

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

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. Welcome to our third and final installment of this wee mini-series all about interpersonal conflict.

So we've been talking for the last three weeks about what conflict is and why it feels so enormous, how we avoid it and attempt to escape it by pushing it under the rug, pretending it's not a thing, or how we sort of throw ourselves headlong into it or create it, often without even really realizing we're doing that.

We talked last week at some length about how to support our nervous system, our limbic system, our inner children to have a different experience of conflict. And I hinted on that episode about something I really love and have found really, really helpful in relationship, which is Clean Fight Club Rules, which is what we're going to be talking about today.

So if you didn't listen to the last two episodes, I would highly encourage that you do that and then come on back here because this is probably not going to make a lot of sense if you're just jumping in at this point.

So my darlings, Clean Fight Club Rules are conflict rules of engagement. They are the mutually agreed upon rules that two or more people in any sort of dyad can create and agree to mutually in order to support the best outcome for everyone.

So when our goal is to have an interdependent relationship, then mutuality, reciprocity, a recognition of mutual autonomy; I recognize you are an

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

autonomous human who can take really good care of your own mind, body, and spirit, and you recognize the same of me, and we come into this unions which could be spouses, partners, parent-child, coparents, best friends, whatever, we come into this connection, this relationship with the mutually shared goal of wanting to support the other person, wanting to love them, wanting to take care of them, wanting to show up for them, and not wanting to do harm to them.

Wanting to meet their nervous system in a way that works mutually, that works for both of us in a way that helps them to stay present and grounded and here, while not taking away from your own needs. So it's not about putting yourself last so you can put their needs first. No, baby, no.

But saying, "Yeah, I can agree to always have our real-talk conversations walking if that's what works best for you," if that works best for both of you. Or someone I'm dating right now, touch is very important to them and touch is very important to me.

And so part of why we have these really beautiful real-talk conversations that I feel like could be conflict if we weren't both so open to seeing conflict or real talk as a way to grow, touch is really important to us. It really grounds me, it really grounds them.

So when we've needed to have real talk, we both sit down, we grab each other's hands, we look in each other's eyes, and we maintain eye contact as much as is possible for us, each of us in that moment. And we stay touching.

It really helps both of us to ground and sort of energetically complete the circuit. So those are things that may be stated as preferences in your Clean Fight Club Rules, but really here, the focus is on do's and don'ts. Hard yes and hard no.

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

And having these rules written out and reviewing them with someone I love has been so incredibly helpful for me because it really does just lets my body relax and reduce some hypervigilance, which like we've been talking about in the last two weeks, can lead us to say and do and be in ways that aren't optional for us.

So really releasing that stress by knowing that it is most likely that the other person is going to abide by our own Clean Fight Club Rules has been really, really lovely.

And before I get into it, I have written these all out and made them into a beautiful little PDF for you so you can see them in writing, which I know works much better for my ESL brain. I like to see things in writing.

So you can use my rules as a way to spark your own creation of your own rules in your own life. So you can head on over to victoriaalbina.com/cleanfightclubrules. And you can put your name and your email in there and download away.

So here are some of my Clean Fight Club Rules. I promise to be respectful in my choice of words, in my tone, and my energy. I promise to recognize that body language is a form of communication, and I promise to be mindful of what I say both verbally and non-verbally.

That is, I promise not to roll my eyes, to smirk, to make faces, or otherwise comment without words. I promise to listen with a curious, open heart, to ask for clarification, to not make assumptions, to do my best not to project my emotions or thoughts, and to not take what is said personally.

I promise to work together with you to find the most loving middle ground that honors both of us and our values and integrity, and not to convince you to think or believe the way I do. I promise to keep it in the here and now,

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

not to bring up old grievances, especially ones we've processed over and over.

I promise to come into conversation with a desire for mutually beneficial solutions, not to make demands or prove the other wrong, not to shame, blame, or guilt, insult, or harm, but to come together as a team to work towards our greater good.

I promise to respect our mutually agreed on time limit. So let me pause here. So I have learned over the years that 30 minutes of real talk is what works best for me and my nervous system. And that has expanded as my own window of capacity as expanded, as I've learned how to regulate myself better.

But talking or processing for hours and hours, I've just found that it usually results in an exhausting and circular conversation. You don't tend to get anywhere new. You just revisit the old crap you just said 20 minutes ago.

So I set a 30-minute timer. And then when that goes off, we either decide mutually to be done and just to be like, okay, we've gotten where we're going to get, I'm cool with where we're at, we can stop here. Or we can decide to come back together at a time we decide then and there together is the time that we'll come back.

It could be in an hour, it could be the next day or the next weekend, but we decide it together. Again, with the goal of everyone feeling okay with that. Similar to that limit is tabling. So tabling is saying I need to pause.

So I promise to honor tabling a conversation and we'll do it according to this agreement. So it is vital to me to be able to table a conversation, to say, "We aren't getting anywhere, let's come back to this." Or, "I'm

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

exhausted, I'm not showing up how I want to for us, let's come back to this."

Or, "My nervous system is getting activated. I need to pause. Let's come back to this." And for me, the person who called the timeout is charged with bringing the conversation back up. And it's my preference that that person, whether it's me or the other person, state when they will bring it back up when they call the timeout, or as soon as possible when it's a nervous system timeout.

So for example, "I need a nervous system break and I will restart this conversation after dinner tomorrow. Does that work for you?" Or, "I'd like to hold this until the weekend so we can really dive in and can have time after to repair. Does it work for you if I bring this up Saturday morning?"

Each person will then use the timeout to think about what they are responsible for in the conversation, to think about solutions, and to ground and regulate their nervous systems and to bring compassion to any ouchie feelings they have, and to think about any apologies they may want to offer.

Similar to that, I have a rule for myself that I will not have a challenging conversation after 9pm, 9:30pm at the latest. They don't work out well for my body, my inner children, my mind, my nervous system. Listen, I go to bed angry.

I would much rather say, "Baby, I love you, I care about you, I'm angry, I see you're angry, but if we start getting into this, I know I'm going to get dysregulated and I may say something I don't want to. I may shut down, I may just not be the me I want to be. So let's table this. Let's come back to this." And then I'd go through that same process of naming the time and place when the conversation will start again.

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

Next, I promise to name what's bothering me instead of hoarding grumpiness. Concurrent rule, if you're still upset about something 24 hours later, speak up about it within 48 hours. That's the math.

Because when we let annoyance, irritation, or resentment pile up, it will come pouring out sideways during the next conversation. I promise to approach real talk with emotional generosity, to assume good intention, and to remember that we all mess up.

Giving the other person the grace the same way you'd want them to give you the grace and the opportunity to make it right really focuses in on that core value of interdependence, which is mutuality and reciprocity.

I promise to keep my focus on me, which is one of the top lessons in Anchored, which is to make things about ourselves and not chronically about someone else. Thereby, we use I statements with a focus on what you are thinking and feeling.

I feel hurt when I feel sad, when I feel dismissed when. Now, before you send that email, I know, I know, using thought work, we take responsibility for our feelings as the result of our thoughts. And in these conversations, I share what happens for me before I take it to my thought work to make it okay for me.

So I'm not saying you made me feel. I'm saying I feel hurt when. Let me do a real one like, "I feel unsafe when you raise your voice." So I can do thought work to source safety internally. I would actually go to somatics here first, but you get the point.

But I still want to communicate to my partner using an I statement that I feel unsafe when you do x, y, z. I feel unheard when you shut me down. I feel

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

sad when you call me a name. So I talk about the pre-thought work experience.

Now, some I-promise-not-to's. I promise not to expect you to do my emotional labor for you, not to make you my enemy, we're in this together, to not use absolutist language like always or never, to not expect you to read my mind or to try to read yours. To not bring in other topics to deflect from the issue at hand.

So that might sound like, "Sure, I didn't call when I was running late but you forgot to tell me you were having drinks with your bother last week." Nope, not doing it.

I promise not to interrupt or take over the conversation. I promise not to bring in other people's opinions, which sounds like, "Well, your mom thinks you're lazy too." I promise not to play the therapist, analyst, or coach, and I promise never to tell you what I think you're thinking or feeling.

I promise to never negate your feelings and tell you that I know better about what's going on for you. I promise to never tell you how to speak or what words to say. I promise to never make threats about leaving the relationship unless I truly mean it. Like for realsies, realsies mean it. Like it's not something to be bantered about.

I promise to not stay defensive or reactive. I may get defensive or reactive because I'm a human and I will do my best to bring awareness and to reel it in. No personal attacks or name calling, no swearing at, no raised voices, no bringing your parents into this, no like, "Ugh, you're just like your mother when you do that." Not having it.

No saying, "I promise not to say yes," when I mean no. Not to appease or people please because I recognize that's just borrowing trouble. In that is I

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

promise to say what I mean and mean what I say, and to trust you to do the same.

So that was a lot. I mean, if you look at them on the whole, it's like, I promise to be respectful, loving, and kind. That's what every single one boils down to. And those are some of my rules for fighting well in a loving relationship, and I want to invite you to do the same.

To sit and write out your do's and don'ts for yourself. What's optimal for you, and to invite your partner and the people you love in your life to do the same. And then to meet, and have a conversation, and to see what you can agree on as the ground rules for you collectively.

So if you are in another situation, like at work or with someone who's new in your life, or someone - whatever, someone you haven't had this conversation with. Like you don't have Clean Fight Club Rules with them, you can still bring in a lot of these guidelines for yourself so that you can show up in the most open way possible, mindful of the impact your words, tone, energy have on the other person.

Because that's part of being in community and connection with other humans. You can use these guidelines to be mindful and make sure that you're staying in your integrity and your values, and you can make sure you're showing up in the best way you can, regardless of how the other person behaves.

And it's so important, especially coming from our codependent habit of tolerating being treated like crap, to get clear on what is and isn't acceptable for you in a real-talk conversation with anyone. An intimate friend, a partner, anyone else, what works for you and what is a boundary that you need to set and to hold fast to?

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

The more you're able to recognize and name your own internal limits and to act to honor those limits, the more you'll start to believe that you really will have your own back, which allows you to show up for once challenging conversations, knowing you are less likely to abandon yourself, knowing you'll take care of yourself.

In my experience, that all makes it so much easier to be vulnerable, open, and available for the real-talk that deepens a relationship and makes it so much less scary along the way.

Thank you for listening, my love. I hope you've gotten something helpful out of this episode and last week's episode. If you want to take this work deeper, if you want to get my support, my coaching, my guidance in a loving, kind community that actually does have guidelines that everyone signs and agrees to before we get started.

We're very strict about them, we're very kind and loving in this community. If you're looking for deeper support, if you are looking to make change in your life so you can live with such abundant, embodied, grounded self-worth, look no further.

We are enrolling for the next group of Anchored. We are about a quarter of the way full and it is currently March. We start in May. So Anchored has been filling up faster and faster, and we've been running a waitlist every single time.

So if you want to join us, now is the time. Victoriaalbina.com/anchored. Learn all about it, apply, we can have a conversation all about it. I can't even wait. It's going to be a blast to welcome you to the familia. We have such a good time.

Ep #162: Clean Fight Club Rules

Alright my beauty, let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart should you feel so moved. 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 darling. 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 to grab your seat now. See you there. It's going to be a good one.