

Ep #127: The Art of Reclaiming Our Empowerment with Mara Glatzel



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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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. You can probably hear the birds chirping behind me. I'm currently in Maine on occupied Abenaki territory with my family of origin having such a sweet time by the beach.

My sister and her husband are here with their kiddos and it is just such a delight to be with them and to spend time together, particularly after not really seeing each other during the pandemic. So, feels extra, extra sweet and really nourishing and I'm really grateful for it.

I hope that you are getting to spend time with chosen family, family of origin if that's your thing, and whomever you may be spending time with, I hope that you are taking the time to take good care of you, to regulate your beautiful nervous system, to attend to, honor, and reparent your inner children, all of your inner family.

That is my hope and wish for you this beautiful summer. This week on the show, I am just beyond delighted to share with you a conversation I had on the Needy show with Mara Glatzel. She is so phenomenal and we had so much fun. We had such a great conversation.

We talked about our favorite themes here on *Feminist Wellness*. Codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thinking, and we talked about how I use thought work to take care of myself. We spoke at length

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about the act and the art of reclaiming our empowerment over the words, thoughts, and narratives we use to describe and create our lives.

And I talked about my strategies for using thought work intentionally and what a belief bridge is and how you can incorporate that concept into your practices if the new thought that you're creating using the thought work protocol isn't sitting well somatically.

So it's one of the really important things for me when we're using thought work, we use it to recognize our habitual thinking and to then check in with our bodies so we can feel our feelings in our animal, not just think about our feelings, which is something that is so common for my clients when they come to me and they first start Anchored, my six-month program.

They tend to do what I tended to do, which was to over-intellectualize, overthink, and think about feelings instead of feeling them in our bodies. So we talk about how you can use a belief bridge to help yourself inch ever closer, taking those teeny tiny kitten-sized steps towards believing the new thought that you want to incorporate into your life.

Instead of well, emotionally bypassing or spiritually bypassing, or using toxic positivity to just lie to yourself, which happens. There's an allure to it because it feels like, well, if I just believe this hard enough then my life will be changed. But it's so often not the truth if whatever that new thought is isn't resonating with your nervous system and in your body.

So that's when we use a belief bridge to help us get to there. So this was a really beautiful, really heartfelt conversation and I'm so grateful that I get to share it here with you all today. So without further ado, I am delighted to

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turn the mic over to Mara and I want to remind you that Anchored is going live again.

If you've been wanting to join my program, if you've been wanting to deepen your work with me, this is your opportunity. This is the last offering of Anchored in 2021. So this is your time. Whatever may have come up for you around self-love, self-worth, codependent thinking, people pleasing in the pandemic, this is your chance to dive in to get my daily support and the support of a loving, kind, caring community for six months.

It is just a dream come true. So check it out. Victoriaalbina.com/anchored. Alright my beauties, I will talk to you soon.

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Mara: Welcome Victoria. I am so excited that you're here today.

Victoria: Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

Mara: Yay. So tell us a little bit about yourself. What do you do? Why do you do it?

Victoria: Thank you. So I am a holistic nurse practitioner, life coach, and breathwork meditation facilitator. And my passion is helping humans socialized as women to overcome and rewrite the stories of codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thinking that hold us down from living lives with intention and joy.

And I do that using a feminist lens, which is really important to me. And I do this work because well, I was really sick myself. I was physically sick for

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most of my life with a lot of digestive concerns, adrenal concerns, and the intermittent depression and anxiety that are part and parcel of having what I would have called a hot mess of a gut back then.

I use more loving terms now but in all of that, I sought for many years to get the care I needed to heal my body. But what I didn't realize while I was in that journey was that the mind is such a huge part of that work, that the mind and body are not separate. They are one.

And so while it is absolutely vital to attend to the physical self, like get the stool test, check your adrenals, check your thyroid, please do those things. To achieve sustainable lasting health for a lifetime, we also need to look at our habitual thought patterns that are keeping our physiology jacked and are keeping us from our joy.

Mara: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. I know that all of the people who are tuning into this podcast and regular members of our community will resonate with a lot of your story and I'm so excited to have you here, both to hear more of your personal journey and also to have us walk away with some of those tips for how we can get started in navigating both the physiological realms and also the interpersonal, the way that we're showing up and navigating our codependency and God, perfectionism is such a hot topic in my neck of the woods. So welcome. I'm curious, what does it look like for you now to take care of yourself on a regular daily basis?

Victoria: So the most important thing I do to take care of myself is thought work, is attending to my thinking, understanding that about 20% of our lived experience as human mammals is this top-down communication from the brain to the body. And so our thoughts lead to the release of the molecules of emotion.

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So you have a thought, it creates a feeling within you, and we take action based on that feeling and create a result in our own lives. So while I love all the hashtag self-care things, I definitely took an Epsom salt bath last night, exercised this morning, drink nourishing teas and also trade as a herbalist. I attend to my body those ways and the primary most important thing I do to really, really nourish and care for myself is to manage my mind.

Because I know that if I continue to have thoughts like I need to put others ahead of myself, what other people think of me is my business, on and on, all those perfectionist thought loops, it will impact my body, mind, and spirit in ways that I would rather not. In avoidable ways by attending to myself and really learning to see my habitual thoughts and how they show up in new and exciting ways.

Because it's like peeling an onion. There's always another little layer and another layer and by doing daily thought work first thing when I wake up in the morning, I set myself up to know that I'm going into my day in charge of my mind.

Mara: Yeah, it is like peeling an onion, isn't it? Tell us, for people who are unfamiliar with thought work, when you're doing your thought work, what are you doing?

Victoria: So I start with a thought release where I grab my journal and a pen and I know, it's the digital age but I highly recommend doing this pen to paper. I also do a lot of work with somatics, with the body, and there's this kinesthetic magic that happens when we're using our physical body to write.

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And there's studies because I'm a wicked nerd - now I'm bragging, but I'm a wicked nerd and there's studies to back up the importance of that. So I sit down and I handwrite out pretty much everything. I just let my brain dump. At this point I don't time myself, but when I was getting started, I would put let's say a five-minute timer on.

And so the goal there was to work within my body's window of tolerance, which is a psychological term meaning how much input your body can handle and stay in that self-loving, gentle place. I prefer the term window of bodily dignity. But so staying within that and not freaking my perfectionist brain out that's like, I have to write for an hour or it's a waste.

So understanding my patterns and getting ahead of them, setting a timer. So free write for five minutes for example, and from there, I'll look at what I wrote and I look for patterns. So patterns of thinking. This is how my brain works as a science-y nerd. I love looking for patterns and seeing the habitual thoughts in there that are creating feelings that I don't want to continue creating.

So it's not that I don't want to continue feeling, but it's feelings I don't want to continue to create for myself. Like resentment, frustration, disappointment, sometimes anger. Anger is really vital for humans but the point is recognizing where I'm keeping myself from thriving by ruminating, by worrying, by future-tripping, by not staying in my own lane.

And so I can see all of this in my writing so I'll pull out the thoughts that feel yucky, it's the word that just came to me. The thoughts that are leading me to stay in these patterns that don't serve me. So then I write out on my paper in my journal CTFAR.

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C is for circumstance, T is for thought, F is for feeling, A is for action, R is for result. And so I'll write out whatever the situation is that I'm having feels about as a circumstance. And so what that means is to get neutral about it and I have an important caveat I'll come back to.

Getting neutral about it means taking all the adjectives out, all the adverbs out, and making it into the most simple, court admissible facts because my brain, human brains, all of our brains, we function by judging. That's how we survive.

Is that a tabby cat or a lion? Our brains are built to categorize. And so when we get neutral about a circumstance and write it out as such, we give our brain the ability to see that it is our thought about that circumstance that creates our feelings.

So instead of writing he said x, y, z, he's such a jerk, I hate him, I'd write he said words. And so in doing so, I give my brain space to see that I have a choice in that moment to have whatever thought I want to about the fact that he said words. I don't have to make it mean anything until I choose to.

The really important part of this, the caveat I will share because this isn't said enough in the coaching world, we can get neutral about anything in the world. That is literally possible for us as humans with prefrontal cortexes. But there are many things I don't choose to get neutral about.

So one could say racism is neutral but no thank you. I don't see prejudice, I don't see discrimination, that is not ever neutral to me. So that's my vital caveat. So I've taken the circumstance and I've gotten neutral about it, given my brain the space to make my own decision, written out the thought

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I'm currently having about it, the unintentional, habitual thought, how that makes me feel, the action I take when I'm feeling that.

And so here's where the somatics comes in. So really, really feeling in your body what that feeling feels like. Potentially if it is safe to do so, amplifying it. Really allowing it to exist. Really allowing ourselves to sit in the discomfort of whatever that feeling is, so we can see really clearly the action we take or the inaction we spin in for my perfectionist procrastinators when we're having that feeling and the result we create for ourselves in our own life.

And that last part is a huge shift for most of my clients because when codependent thinking, perfectionist thinking, people-pleasing thinking is your life-long habit, you're so focused on the results you believe you're creating for other people, right? It's like this huge brain shift where it's like, oh wait, I'm creating my own world for me. Wow.

Mara: Yeah, I think it's so profound because I notice in myself my own perfectionism, a lot of it comes back to the results that I'm creating for other people and also how I'm keeping myself safe by doing so, which is always a false safety, right?

Victoria: Exactly.

Mara: Because I don't feel safe in my inner landscape if all of this is going on. And so the safety that you're describing here, offering here with this process is so much deeper and I could just feel myself relaxing into it as you were talking. I'm wondering if you can use an example.

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When I was looking at your website, I was looking through on your about page, you have all of these great points of this is what your healing might look like. And one totally stuck out to me, which was stop panicking when your boss asks to talk to you.

And that visceral feeling of somebody being like, “Can I talk to you?” Not right now of course, but like, in a little while, so you’re just sitting here stewing, making mean all kinds of things, feeling all kinds of feelings. And so I’m wondering, using an example like that, what maneuverability do you see that we have in there to work with ourselves through working on our thoughts?

Victoria: Absolutely. So let’s play it out. So the circumstance here is boss said words. Does that resonate?

Mara: Scary words.

Victoria: Okay. So that’s why we write out the circumstance without adjectives because they’re not inherently scary words, right?

Mara: So right.

Victoria: Because if your best friend was like, “Oh hey girl, can I talk to you later?” You’d be like, totally.

Mara: Yeah, exactly.

Victoria: So boss said words. And so what is your thought about that? That fact?

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Mara: I'm in trouble.

Victoria: I'm in trouble. How does it make you feel in your body? And take a moment, check in.

Mara: So scared.

Victoria: So scared. Where do you feel that fear?

Mara: In my solar plexus.

Victoria: Does it have a color?

Mara: Purple.

Victoria: Is it still? Is it moving?

Mara: It's very still.

Victoria: Is it heavy? Is it light?

Mara: Heavy.

Victoria: Does it have a temperature?

Mara: It's cold.

Victoria: Is there any other descriptive words to explain this fear that lives in your solar plexus?

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Mara: It's liquid-y.

Victoria: Liquid-y. What does this fear, this purple, still, heavy, cold, liquid-y fear in your solar plexus want you to know?

Mara: I think that there's a time in the past where that fear was real. Where somebody could take my safety away just by saying something. And also that that time is not now.

Victoria: That's so beautiful. That's so beautiful. How does it feel to hear that? That time is not now?

Mara: So good.

Victoria: So good. Does so good, does that feel calm, like peaceful, confident, assured?

Mara: It feels assured and it feels pretty calm.

Victoria: Beautiful. So let's step back into this moment. Boss said words, your thought is I'm in trouble. You feel scared. In your solar plexus there's a purple, still, heavy, cold, liquid-y fear. What is the action that you take when you are full up with this fear?

Mara: Just be totally paralyzed.

Victoria: Yeah. What's the result in your life of being totally paralyzed?

Mara: That I can't move on between that moment where boss says words and the conversation whenever that comes, which could be hours or days.

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Victoria: Yeah. And I would posit that the result you create for yourself is to create trouble in your own life. Does that resonate? So what that shows us is that this initial thought, "I'm in trouble," created your lived reality. And so we believe that it's the circumstance, it's the fact that boss said words that creates that scared and creates the experience of being totally paralyzed, but it's actually your thought about it.

So what we do next because I'm not going to leave you there is we sit with it. And in coaching, we would sit with it for as long as you needed to really have it resonate in a real way, to really see and feel how you are co-creating this experience for yourself as your adult self. For our purposes now and for your listeners, we'll move on if that feels safe for you.

Mara: Absolutely.

Victoria: Thank you. So what we would next do is in looking at this experience that you co-created for yourself, and I say co-created because we're all a part of our socialization, our conditioning, our environment, whatever systems of oppression impact us, right? These thoughts don't come from nowhere and I think it's important to say that out loud. It's not that you're just inventing ways to torture yourself. We were taught them. So when your boss says words, how would you rather feel?

Mara: Just casual.

Victoria: Casual, yeah.

Mara: Like okay.

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Victoria: Yeah, like cool dude, whatever. Great. What is a thought that you could think on purpose to bring that feeling of like, cool, whatever, calm, peaceful, casual into your mind-body to create that feeling for yourself?

Mara: I think even just like, the simple thought of he has something that he wants to talk to me about. And not and that means x, y, and z. Just the simple context now is soothing, and maybe even tagging in a reminder of and that doesn't mean that there's something wrong.

Victoria: Yes. And the message from your solar plexus also came to me, that purple, still, heavy, cold, liquid-y feeling in your solar plexus that was fear wanted you to know that while there was a time in the past people could impact your sense of safety, totally valid, that that time is not now. So I just want to see how it feels in your mind-body-spirit to consider the thought, "I am safe." Does that resonate? Does it make you feel casual?

Mara: Yeah. It brings a much more neutral charge to it.

Victoria: Beautiful. Great. So I am safe is our thought, feeling casual. When you're feeling casual, what action do you take?

Mara: You just keep moving. Like okay, that happened and now I'm responding to - this whole scenario is hilarious because I do not have a boss nor have I had one for a very long time but I so remember that feeling. And there are certain people who still bring that up in me totally who would say something like, "I need to talk to you later," and it's the tone, and you just feel frozen.

And I think for people who spend a fair amount of energy, we're conditioned to spend a fair amount of energy on anticipating people's

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needs. So often those words are heard as like, oh shit I'm in trouble because I wasn't doing my job, and my job is to know five steps ahead of everything what I'm supposed to be doing, what I'm anticipating, what other people need from me, which of course is not our job. But that's real too. For so many of us, we needed to do that in order to be safe when we were young.

Victoria: Yeah. And so in speaking to tone, actually can we come right back to that? Let me help you get to a result on this one. So if the action you take is to keep moving, what result do you then create for you?

Mara: I'm getting the things done that I want and need to get done instead of sitting in a terror puddle for the whole day, and then having a bunch of things to play catch up on.

Victoria: Right, which will spark that perfectionist brain, that people-pleasing brain, and can have the result of leading you to feel less safe because in that paralyzed, in the unintentional protocol we were looking at, in that paralyzed place where you're making his words means you're not safe, you're not getting your job done.

So your job actually is less secure. Because there's now - you spend all of Wednesday spinning instead of working, right? And so having that internal mantra, that internal thought be I am safe, boss said words, I am safe, you actually are both energetically within yourself but also in the physical realm, you get the spreadsheet done or whatever and you're actually keeping your job and your income and the roof over your head safer. Isn't that amazing?

Mara: Yes. And I think - I want to thank you so much for going through the whole piece of it with me because I think that there's so much

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misunderstanding. People think like, oh, doing thought work is just bypassing the things I don't want to deal with or tying up these "bad" thoughts in a pretty pink bow, or all of these ways, when really, it is such a powerful tool. And it enables us so much sovereignty and maneuverability within our inner landscape.

Victoria: Absolutely. And to your point, it can be emotional bypassing. It can be spiritual bypassing. People are not wrong to have that concern, which is why I talk so much about it so directly. That that's not what I'm ever here for. I mean, there is no light without the shadow, shadow work is vital, and there are no negative feelings.

All feelings are beautiful and amazing and incredible teachers. Some of them feel like shit but they're not bad. I think that's where we get in a trap of saying this thought is bad, this feeling is bad, I need to shove it aside to live some healed and healing wellness life. That's garbage.

And I get the inclination. I get why that's alluring. For a millisecond it feels so much better to engage in false positivity, to put some lipstick on it and pretend it's fine, but it will all always come back around. I wanted to make sure I address that absolutely brilliant and important thing you brought up around tone.

So when we're talking about tone and that - it takes milliseconds for the body to react. So that's when we're talking about the 80% of our lived experience that is vagus nerve up. That is body to brain. So this cognitive work, thought work is brain down.

And tone matters hugely to humans. I mean, you can see it with a dog or a cat. Who hasn't grabbed their dog and been like, you are such a piece of

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shit, I love you so much, you're the worst dog ever? And the dog's like, I hear prosody of voice, I hear tone. I hear a tone that lets me know this human loves me and will continue to feed me. So the words are less important than the tone and how we are individually experiencing, interpreting, and processing that through our bodies.

So that's where again somatics comes in and learning to pay attention to the body and the signals we're being sent. And again, pattern recognition. I think of myself as a pattern investigator, like I'm constantly on the lookout for when the thing keeps happening because that's the sticking point.

And so if there's always a certain tone that sends your body into sympathetic activation, that adrenaline-based state where we're in fight or flight, or dorsal shutdown, which is when we're in that immobilization place, in a [inaudible] place, when those things continually happen with a certain input, we get to look at why that is so we can find new ways to support ourselves around that, to resource ourselves when we do hear a certain tone.

Not with the goal of negating what's happening but in finding that pause, just those little seconds of pause where we can resource ourselves and get grounded in ourselves, oriented to our environment so we can stay in ventral vagal, which is the safe and social, safe and secure part of our autonomic nervous system so we can show up how we want to. We can respond instead of just reacting.

Mara: Yeah. And I'm wondering if you can share with us a few ways that we can work with this system of our body intentionally each day so that in those moments when maybe we hear the tone, we have not like a toolkit but a greater range of options at our disposal.

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Victoria: Yeah. So thought work does impact our physiologic response. So that. And bringing in stillness. Bringing in moments of mindful quiet starts to work with our neuroplasticity to remind us and give us new tools to pause. Because that alignment happens in that little pause where someone says something and you feel like that zap in your belly and you can recognize it.

You can recognize just that hint of activation and can then make a choice around how you're going to respond to it, versus just allowing yourself to go into reaction. So for some, that can be taking a breath, putting a hand on your heart, sometimes I'll have folks, if there's rings or bracelets they wear, just touching, having an actual touch stone.

But something to bring you back to the present moment. Because when you get activated in your nervous system, you're not in your mind. You're not in that ventral vagal place where you can make decisions really consciously. You're in a different part of being an animal. You're in a more reptile place where your reptile mind, your lizard mind is taking over.

And so whatever you can do to bring yourself back into that connection with I am present in this moment, I am alive in this moment, I am breathing in this moment, I'm looking around, let's count by color. I see one, two, three, four blue things, I see one, two, three red things. Or engaging your senses can help to get you present in the moment.

So what do I see? Name five things? What do I smell? What do I feel? So I feel the clothes on my shoulders, I feel my bangs on my forehead, I feel my seat in this chair holding me up.

And doing these things to orient ourselves back into the environment, back to the reality of the here and now, which predominantly in the type of

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situations we're talking about is a moment of actual safety that totally doesn't feel that way at all but actually is. So the more often we can engage stillness, mindfulness, getting present on purpose, we train our bodies to believe us when we say I am safe in this moment.

Mara: It struck me as you were talking too that having that, being able to get that stillness, being able to have that second of pause, being able to stay more in our window of tolerance, I love how you call that the window of bodily dignity as an aside, it's beautiful, it occurred to me that there's so much - and this happens a lot with codependency. There's so much mind reading that's happening.

Victoria: Oh my God, all the time.

Mara: So I hear your tone and I'm making a buffet of meaning out of what I'm hearing that may or may not have anything to do with what you're trying to communicate. But when you're in that place of always trying to anticipate somebody else's needs and deliver a certain result, be perfect, twist yourself up into shapes, into whatever you assume is being desired of you in the situation, that there's so much mind reading taking place. It's like a horrible game of telephone.

Victoria: Oh my God, it's the worst. Totally. And I do want to just give a little hat tip to Jane Clapp who taught me that term, window of bodily dignity. She's amazing.

Mara: She is amazing.

Victoria: Always got to thank your teachers, right? Name them. So right, one of the things that's been huge for me has been learning and it's an

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ever-evolving skill, I get to practice it so much is taking people at their word. So inviting my brain to step back and the thought that I keep on tap because that's one of the things we can do with thought work is use our prefrontal cortex to pick a thought we're going to think on purpose when x, y, z happens.

So the thought I keep on tap is I'm taking them at their word. So when someone says no, it's totally fine. I hear the chatter. My brain's like, "Does she really mean it? Is it really okay?" And it starts questioning and spinning. Gosh, one that was really challenging for me is when I would ask someone like, "Hey, do you want to do x, y, z?" And they would say sure or fine.

My brain was like, this does not compute, it doesn't fit into that codependent black and white thinking of I need a solid answer. And so my brain would start to spin like, what does that mean? So I would take all of that anxiety and angst onto myself and into my physiology and now I just clarify. I either take them at their word and just interpret it and move on, or I'm like, hey, when you said sure, did you mean yes or no? Just let me know. Just casual, pick one. But you're totally right. Oh my God, so much mind reading.

Mara: Well, it's amazing how - I mean, of course that example of hey, when you said sure, can you just clarify, not a hard thing to say even really. And yet for so many people, I can think of so many times in my own life where that never would have even occurred to me.

But what would have absolutely occurred to me was to spend the next week and a half obsessing about whether or not I got it wrong, whether or not they actually wanted to do it, whether they were just being nice to me by saying sure but really they didn't really want to do it. Now days of my life are devoted to this sure, which was such a reality for me at so many points.

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And how, again, we can bring it back to such a neutral charge by clarifying. And of course, some conversations are much higher tests than this but a lot of them, a lot of the ones we perseverate on aren't. And a simple clarification could provide so much clarity.

Victoria: Yeah. And I think something feels high test when the quotidian isn't attended to. So when the day by day little things have that anxious charge, have that energetic charge, it all builds up in our bodies so what one might call a bigger conversation, though we can get neutral on that, but let's not, what we might call a bigger conversation feels so heavy and so weighted because all of that people pleasing, all of that codependent thinking, all of that perfectionist thinking has kept so much unsaid within our own spirits.

And we've built up so much resentment, so much annoyance instead of just getting clean and clear and specific and asking for what we need and just declining to read minds. Because I decline, like thank you for the offer, I decline.

Mara: Do you tell people in your life that or do you just do it?

Victoria: Combo. So I mean, this really doesn't happen in my life now but if - let's come up with a sort of an easy example. If someone was like, I really wanted you to get me that present for my birthday and I'm disappointed you didn't, I would really clearly say, "My love, you need to tell me. I cannot read your mind. That is not one of my superpowers. So if you want specific from me, I'll invite you to ask for it." And I say it with a loving prosodic tone, with a gentleness, but directly, simply, plainly.

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And that's another thing that's been a huge, huge part of my healing from all of these habitual thought patterns is learning to be a direct communicator, which I most certainly was not the first 30 years of my life. It was all indirects and passive aggression and all that sideways commentary.

"Oh I mean, it would be really cool if you could pick up the groceries on the way home but it's okay if you're tired. I mean, I worked from eight to six today but without a break, I didn't actually have a break today, I didn't actually even pee or drink water or mow the lawn, I did literally nothing but work and I'm super exhausted but I can do it if you don't want to, I know you had the day off and were just hanging out," et cetera. And now it's like, "Hey babe, can you pick up the groceries? Thanks."

Mara: Yeah, it's amazing. Learning to be more direct has been a huge part of my healing process as well. Including - and that's the reason why I asked you, being direct about the fact that I'm no longer available for mind reading. Because I realized that was baked into so many of my relationship contracts because I had always done it.

And people loved it. People loved it. They're like, "You're so great at knowing exactly what I need five minutes before I need it." And I loved being loved. But I didn't love how I was constantly vigilant for every single thing all of the time and making all of those things my job. Not possible. For me, I had to say it. I had to say I used to do this and I'm putting you on notice, I'm not going to do it anymore.

Victoria: Here's your memo, I faxed it to you. Done. I love that. And there's some relationships where I have chosen to do that and it's been really helpful for me. I mean, when you stop people pleasing, people are not pleased. But frankly that's okay with me.

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Mara: Yeah, say more about that.

Victoria: Well, so you talked about in mind reading, people were delighted with me and I was anticipating their needs, I was hyper vigilant to their needs, and so I felt loved. But what I would posit is that that's a false love. Because they're not loving the real you, they're loving you in a caretaker role, in a mind reader role, in a parental role.

In these roles, versus showing up as your beautiful, magnificent, authentic self who is not a mind reader, thank you very much. So recognizing yeah, they're loving this false version of you. And I want to be loved for the authentic version of me or not at all.

And so there's my power. The not at all feels great now because when you stop people pleasing, people don't like it. I don't feel the need anymore to keep people in my life, in my realm, in my world who love the false version of me who used to show up.

If I need to perform and be the dancing monkey on the stage for you to love me, to be pleased with me, to think well of me, then I don't need any of that from you, thank you. And from there, I actually do a lot for the people I love. I love sending random gifts, I love sending cards, I love texting.

I know, it's 2020, you're supposed to text before you call but I'm the guerrilla caller who's like, "Hey Leah, how are you today?" Like, "Oh, my phone never rings. This is great." I'm like, "Tell me about you." And I'm so much more available to show up for and show love to the people I love when I'm doing it from my authenticity versus obligation.

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What you said, that social contract, that relational contract of oh, I need to check in with her or she's not going to be available when I have a need. And that's the rub too, right? That part of us that is so fearful of being alone or not being safe wants to perform being loving, perform being kind as sort of a putting a coin in the bank.

There's a manipulative character to it which I'm not judging. It's just what is. And it comes from that - we've been talking about this, that childhood survival place. If I do this, I'll get fed, if I do this when the lions come, okay, my parents are going to grab me for sure and carry me out of the village before the lions eat everyone there. It's brilliant, it's amazing, it's genius for children.

Mara: So I'm wondering, Victoria, for people who are listening to this conversation and saying like, yes, maybe tentatively like yes, I would like some of that but I'm feeling a little nervous too, what's a good place for them to start?

Victoria: I must say my mind is flooded with a thousand opportunities and options. The thing that keeps coming to me most powerfully is starting - so when I'm teaching thought work, one of the things I teach is a belief bridge. Because sometimes if your thought is a bridge too far, there's a river of doubt between you and your goal thought.

So this thought in the boss situation, I am safe, perhaps for you was like, yeah, I can do that. But for someone else maybe like, wow, what? So we create a series of bridge thoughts to get us there. So what's coming to me in response to your question, where do we start, is to consider starting with a bridge towards your goal.

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So if believing I am worthy of love is like, yeah right, what are you talking about? No, I have to continually prove this, I might encourage you to start with practicing a thought like, I am willing to begin to believe that it is possible that I'm worthy of love. Do you see how expansive that is? How much space that gives the brain to not feel forced, not feel rushed, but to consider possibilities.

And so choosing a bridge thought like that on the way to getting to wherever you want to go, and engaging your neuroplasticity, so setting aside 60 seconds - so I love the concept of the minimum baseline. Choosing the smallest possible action to get you towards your goals and the goal here in setting a minimum baseline is to trust yourself.

So you pick a tiny thing and you do it and you do it and you do it and you do it again. And after a week of doing it, you're like, oh, I spent 60 seconds every day and I literally mean 60 seconds writing this bridge thought. That's amazing. I did that for a week. I can now decide to trust myself that I can keep this up for one week. Let's do another.

So giving yourself the possibility of trusting yourself to show up for you in ways you never have by starting small, starting slow, and really setting the focus on showing up for you. And so then we also use smart tools. If there's a new thought you want to practice like this one towards self-love or self-trust, put Post-Its all over the house.

And if you live with other people and you're not quite ready to have a Post-It up that says practice your mantras believing in yourself, you can just put Post-Its up that have a heart on them or a smiley face, but it's your internal signal that that's something you want to do.

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I will also set reminders on my phone to help me remember to practice the new thought because we have to engage our neuroplasticity; our brain's amazing capacity to shift and change and grow. But you need to do it for it to shift.

Mara: Yes. Thank you so much Victoria. It was wonderful getting to hang out with you today. I'm so grateful for you for everything that you shared. Where can we find you? Where do you like to hang out online?

Victoria: So Instagram @victoriaalbinawellness. My website is victoriaalbina.com. And if you head over there, right on the homepage, you can put your name and email in and get a suite of meditations and nervous system exercises and orienting exercise sent right to your email inbox so go over there and get those for free because I love you, because we all need the collective needs, each of us to do our healing work so we can heal the world. And my podcast is called Feminist Wellness. It's on all of the things, the Spotify and Stitcher and Apple.

Mara: Awesome. And you can find all of those links, including a few links to some of my favorite writing that I love from Victoria's site in our show notes. Thank you so much.

Victoria: Thank you so much. This has been such a lovely conversation.

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 to grab your seat now. See you there. It's going to be a good one.