll never feel better, that I'll never be able to eat normally - yes, that was in air quotes again, though what does that even mean in a culture where junk food is the norm?

But anyway, I was worried that dating, having a social life would always be a nightmare because of my digestion, my sadness, my anxiety. And through holistic medicine, herbs, nutrition, breathwork meditation, tons of life coaching and thought work, I was able to turn the beat around and to take my life back.

It took a lot of courage for me to decide to create this podcast. It hit on a lot of old stories about my worth and value. Stories like, everything I want to say has been said before, and there are so many amazing people talking about all these issues. Who would want to listen to little old me?

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And I did a lot of soul searching, a lot of breathwork and coaching, and came to realize that I am uniquely qualified to share my own perspective. Sure, there are lots of amazing and famous authors and speakers out there talking about the mind, body, spirit connection, and how vital it is to heal our thinking to heal our bodies.

And while each of them has something beautiful to share, none of them is me. And none of them is you. In my practice, I work with a lot of folks, women mostly, who want to be life coaches. Who have something to share, who want to write a book, who want to put themselves out there, but feel fear and worry about it.

And I hear these same concerns from them that I once held. And I share with them what I've practiced believing for myself. No one can share your unique way of thinking about and experiencing the world, and if you hide all of your magic, all of your beauty because you're worried that someone may judge it, then no one will get to experience the singular gift that is you.

Let that sink in, my love. No one can share your unique way of thinking about and experiencing the world. So with all of that in our hearts, let's go back to this concept of courage.

Courage is when you feel fear in your body around taking certain actions or doing a certain thing, and you do it anyway. You decide in body, mind, and spirit, that the risk of not doing this frightening feeling thing is greater than actually making the move for your current and future self. Your dream self. Living your dream life.

And that brings to mind the Anaïs Nin quote, "And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." Again, and I've talked about this before, I had this thought, this idea about wanting to do this podcast for a solid decade before I started doing it, but there was something inside me that kept me from just doing it.

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And that something was fear. I love the old acronym that fear is false evidence appearing real. And I was working with some false evidence about my own worth and value. I was rolling around and indulging in some BS imposter syndrome stories, and I'll do a whole episode about imposter syndrome soon because it's so important and pretty much everyone I've ever coached has some degree of it.

And yet here I am. I didn't wait for some lightning bolt of motivation. I didn't wait for the fear to subside. I didn't wait for some external validation. I turned inward. I took this struggle to my breathwork, to movement through yoga, ecstatic dance. I wrote about it a lot. And I got coached on it because coaching changes lives.

And I connected deeply with the scared and fearful parts of me. Child parts. Protector parts. I gave and continued to give those parts of love and tenderness, compassion and caring, while they still whisper, no, don't do it, don't be seen. It's scary to be seen in the world.

I turned to those scared parts of me, acknowledged them with love, and let them know they're safe. That I'm choosing the thought, "I'm going to do this scary thing," because what is this life if we don't take risks? If we don't say yes to the constant invitation to take courageous action for our one human life?

And I think this may be one of the most important things to learn, that you can feel fear and can take action anyway. You can be courageous while showing your wise body love and care, and you can also get things done that totally petrify you by making a promise to yourself and keeping that promise.

When I talk about the think-feel-act cycle, I talk about not lying to yourself with BS fake positivity and this is vital. Brains don't believe lies from ourselves or anyone else. So there's no need to say, "I'm not scared here."

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I'm not worried or concerned or feeling fear about taking this step. I feel it. It's a real sensation in my body coming from a thought and I'm going to feel into it. I'm going to accept it."

Awareness, acceptance, action. And I'm going to sit in that acceptance. Okay, I'm feeling this fear. There's no need to judge it. There's no need to change it until I've really felt into it. And when you're ready, when you've felt it all the way through, processed it through your body, when you felt your feeling on purpose, then you can begin to pick a different thought so you can take action.

To not just think about the action you want to take, but to be the person who takes the action, to do the things that frighten you, recognizing that they frighten you. That's okay. You can commit yourself to those things and get them done. This is courageous action and in the next episode, we'll be getting into a little more of the nitty-gritty about how to actually do it.

And what it all comes down to here is the courage to say I feel fear. But I know the path that is right for me and I'm going to proceed in that path anyway. I'm going to do the thing that scares the shit out of me because I know I can live a better life.

A more fulfilling and engaging life. A life of service. A life without codependence. A life in which I value myself and I don't say yes to things I don't want to say yes to because I know that's a one-way ticket to resentment town. I know my worth and I live like I know it, even when that feels scary.

I live a life in which I'm living up to my potential and feeling the very best I can within my human body. For example, when we're talking about healing our physical bodies, I recommend that folks start with their nutrition. It takes a lot of courage to start an elimination diet where you take out all of the

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most inflammatory foods you're used to eating, including the foods that you believe bring you comfort.

That's a freaking scary thing to do until you do the thought work to recognize that you don't need food to bring you comfort. You feel comfort when you think that you are comfortable. Not because of the food. The food is neutral. It just is.

Someone who is raised eating liver and onions on a special Sunday night meal might feel comfort when they think of that food, while it might wildly gross you out. I'm Argentine so asado, barbecued meat, resonates with comfort for me because I have thoughts that make me feel comforted when I think about a steak, while my partner Ash thinks of yellow cake with funfetti icing as the ultimate comfort food because it filled that role in their childhood.

Meanwhile, thinking about cake doesn't bring me any comfort. I want the steak. It's not the food. It's your thoughts about it that bring you comfort. Not the act of eating it. Just the thought. See where I'm going here? Comfort lives within you because it's just a thought away, as does fear.

And shifting your thoughts about either could help you shift how you feel and thus dictates the actions you can take. The point is if you want to live a life full of radiant health, you get to recognize your fear - no more cake, name it, no more cake - acknowledge it, give it love, and then you can decide you want to do the thing anyway.

Here, to step away from certain foods for a minute, and in this example to say I want to live a healthier life. So I'm going to do this thing that feels really scary like not eating gluten or sugar one day at a time for 30 days to get started for my own wellness. Comfort is always mine because I make it in my mind with my thoughts.

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So let's also pause here for a moment to give some praise to fear. Because fear doesn't come from nowhere. Our lived experiences have led us to tell the stories that create our current feelings. The feelings we had as children, teenagers, young adults are valid and shaped us, and are also in the past.

So often, our feelings of fear are grounded in things that happen to us and that we internalize as stories, thoughts we tell ourselves often about ourselves. Maybe it's a story about a parent's anger when we were children, or the way someone reacted when we spoke up, or the way we were told to behave.

These old stories and thought patterns can flood us with feelings of fear and can stop us from taking the actions we know are in our own best interest until we pause and learn to rewrite them. And it can be challenging to see these old stories on our own, which is why I recommend working with a certified life coach such as myself. Someone who can help you see the stories you're carrying and can help you to rewrite them.

Trust and believe that I have a coach too. Also, I would never work with a life coach who didn't actively work with a life coach. So every week, I talk to Lauren, and Lauren helps me see things I can't see as clearly on my own. She helps me to realize my thought errors and tired old stories so I can look at the fear. I can look at what's holding me back.

Coaching is magic that way, my darling. It helps you to see your own mind. And it benefits every human on this planet to have a trusted guide, a coach, who can help you to see your perfect brain and all of its machinations and old fear stories so you can write and live into the new future of your dreams.

And I want to acknowledge here that many of us learned as young people not to cry or not to really feel what was going on inside of our bodies. It makes sense that you would have put up defenses like fear to keep

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yourself from feeling or expressing those feelings that led to a caretaker making fun of you, mocking you, ignoring you, or not giving you what you needed in that childhood moment.

We know that often, these old feelings and experiences continue to live in our bodies and get connected to a story that we stay subject to until we're able to create a new thought story that will lead to a new feeling, that will lead to new actions, and a new experience of life. A new result.

It's hard to take action, particularly courageous action when you're living in that old story. Rolling around it in. When you don't create the space through practices like breathwork and thought work to deeply feel the old wounds, to heal the hurt, and to recognize, see, and then change the old story that's creating your fear.

Breathwork meditation has been my best and most powerful tool. My ally really. And feeling my feelings in my body, not just telling a story about what I'm feeling, but really getting deep on my underlying feeling. I can then take that work to my thought work.

Using awareness, acceptance, and action of my own thoughts and the feelings they create, I can then use our thought work protocol where we look at the circumstance of our life, a neutral fact, our thought, a sentence in our mind, the feeling, a sensation in our body created by that thought, and the action and result that are the product of those thoughts and those feelings.

Courageous action means recognizing your old fear around something that's not actually life-threatening, although it may feel that way to your child self and your nervous system, your beautiful, magnificent vagus nerve, and deciding as your own adult, as your own best parent, that you are going to do it anyway.

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Courageous action means you're going to go to grad school. You're going to ask that person on a date, you're going to travel alone, you're going to tell your mom you can't be her therapist anymore. You're going to launch your business. You're going to heal yourself. You're going to maybe start your own podcast.

Oh, don't forget to invite me on for an interview, okay? I can't wait to listen to your podcast. I will subscribe, rate, and review on iTunes and share on social media. So my darling, you may be asking, all of this is well and good, but how do I begin to take courageous action?

And if you've been listening to the show, you know that I'm obsessed with starting with awareness. My darling, I know you want to jump to action. We all want to jump to action, and yet we use the framework of the three A's in this family. Awareness, acceptance, action.

You cannot change what you cannot see. So your homework this week is to bring awareness to the times when you feel fear, worry, concern about doing something new. Something scary that isn't actually life-threatening, and to be clear, I'm not talking about getting into a pit of vipers here, my darling.

I'm talking about asking your mom to not shit talk your dad, or to ask someone on a date, or to work with me as a life coach, to voice your opinion with confidence. That kind of scary. Not like, jumping out of an airplane without a parachute kind of scary.

So your homework is to get aware, to get into awareness. To be your own watcher, a theme I am fully obsessed with. Episode two. And to feel into what's holding you back. Really feel into it. We have to feel our feels in order to take the next step.

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If not, you're just spiritually, emotionally bypassing and that does you no good. So feel into it. See where the fear story lives in your body. And when you've gotten it, when you've connected with it, mine generally lives in my tummy and in my throat chakra, depending on what I'm feeling fear or nervousness around.

Give it some love. Write the story down with a pen on paper and look at that old story in black and white. This step is so darn helpful. And make sure you're subscribed to the show and that you're on my email list so you don't miss next week's episode, where I'll continue this theme of courageous action.

I'll talk more about it in philosophy but also the way I know you want, step wise, so we can talk about how to put this to work for your own beautiful life. Courageous action is a vital part of living a life that blows your mind each and every day. And there's nothing I want more for you, my darling. So thank you for tuning in. Thank you for listening, my love.

Oh, and thanks to everyone who's been sending me emails to info@victoriaalbina.com, who's been DMing me on the Instagram to let me know that you're loving the show. It feels amazing. I'm so grateful for all of you out there listening, posting about it to your stories, or wherever on social media, sharing it with your patients.

I get a lot of emails from clinicians who say they share the podcast with their patients, with their clients. It just makes me so darn happy. It is such a pleasure to share this info with you. I truly love you, each and every one of you. So holler at me on the Instagram [@victoriaalbinawellness](https://www.instagram.com/victoriaalbinawellness), share this show with your friends, and please take a moment to review on iTunes.

It really helps to spread the word about this show, which is one of my greatest dreams to get this free resource to anyone and everyone it can help. So let's take a deep breath together in through the nose, out through

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the mouth. This work of beginning to see your mind is scary at first. And it can bring up a lot of old fear, and that's okay.

You can have courage in the face of fear. I know you can. And I know you can live the life of your wildest dreams by learning to manage your mind. Remember, my perfect, beautiful love, you are safe, you are held, you are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well 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.