

# Ep #176: Loving Your Past Self, Living with Compassion



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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## Ep #176: Loving Your Past Self, Living with Compassion

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 delighted at all the birdsong; can you hear it? I feel like I live in a bird sanctuary and it's just so dreamy.

So, today I want to talk about the concept of our past self, when we start to learn to live in a new way. That it's possible to ditch our old codependent, perfectionist, and people pleasing thought habits. It's super common to get really down on ourselves.

We coach on this a lot in *Anchored*; it's a whole thing, for sure. We beat ourselves up when we learn new things, new ways of being. We forget that we, you know, just learned it. And we don't give ourselves the grace for being new at something.

We have this habit of speaking to and thinking of ourselves in such unkind and even cruel ways. We are often mean to ourselves for not knowing what we didn't know before we knew it, which often comes from both the codependent story that we're not worthy or good enough. Or else, we'd already know everything, and everyone else must know this.

And at the end of the day, we're probably too broken to know it anyway. We think this way and treat ourselves this way, from the perfectionist thought fantasy that tells that same old story; that we're supposed to know all the things, all the time and that something is wrong with us, for not being all-knowing.

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We are so focused on the things we should have done, the things we think we could have done better, before we knew how to do them better. We get so focused on the things we don't see as successes, see as failures in a bad way, versus failure in a good way, which we talked about in episodes 39 and 40.

And we're cruel to ourselves. And in so doing, we walk around the world with blinders on to how amazing we really are. All the amazing things we are doing. All the ways we are succeeding and growing. And we brush those successes aside and move steadily along to self-flagellation from the story that we're never good enough.

So, our brain says, "Why celebrate ourselves at all, if we're not 127.43% perfect?" And in that, we create so much shame for ourselves. Where shame is a belief that there's something inherently wrong with us. And not knowing what we didn't yet know, is evidence of that in our unmanaged minds.

That shame keeps us from being present with ourselves and those we love; from celebrating, from continuing to grow, and from thoughtfully evaluating why we didn't do what we meant to, or said we wanted to do.

And, shame is the most massive success blocker, ever. The most rigid and unyielding barrier to self-love, to taking risks, and possibly failing, and less growing. It simultaneously blocks us from seeing how we're getting in the way of our own success. What a cluster cuss, am I right?

This habit of beating up on our past selves and thinking unkind thoughts about the you, you were yesterday, or five years ago, or fifty years ago, these thoughts become part of our self-concept; the story we tell about ourselves. And that's where this gets super problematic for making future

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change. Because you're telling the story, as you beat yourself up for your past decisions, that you're a kind of person who fails in a certain way.

Instead of seeing that you've just been operating from your programming; enacting a set of behaviors likely based in your survival skills from childhood, which are running in the background on autopilot. Most of us don't know to pause. To connect with our inner children. To reparent ourselves. More on the inner child and reparenting in episodes 22, 25 and 153.

So, we don't know to pause and connect with those little kiddos inside, who've been keeping you, who've been keeping us in the same old narratives and beliefs, the same old somatic or bodily stories in our nervous systems, that drove our past actions. You are going from an old script.

Of course, you did what you did, my love. Of course, you dated that emotionally unavailable person, or worthy emotionally unavailable person in a relationship. Of course, you said 'yes,' when you actually wanted to say 'no.' Of course, you did whatever you now wish you hadn't done. Because you were the version of you, you were then.

Now, you're the version of you who knows how to do it differently. And when you decide who you inherently are is based on your past self, you block growth, create shame, and remain stagnant in that old self-concept story. It's like labeling ourselves as codependent, which we don't do around here because it blocks change.

When a label or story feels like a fixed part of your core identity, then that's all you can ever imagine yourself being, versus stepping into a self-loving growth mindset from which you can understand that your past codependent

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perfectionist people pleasing thinking are sets of survival skills that did you right for so long.

Until they didn't. You were doing the best you could with everything you learned in childhood; from your family of origin, from what was modeled for you, from your socialization and conditioning, from growing up, like we all did, in the patriarchy and white settler colonialism.

Labeling ourselves in these ways is so likely to leave you feeling stuck and forever screwed. "It's just who I am." says this thinking. And my beauty, my darling, tender ravioli, I'm not buying it. You are so capable of change.

The neuroplasticity of our minds is evidence of that. You can change your thinking. You can change your somatic or bodily experience of life and your nervous system responses. And not only am I living proof of that, the hundreds of women who have gone through Anchored, whose transformation stories you've been hearing on the show lately, are also proof positive of that, which is why I'm sharing them.

You truly can change. Hating on your past self is not going to facilitate that change, it's only going to continue blocking it. Because, science, my nerds. When we are cruel to our past self, we're not giving ourselves the grace, we are robbing ourselves of compassion, curiosity and care.

What we're doing is staying in self-judgment instead leaning into self-acceptance, which is key to owning who you were and what you did. So, you can look at those past behaviors. You can look them right in the snout and can say, "No more. Basta. I'm doing this in a different way starting now."

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You can't know that you want to change your past ways if you're not looking at it. When we wallow in being mean to ourselves, we are out of acceptance, which keeps us out of making positive change. And inherent in that judgment of self is so much moralistic, all-or-nothing thinking.

We decide that some things are morally okay, are good and some things are bad, which strengthens a story the patriarchy loves to reinforce. The narratives around how good girls, good women, good wives, moms, partners behave, which is generally to put ourselves last, for sure.

Stories like thinness is imperative for lovability, which means that eating certain things is good or bad, which makes us good or bad for eating them. Thereby, that fries are a sign of moral failing. And a side salad is the marker of making good and worthy choices. Here's the kicker, choices that prove your worth.

And from that way of thinking, how can you possibly decide what's actually good for you, what you actually want, what truly serves you, if you're looking at your choices through a moralistic lens that was taught to you by oppressive systems?

Learning to be kind to our past and present self does not mean you don't change or grow. It just means you stop identifying with the person you were, as a forever identity. There are two things I'd like to share on this, you know I love my metafora.

In the Romance languages, we have two forms of the verb "to be." In Spanish, my native language, those are "ser" and "estar." They both mean "to be" but they have different flavors to them. So, ser is what you are in this unchangeable way. For example, Yo soy de Mar del Plata, Argentina. -

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I am from Mar del Plata, Argentina. Sorry, it really cracked me up, with that accent Mar del Plata, Argentina.

Then, the other is “estar,” which are the things that you are that are mutable and changeable. So, like, I used to estar in Brooklyn, and now estoy in the Hudson Valley; changed and changeable.

We all have the option to look at our lives, the choices we've made, the ways we've shown up through the lens of estar; not permanent things about who we are, just who we were being then; who we were estando or being in that moment.

When we can look back on our lives, and we can look at our past self through that lens, we can give ourselves so much grace. So much space to choose, in this present moment, how we want to think about our past selves. Remembering that when you look back on your past and see yourself in the most unkind way possible, hoo! Then, everything feels so loaded and heavy.

Of course, your brain will make your past choices mean bad things about you, versus just being the things you did, with the skills you had at the time. So, right now, my darling, my perfect little pancake, you can choose to remind yourself that you are doing the best you could in that very moment. And can remember that it does nothing, exactly 0.0 things, to make your life better to look back on your past self in a harsh and critical way.

In fact, nerd alert, if we take a nervous system view, which you know I'm always going to, when we look back on our past self with critical, mean eyes versus lovingly evaluative eyes, we take ourselves out of ventral vagal, which is the safe and secure part of our nervous system. And we

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jack ourselves up into sympathetic activation. Or, we drop ourselves down into dorsal, which is the checked-out freeze response.

So, we either get all anxious and worried, and “Oh my god! I did this thing, and I'm having all these thoughts about it, and about myself, and I'm beating myself up, and I'm all stressed about it.” Or... Because that was sympathetic, that was fight-or-flight.

Or, we dropped down into dorsal. And then we go into that place of checked-out, sad, depressed, disconnected, isolating, unable to make change. And what's important to know, is we're not going to be able to make change and do things differently the next time, unless we're in ventral vagal about it. Unless we're in that grounded, safe and secure part of our nervous system, with ourselves and about ourselves.

That, being in ventral vagal, is facilitated greatly by being in acceptance of what was, versus being in moralistic judgment of ourselves. Because the next time you go to take whatever action, to say whatever you want to say, if your immediate thought, if the neural groove immediately firing, and thus your immediate somatic bodily nervous system response is, “Oh, man, I can't mess it up the way I messed it up before.” Or, “Well, I'm just gonna mess it up, as usual.”

Then, you're priming yourself to do just that, versus finding your way through somatic practices, like the ones we do an Anchored each and every week, to get into right relationship with yourself, with past you. So, you can make different choices now from a grounded nervous system.

I'll also share one of my absolute favorite Spanish things, and I do love the Spaniards and all of their lipping; Hola, I am Silvia from España. I love their



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lisp. And just by the way, I don't sound like a Spaniard in Spanish, por favor. I sound very Argentine; it's very different.

But there is this fabulous saying, "You can't kiss the same girl twice." Isn't that so great? I mean, think about it, right? Every kiss changes you. Every moment in life changes. So, you can't kiss the same girl twice, because that girl is forever changed. And now that I'm hearing myself out loud, let's be more feminist. You cannot kiss the same woman twice. I must say it irks me when people call grown women, girls.

But anyway, there's a similar saying, "You can't cross the same river twice." Because the river is always moving. It's always changing. So, whichever metaphor works for you, think of your own life as that evermoving river, that ever-changing experience of being you. You are now changed. You're not the same person you were ten, fifteen minutes ago.

So, you now have the option of living in a new way. And you have a new lens for thinking about your past decisions and your past choices. This is where you get to do thought work; to consciously make the next right choice for yourself. And for me, that next right choice is never beating past me up for doing the best she could, with what she knew when she knew it.

I was just operating from my nervous system programming, which lets please remember, that original programming largely happens ages zero to seven. So, when you're beating past you up, you're kind of beating up children. That's not cool, right? Come on.

I can recognize that in the past, past me was making the best choices I could from my own attachment wounding, which we talked about in episodes 129 and 135. I was making the next right choice from the

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information I had, the skills and tools I had, the somatic capacity in my nervous system I had, at that moment.

A thing that just came to me is this, and this is super important; I never know, you never know, what growth will come from a decision you made in the past, that you don't like right now. You just can't begin to know how it's all going to play out.

By hating on those past choices, we're declaring that we do, in fact, know what the future holds, which is not only not possible, it's a further block to our growth. Because it keeps us believing that we can control the uncontrollable.

That is a key component of our codependent thinking; that desire to control everyone and everything. And that keeps us believing that if we are mean enough to ourselves, we can control the world and have some perfect fantasy life that plays out exactly to our specific specifications. Instead of trusting the universe and the great unknown, and that things are rolling out how they're meant to. Thereby allowing that process to unfold instead of trying to be the endless puppet master of it all.

Now, my darling, do I love every choice that I've made? For example, do I love that I stayed in an emotionally abusive relationship for many, many years? No, I don't love it. And having done all the work I have; I can accept it now. Because, well, frankly, because it happened, right? It's a court admissible fact that I stayed.

And, I don't need to beat myself up now, for doing the best I could with the skills I had then. Because I didn't know how to do life any differently until I did. And then... Then I took action steps. Lots, and lots, and lots of them;

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lots of coaching, lots of therapy, lots of somatic work, nervous system work, all the work, to change my life.

I get why stepping into acceptance and love for our past self, for making choices we now don't like, is scary, at first. I hear this from my clients in Anchored, all the time. They say, "I don't want to be kind to myself about the past choices that I don't like, because I don't want to do it again."

We tell the story that we need to beat ourselves up, in order to attempt to prevent present and future harms or missteps. But that's the absolute opposite of what's real. It's when we are kind to ourselves that we make real, lasting sustainable change. When we are most loving, compassionate, caring and curious towards our past selves, that is when we can, in fact, do it differently the next time. Pinky promise and for realies.

I'll also say this, spending time and energy now, beating up past you is a buffer. You heard me right, it's buffering behavior. Where buffering, as discussed in episode 14, is when we don't feel our feelings in this moment. And instead, do whatever is easiest for our nervous system as a distraction from feeling the feelings.

So, instead of feeling the guilt, the shame, the anger, the disappointment, frustration, et cetera, and process it through our bodies somatically... Instead of actually being present with it, we beat ourselves up for it. Can you see how that actually keeps you from doing the work you want to do to make change, when you're so busy buffering against the feelings?

Isn't that fascinating? Gosh, we think beating ourselves up does so much; so much good for us. It just it does so much, just the opposite of what we want.

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So, when we can show up for our inner children with compassion and care and can say, “I recognize and accept that I dated that person, took that job, said ‘yes’ to that thing I didn't want to do. And that led to this pain for me. And I don't want to do it again. And what I'm going to do is show up, as my own most loving adult, to repair my relationship with myself and my inner children. I'm going to actively choose right now, to soothe myself, to meet myself with kindness.”

It's from there that we can take stock of what we did. We can take personal responsibility in a way that creates a pathway forward, instead of leaving us spinning in the past. These are the remedies, my love; more self-love, more compassionate, embodied self-responsibility. And more, deeper, always more self-acceptance. You were doing the best you could with the skills, tools, socialization and conditioning you had at the time.

And let me say it one more time, beating past you up, that serves no one and nothing in this world, my darling. If you are ready to gain the skills and tools you want and need to begin to regulate and heal your nervous system; to live from a more embodied somatic or bodily present experience.

If you want to live with more intentionality, more self-acceptance, more self-kindness, and you want to do it in a loving community, with me as your coach each and every week, it's time for you to join us in Anchored; my six-month program.

The August cohort is filling up pretty fast. So, if you want in, before we go to our waitlist, before it sells out, which happens each and every time for the last couple of years, it's time to join us now. Head over to [VictoriaAlbina.com/anchored](https://VictoriaAlbina.com/anchored) to fill out your application. Get on a quick call with me where I can answer any of your questions.

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And know that I look forward to connecting with you, and to welcoming you to the Anchored familia. It is a beautiful place to be; to make change, to grow, to make friends, and to learn to be kind to yourself, your current past and future you.

Alright, my love, 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](https://VictoriaAlbina.com/masterclass) to grab your seat now. See you there; it's gonna be a good one!