

# Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Victoria Albina, NP, MPH**

## Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin

This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine Expert, and Life Coach, 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 on this absolutely gorgeous day. So I was talking with my client Eline the other day about this shift from being reactive in the world to being responsive. About learning to pause when you feel that little flood of anxiety, worry, upset, annoyance, well, when you feel it when it's more of a trickle, a drop, more than a flood actually.

When you feel that ping or zap in your belly that comes often with sympathetic activation, when we think we've done something wrong, when someone says something and your defenses perk up, and you want to say or you do actually say, "You're wrong. You've got me all wrong. I didn't mean to say something hurtful. I'm not a bad person, you're mischaracterizing me."

When that little voice of defensiveness raises its head, urging us on to defend ourselves, our character, our spirit, our being against someone else's thoughts about us. It is in that moment of pause that you get to remind yourself you're not actually seeking to defend yourself against their thoughts about you.

Because if they said something about you that resonated nowhere in your body, you would just let it go. It wouldn't touch in, it wouldn't register. But when it does, what we're doing in that defensiveness is attempting to protect ourselves from what we are making their thoughts mean about us and the feelings that rise within us from their words and the way we interpret them.

## **Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin**

Most of the time we are actually worried about our own self-regard, our own self-image, our sense of self when we get defensive. And we take other people's thoughts, the words they say, the actions they take, or forget to take as reflections of our own worth and value because that's our habit from codependent, people-pleasing, and perfectionist thinking.

We are habitual externalizers, outsourcers of our own inner landscape, and so we borrow other people's thoughts and take them on as our own. I grew up hearing that I was fat and that was bad. So I took it on and learned to hate my body.

I grew up hearing I was too loud, too rambunctious, too joyful. That's actually been said to me and that that was bad. So I took it on and told the story that I was annoying and obnoxious and became self-conscious. I grew up hearing that I was a weirdo, a foreigner who didn't fit in with the white American girls, or with the Latina that I grew up with, so I took it on.

And told the story that I didn't and couldn't and wouldn't fit in, that I was exceptionally, terribly, unbearably unique in a very bad way and would never find my gente, my community, my people. And so I became guarded, defended in mind, body, and tender, tender heart.

I hid parts of myself away and became a chronic codependent shapeshifter, a chameleon, people pleaser, awash in resentment and disappointment in life. Putting my true nature and my desires last while being super pissed off about it, seething in passive aggressive ways, saying things like, "Yeah, I mean, I don't want to go there but if you do, I mean, it's okay, I won't eat if we go to that restaurant but if it matters to you we'll go."

## **Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin**

That kind of thing. Because I didn't know how else to show up or be. And when someone said something that touched upon the tenderness, the stories about me that I so feared were true, I fought them tooth and nail.

So many of my clients tell similar stories and my client Eline was no exception. What she said to me the other day gave me pause because it's a thought I had so often back in the day. I just need a thick skin so other people's comments or choices don't bother me.

And this statement gave me pause because it's not a loving, vulnerable, open-hearted, honest way to live a life. It's not a goal I want to have or want for you, my beauty. It is the patriarchy that tells us to have a thick skin, to develop callouses against our own feelings, against the world, to deny our tenderness and to buck up, to man up effectively, and to not be a complex human with feelings, with emotions.

That having your feelings makes you vulnerable to hurt and that is an inherently bad thing, so you need to isolate. Push away and get harder in your heart. I find it to be a deeply patriarchal sentiment whereas a more feminist approach in my opinion is more truthful, more caring for yourself and your rich inner landscape, your emotional life. It honors that and that you and your feelings, your experience matters.

The core of codependent thinking is about externalizing everything. Your self-worth, your sense of self, the stories about whether you're good or bad or worthy or not. And where do you wear a thick skin? Well, externally of course, to guard yourself against the world.

A thick skin is needed when other people's opinions about you matter more than your own. And when we don't pause to realize that their opinions, their

## **Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin**

thoughts come from their socialization and conditioning too. Because from that conditioning, other people will believe that their thoughts about your body size and shape matter.

Their thoughts about whether you're married or have kids, those thoughts matter. Their moralistic judgments about who and how you date and have sex and find pleasure in your own body matter. That their thoughts about your career, your fashion, your choices matter. And as humans socialized as women, particularly when our mindset is a codependent one, we believe them.

That their opinions, their choices, their judgments matter more than our own because we've been trained to. And so I get the logic that a thick skin is what is called for, but baby, it's the opposite of what's needed. You don't need more defenses, more guarding, more self-protection. That is the fight part of the fight or flight response.

That sympathetic activation that says I need to protect myself from this person having a thought about me I don't agree with, and I will treat this like a lion attack and will act accordingly, biochemically accordingly. Spending my time, my mental and physical energy trying to change your mind, while I am awash in adrenaline, norepinephrine, and cortisol, instead of focusing on my own self-image.

Because I am assuming your thoughts mean something real about me and it matters if they do, and this, this battle to get you to think about me differently is worth slowing my vagus nerve down, worth slowing the migrating motor complex in my digestion down. It is worth the impact on my human body.

## **Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin**

So what if it all just stopped mattering? What if you put your focus squarely on you, and what matters to you, and what you know and believe to be the truth about you? What if you stopped caring what other people think is right for you? What if you released your attachment to other people's moral notions and to what other people are thinking or doing in their own lives and the choices they make?

What if you recognized that what other people think, feel, and do is all about their own lens? Their perspective, their point of view based on their own experience of life? It's never, ever, ever about you as a human. It's just about how they see and choose to interpret you.

Como si yo fuese hablarte en Castellano, pero no lo hablas. Like if I spoke to you in Spanish but you don't speak it, or even if you do, your experience of my words is just your interpretation. See, it's not about developing a thicker skin. It's about not believing other people's thoughts about you to be some kind of indictment of you.

Not taking them on as a declaration of fact, of gospel, of truth in a habitual, unintentional way. It is always and forever just their interpretation of you through their lens and nothing more. And you get to run other people's thoughts, feelings, actions, statements through your own internal filter before taking those thoughts on and calling them facts.

So you get to start there. And once you can recognize and believe that, you can stop taking the things others do and say on because it never serves you to. And never moves your life forward. And stops you from living in your authenticity, stop you from living in the beautiful vulnerability that allows for ever greater connection when you're busy spending your life defending yourself.

## **Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin**

And all of that said, sure, if you're hearing the same thing over and over from people you know, love, trust, people really have your back, if you're being called in to make change, then it may be time not to just believe them but to ask yourself if you believe what you're hearing, if it's resonating in your body as truth.

And if so, if you're hearing a way that you're behaving is hurting you or others, if someone loves you enough to share that enough with you, then you get to choose to learn from that, to see what shifts in the way you operate, the way you show up in the world could actually serve you and the collective more.

You get to ask who you want to be in the world. You get to run what you're hearing through the filter of does this recommendation help me to live in my integrity more? Or is it just one more thing I'm beating myself up with?

And if it does help you to live more in your integrity, if it is a call to live your life in a more loving way, then take it on. Examine your habitual thinking, your expectations of yourselves and others, your preconceived notions, your language choices, whatever it may be.

Not because you want to please others or protect yourself or live in that perfectionist goal of doing everything the right way others tell you is the right way, but because this new information supports you in living in more self-love. Living from your full, open, less judgmental heart.

But please, please my sweet beauty, don't develop a thicker skin. I mean, you're an adult so develop one if you want to, but I am saying the alternative is to develop a better internal filtration system and a stronger sense of your own beliefs about you and what matters to you in the world.

## **Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin**

Because all kinds of people are going to have all sorts of opinions about you. Your goals, your weight, your looks, your relationship, your career, your plans for the evening, your everything. And you don't have to believe other people's thoughts. You get to check in with your own values, your own integrity, and you get to have your own back and believe in you.

And you get to allow other people's thoughts to simply be that. Their thoughts. Not some verdict about you, but the thoughts they're having from their own lens. And from there, no defensive thick skin is required to live a life of your dreams, my beauty. None at all.

So if this and other shows have been helpful for you, I would be so grateful if you could take a moment to subscribe to the show, particularly on Apple Podcasts, rate it and review it as well. If you've already done that, thank you, thank you. And I would be so grateful if you could share it on your social media.

When you're listening to this show, just take a screenshot, post it to your feed or to your stories and tag me, @victoriaalbinawellness. It is such a great way to get this free resource that I do to be of service to the collective into more and more ears. So I'd be grateful if you could join me in that.

Alright my beauty, thank you for being here. It's such an honor as always and let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart if that serves you, if that feels good in your body. Close your beautiful eyes or simply lower your gaze if you're not driving. Attune to your breath. Step into that watcher place.

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.



## **Ep #119: Hurt Feelings: Why You Don't Need a Thicker Skin**

If you've been enjoying the show and learning a ton, it's time to apply it with my expert guidance so you can live life with intention, without the anxiety, overwhelm, and resentment, so you can get unstuck. You're not going to want to miss the opportunity to join my exclusive intimate group coaching program, so head on over to [victoriaalbina.com/masterclass](https://victoriaalbina.com/masterclass) to grab your seat now. See you there. It's going to be a good one.