

## Ep #125: Client Coaching Q&A



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Victoria Albina, NP, MPH**

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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. I am so delighted this week to be doing a question and answer show. These are so much fun because they're a real insight into what coaching actually looks and feels and sounds like, and I'm going to be doing live coaching over on my Instagram @victoriaalbinawellness so make sure you're following me there.

And I'm going to be doing some webinars starting mid-July, so if you're not on my email list, I want to invite you to hop on over to [victoriaalbina.com](http://victoriaalbina.com). Up at the top of the page there's a place to put your email in, your name in, you will get my suite of free meditations sent right to your email inbox and you can sign up for my email list that way so you won't miss a thing because webinars are really fun.

I really enjoy doing them. It's such a great way to share free information with you all that I feel so privileged to have learned over these many years of studying human psychology and wellness and how brains operate. And it's a fun way to connect. I love chatting with you all in the chat, so join me.

So this week's Q&A is a little different. So I am sharing some of the coaching that I have done with the folks in my six-month program, *Anchored: Overcoming Codependency*. And so the folks in my program who have posed these questions asked for the coaching they want and need over in the Slack we have there, which is like a direct message system we use.

They often know the thought work protocol, they are well-versed in nervous system terms, so I will sort of stop in the middle of my answer to be like, oh

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hey, by the way, here's nervous system 101 because they are steeped in it. It's the language we speak in the program and that may not be the case for all of you, so I just want to honor that, particularly if you're new to the show. Welcome.

So I will be pausing to define terms, so don't worry too much. Okay, so let's dive in. Okay, so our first coaching request. It reads like this. "Dear Vic, I'm getting myself into a bit of a muddle so I'd like some help. I've recently gained awareness that I seek validation from others when I have achieved something, i.e. something that has happened that makes me feel proud, happy, and then I immediately tell lots of other people because I want them to tell me I've done a good job. This is what makes it really count in my mind.

So since gaining that awareness through the program, when something I've been working on paid off the other day, I caught myself when I wanted to immediately tell lots of people and I held back. But now, my brain is offering the thought, "You shouldn't be hiding your achievements, you should feel comfortable telling other people all about it."

So here is my thought work. Circumstance: got told by my publisher that they agreed to publish my book. Thought: I should be telling other people about this but not to get validation from them. Feeling: confused. Action: go back and forth in my head over which choice is best, indulge in confusion, seek help here, judge myself for not knowing what to do, tell my immediate family but not anyone else, which leads to the result, don't give myself experience of being proud of me. Any coaching on how to move forward would really be appreciated."

Okay, so this is such a great one, and I actually would like to start by seriously congratulating you. That is phenomenal news about your book.

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Now, on to the coaching. So the shift that we are often going for in coaching is in the energy, in the reason why we do the thing.

Remember, you can take the same action from two different feelings and you can create really different feeling results for yourself from those different energies within your body. I've talked about this on the show before.

When folks for example, try to lose weight from a place of hating their bodies, they'll lose five pounds, 10 pounds, 20, or they'll gain if they want to gain weight from a place of hating their body, they'll gain five, 10, 20 pounds, and they will still feel bad about themselves, still think that there's some magic number out there whether it's gaining or losing that will make them feel better about themselves, make them love themselves, appreciate themselves, et cetera, et cetera, when it's actually not the case.

You are perfectly lovable whatever size your body is, whatever weight your body is, and it's not the action of gaining or losing weight that makes you love yourself. It's your thought and the feeling that that creates for you. So too, you can take the same action, celebrating yourself, from two different feeling feelings, from different energies in your body, which will create different results.

So in my body, telling folks about my accomplishment so that they will hopefully, I mean, fingers crossed, validate me, that just feels yucky. It feels like this grumbly feeling in my belly like an insatiable feeling. And when someone is invariably nonplused by my accomplishment, that will lead to the feeling of feeling hurt or feeling disappointed because I was asking them to do emotional work that no one else on this planet can do for me because that's an inside job 100% to validate me.

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So I deeply believe that when we're doing the work of taking our self-worth back from our codependent habit of externalizing, one of the things that is vital is constantly celebrating ourselves, learning what it feels like in our bodies to be our own best friends, our biggest cheerleaders, our most adoring, unconditionally loving parents so we can experience validating the fuck out of ourselves first so we're not running around chasing that feeling from other people.

This is why we have the daily celebrations and wins channel in Anchored, to experience ourselves stepping out of stories like, "It's selfish to brag about myself, it's tacky to brag about myself, people will think I'm pretentious or pompous if I brag about me. It's awkward to acknowledge my own achievements."

The more you do it, the more you actively show up and say, hey folks, I did a thing, I had four glasses of water today, I won a Nobel prize, I put my shoes on and went for a walk. The more you pause, acknowledge, and celebrate the amazingness in you, the more your nervous system gets used to it.

And the dopamine hit is internally generated. It's not based on someone else responding in the right way or saying the right thing. It's based on you validating you. And so to that end, I brag on my constantly and I love it when you all do over in our Slack.

And I share my achievements with others from the energy of I know I'm awesome and amazing, I am inspired by and proud of me, I have validated the hell out of me, and now I want to tell you. Because it's fun to tell you. Not for you to do my internal work for me because I know you can't do that.

I'm not asking you to pat me on the back and tell me that I'm now worthy of love and praise because I did a thing and you think that thing is

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praiseworthy. I believe that I am constantly worthy of all good things and this achievement is just icing on the cake.

That is to say, my darling, you get to be the cake and to let everything and everyone else just be the icing. And it's a process to get there. It's not likely to happen overnight so you get to sit with being in those shifting waters, to surf and ride the waves of it.

And there will be discomfort and that's okay too. So before you share about an accomplishment, I want to invite you to check in with yourself. Have I praised me enough that I'm sharing because bragging on me is so fun and awesome? Or am I unintentionally asking this other person to do my emotional labor for me? The answer you seek is in the answer to that question. Thank you so much.

Okay, so the next request for coaching. "Vic, my brain loves to tell me that I can't relax or have fun or focus on things that I want to do because there are way too many things to do for my day job. This is cropping up today, like it does every weekend. What I'd like to do today is to make some food for the week, run an errand, see a friend, and work on my coach certification. My brain says absolutely not. You need to calendar to get ready for the week or work on one of several work projects that you should have already done. Hop to it.

But then I read your coaching in the Anchored Slack and I put a hand on my heart and found that have-to energy. I've met this energy before. I've experienced this energy as a hissing cat, back arched, backed into a corner. Today, I did the somatic practices you've taught us and found that the energy was a woman, not sure of her age, also backed into a corner, eyes wide and wild and wielding two swords.

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I've sensed this woman several times before. She's always in a corner ready to attack, aggressively fending for her life. I'm not sure if she's never ever rested, but I get the sense that she never rests. Not quite sure what that means, but I do know that she's a part of me. What I do recognize is that she's traumatized and that forcing her to do anything, like standing down, would be counterproductive as I recognize her as part of me. She is a protector that lives within me. How do you think I should approach her?"

Well, first of all, thank you for sharing this and how beautiful that you were able to bring her into your awareness using the tools that we learn in Anchored and that you were able to connect in with her. This is truly the beauty of the somatic or bodily practices we do together.

They give you a new language, a new vocabulary, a set of skills for connecting inward and for getting into conversation with all the parts of you, with love, compassion, curiosity, and care. When parts of me come up that are new to my conscious mind, I start by getting into conversation with them.

I talk to these parts of me - a concept from internal family systems work - as I would a loving friend or a gentle kind parent. From my brain, maybe because I'm an ESL kid, who knows? I like to have these conversations out loud and that might not be right for everyone, so feel into it for yourself.

So the first thing I do is either to ground into my body, so for folks who feel safe going inward into your bodies, I would start there. And if that doesn't feel safe, that's unavailable, that's perfectly fine. Orient to your surroundings. And if grounding and orienting are new practices for you, you can head on over to [victoriaalbina.com](http://victoriaalbina.com).

Right at the top of the page, you can download my suite of meditations and nervous system exercises where I lead you through how to do both an

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orienting and a grounding exercise. So those resources are there for you, my beauty.

So I do one of those first. To quiet my mind, quiet that reptile brain, that lizard brain that likes to talk so loud, and to support myself in getting really present. From there, I let this part of me, here, this warrior woman with the swords, I let that part know that I'm available for conversation.

Next, I get that part's consent to continue the conversation. So like you said, there is nothing to be gained by pushing this part or any part of us, an inner child, a protector, a fire fighter, a defender, there's nothing to be gained in pushing them to talk if they're not available for it.

So much like we are learning together to set and hold boundaries with the people in our lives, so too we hold space for the parts of us to have their own boundaries. So I always, always, always start with getting consent and letting the part I'm talking to know that the primary rule of consent is that the person or being or energy or spirit giving that consent can always take it away any time they want to and I let them know that I promise to honor that between us.

From there, I would ask that part what her name is, what she wants to be called. You can check in with pronouns as well. Is this creature that you see as a woman, does she identify as a woman? We start with these questions so that we can build trust and safety between ourselves and these parts of ourselves.

So I also do this because the more I can personify a part, the more true kinship and relationship I build with them. And it's okay if in asking this part what their name is, you don't hear a name you recognize, like a name like Tanya or Nicole or Karina. Parts can be called things like timid, or shame, purple wind, or warrior woman.



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It doesn't have to make sense. Just listen in. Next, I'd ask her what she wants both from you and for you. I would ask her what she herself needs in order to be able to rest or if that's unavailable for her, what she needs in order to be able to allow you to rest. See if she's available to be acknowledged and maybe even befriended.

One of our core values in Anchored is curiosity. Stepping out of judgment of our own thoughts and feelings and into greater acceptance. And one of the key ways we get there is through curiosity. Not assuming we know the answer, we know the way, but being curious so we can come to understand our own motivations and those of our protector parts.

And this part really sounds like a powerful protector and I'm curious what she is trying to protect you from, what she's trying to protect herself from. And these are all questions that you can start to ask her and ask yourself.

My best guidance in this work is to start with acceptance and pour on the love. She is there to protect you because she loves you. You may not adore her goals or ways of defending you, or the results she creates in your life such as keeping you in this thought loop that I cannot rest, I cannot rest, I cannot rest, but what's really important, core, and key here is to recognize that she thinks her work is the most important thing in the actual whole wide world because she believes she is keeping you safe.

And the more you can believe and accept and trust that that is true for her, that she's not trying to fuck up your life or ruin your day, the more you two can move from being possible adversaries to true allies together. One other thing that I would add here is to consider starting this practice and ending this practice of opening up this conversation with her with a somatic practice.

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So getting in touch with your body, again grounding and orienting before and after, maybe some movement, putting on one of our breathwork songs and dancing, that could be a really beautiful way to really connect whatever comes up into your body and to move any energy that may come up through and out.

Alright my beauties, this next one is a beautiful one as we come to the close of pride month. Happy June my babies. So this human writes, “For a while now I’ve been wanting to identify as non-binary. Since joining Anchored and listening to your show, I’ve been deconstructing a lot of social norms that have piled up in my brain and I’ve been seeing how much I’ve been feminized through my life by the society, culture, and family that I’ve grown up in.

Non-binary is something that just feels right to my past, present, and future self. However, when I try to feel into it, I realize I don’t feel worthy of this identification. I fear it’s something that if I were to start announcing, people would say, “But come on, you’re way too womanly or fem to actually be non-binary.” And then the fears of appropriation set in, which make me doubt myself and my feelings even more. How can I dig into this, Vic? How can I support myself here?”

Thank you so much for sharing this with the family and sharing it for me to share here on the podcast. I really appreciate it. So I will begin by inviting you to give yourself credit for the fact that you already are digging into this.

So often we think I need to get started working on this but when we pause and share about it, we can actually see that you are already in process. We are already in process by raising our awareness about whatever it is that we want to shift. So pause and give yourself credit, my beauty.

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Whenever there's this story of worthiness connected to what others would say, my question is this: who cares what others think about you? Your gender, your sexuality, your hair color, your career, your anything. And as always, that's not a brush off.

I'm not just prompting you to say, right, right, okay, I shouldn't care, because remember, as humans we are pack animals, so it's natural and normal to care what others think. That's built into us. We want the village to think well of us because when the marauders or the lions come down to ravage the village, we want to be the liked animal, we want to be the one that a larger animal grabs under their arm and runs away with to protect us. We care what others think and that's okay.

But where that becomes something to look into and ask loving questions about is when you stop yourself from being yourself or living into your truth because you care more about other people's thoughts than you do your own. So there's the line there. Often a really fine line and this is again where somatics comes in to help us feel into and really get into awareness of our own motivation around our thoughts, our choices, and what we may fear or want other people to think about us.

So this is an earnest for realies question that I'm posing to you. Who are the parts within you that care? It's an invitation to ask your body, who is it who cares? For me, it's often my inner teenager with all her angst and worry about not being liked. I didn't fit in in high school, I didn't have a lot of friends, I felt very other in a lot of ways.

So that story is held by that inner child, that inner teenager really worries. She historically has really, really wanted to be liked. So when there's this thought that there's potential for isolation, to be cast out of the flock, many parts of us may come up to tell us just how much they really do care.

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And the more you can lovingly meet those parts of you, can honor them, support them, and show them that they are safe with adult you at the helm, the more you can show them that you are indeed resourced now, the more they can relax into letting you live your life on your terms.

The fewer doubt thoughts come up about the potential impact of other people not liking your choices, not agreeing with your choices, thinking you're wrong because you know you've got your own back.

Next, I'll invite you to ask yourself, do you want to continue to live your life based on what others may or may not think? Based on a projection of a possible thought that may cross someone else's mind? Do you want to continue to worry about what people who habitually judge others might think about you? How they may judge you?

So again, I will ask, why would anyone else's thoughts about your gender matter? Again, inner protector parts and others within you may scream out, "Because then I'm safer," and that is understandable and of a self-loving origin. And you can honor those parts that think that, and you also don't need to live from that wounding that says that other people's thoughts about you are more important than your own.

It's challenging work, no joke, and it's the work of having your own back. Life-long work of honoring your truth and your life, and I got to say, the more rooted and grounded and anchored I am in my own sense of self, the less I care about other people's thoughts about me, my gender, my sexuality, my career, my life, my weight, my anything, because I know now and yes, this took some time, a lot of thought work, a lot of somatic practices, breathwork, but I trust now that I love and accept myself unconditionally and that the people that matter the most to me and who love me the same way I love me are not the people who are standing in judgment of me.

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So my darling love, what would you decide to believe instead of that loving, protective old thought that other people's notions of your gender matter at all? That's a place to do some work, to do some breathing, some dancing, some somatics, some thought work. Bring all of your beautiful tools to work on that question.

Finally, back to your point about appropriation. So I think it is always an important check to run and I love that you're pausing to check in with yourself there. And I will say, as my point of view, as a cis queer fem woman, and again, only my point of view, if you know, believe, and feel that you are gender non-binary, then what would you be appropriating, my darling?

Whose experience would you be diminishing or taking away from and owning what your mind-body knows to be your own truth? This is another question I'll invite you to actually write the answer out to, to do some thought work and some somatics around so you can see and feel the stories that live within you. Who exactly are you afraid will judge you or tell you that you're not non-binary enough? What does that fear story look like within your mind and your body?

Finally, I'll share that my life is so much more beautiful for me when I'm standing in my truth and living out loud, owning who I am for me. And it's a gift to the world and the people we love, our communities, to be honest as much as is safe for you about who you are, including sharing your gender and your pronouns, wherever, whenever feels empowering for you. Thank you, my love.

Okay, and so that brings us to our final coaching moment for this week's show. And this one is an example of how we work with the thought work protocol in Anchored. So for all of you who are using the thought work protocol having learned it here on the show, this could be a really

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interesting one for you to see that we can work out our unintentional protocol, which is just a quick moment of review.

The thought work protocol is when we look at the circumstances in our life as neutral, meaning we state the court admissible facts, which helps us from our codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thought habits. Really pausing to get neutral about the circumstances gives us the chance to see where we are imposing our habitual thoughts onto a situation and we're not giving ourselves the chance to come up with any other thought pattern.

We're just going knee-jerk into that old habit of thinking he was rude, she wasn't kind enough, whatever the habitual thought is. From there, we look at our thoughts about the circumstance, we feel into our bodies, and we ask ourselves, when I have this thought, what is the feeling, the energy that's generated in my body? Is it a nervous system response or is it another feeling? A vibration in my body, such as happy, angry, sad, et cetera.

From there, we attend to ourselves somatically. We do somatic practices to help us really drop into our bodies where that's safe and we acknowledge the feelings if being in our bodies doesn't feel safe in this moment and we do exercises to support ourselves and our autonomic nervous system.

From there, we ask ourselves, what is the action I take when I'm having this feeling? And finally, what is the result that I create in my life and only my life because we don't create results for anyone else, so what is the result that I create from taking this action? So that's the thought work protocol in a nutshell. And there are several episodes, including one as recent as late spring of 2021 where I go into a lot of detail about the protocol, so you can check that out if you want more details.

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Alright my love, well I hope that it was helpful to hear some of the coaching that we do in Anchored. One of the most beautiful parts of the program is that folks just really bring their realness and we talk about everything from romantic relationships, dating, relationships with our parents, relationships at work, how we interact with strangers at Target.

I mean, we really talk about everything. Whatever is coming up in people's lives, we apply the thought work protocol and somatics we bring to breathwork so that we can get into the depths of our realness in new ways and can really start to see our habitual thoughts and feels, the actions we take, and the results we create in our lives, so we can really get in touch with our nervous systems, our inner children, and can really start to see, feel, experience, almost taste and touch what it feels like as adults to have our own backs, to really, really show up for ourselves, and to recognize that we have habitually been externalizers.

Folks who have placed more value on what other people think and feel of us, other people's notions of our worth, our importance in the world, whether we're doing a good job, whether we're good girls, whether we're good humans in the world, and we can really take back our power by learning about our nervous systems, doing somatic practices, learning thought work protocol. And it's just so exciting.

So I'm delighted to share that we will be starting the program again with another cohort starting September 20th, 2021. So if you are interested in learning more, in joining us for this life-changing six-month program where you will learn thought work, you will learn somatics, we will do breathwork as a community, and you are able to get coaching from me live every week on a Zoom call and over Slack, literally every weekday for six months with a beautiful, amazing community of like-minded people, head on over to [victoriaalbina.com/anchored](http://victoriaalbina.com/anchored) to learn all about it and to apply now.

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And we are enrolling folks now. We actually already have several people enrolled for the September course. So if you want to join us, now is the time. Alright my sweet beauties, thank you for listening in. I hope that everything is wonderful in your world and I will invite you to join me to do what we do.

Gentle hand on your heart, attune to your perfect breath, 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.

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.