

# Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Victoria Albina, NP, MPH**

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

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 it so, well. That said, for those of you who are riding the proverbial 'struggle bus' of life these days, this podcast may be perfectly timed. Because today, we are going to talk about drama, drama, drama, drama.

This is indeed, a topic near and dear to the hearts of all of us emotional outsourcers, as I have taken to calling us humans, with codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thought habits. We, who habitually and unintentionally source our validation, worthiness, and safety, from nouns; people, places, and things, outside of ourselves, instead of looking within.

So today, we're going to talk about what I mean by drama; what it is and what it isn't. Why we may find ourselves in the center of the drama-nado, like, all the time. And of course, what to do about it; what the remedies are, how to start to see the world and our place in it differently, so that we can see drama as a choice, more than an inevitability.

Now, isn't that enticing? I'm here to testify. It's, it's pretty rad. I'm living it; not here for the drama. What a change. All right, so here we go. And I will start as always, by explaining what I mean by drama, and I will use moi as an example.

When I was younger, I had some habitual thought patterns that it took, some not insignificant time at task, with the old thought work, breathwork, and somatics to really understand. And one of those patterns, was that while I never set out to be dramatic, drama just had a way of finding my doorstep. Oh, brains.

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

When I used to tell the story of my past, of my day, of my life, I thought I was reporting the weather, I honestly did. I thought it was just the facts. However, after doing a lot of work on myself, I started to see that, without even realizing it, I was adding this thick, soupy layer of drama to my stories; lots of lightning strikes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and clouds of locusts, to my experience of being me in the world.

And I was in fact, creating drama without even realizing it. Oops. It's taken time and effort to get to a healthier place, a place that serves me more. And wow, it is so much more better and more productive of a reality that I inhabit now. So much more chill, so much more easeful. And I am so delighted to support you, yes, you, my perfect little kitten in you, to get to the other side of your own personal drama-rama.

Now, if you're listening and you're like, oh my god, I like, never do that. Then I want to invite you to breathe, and to keep listening. And to see if any of this resonates with you. I've literally never had a client or a friend really, who doesn't engage in drama in some form or another. So, this is a place where you get to ask yourself, if you're immediately like, nope, not me. Gently, compassionately, curiously, ask yourself if you're being radically honest about you and the ways you move through the world, or not.

And getting honest with ourselves, about our habits, about our mindset, our ways of moving through the world, this matters. Because you can't change what you decline to really look at in the snout. If you continue to live a life where you're chronically creating drama, even low-grade drama, or engaging with other people's drama, your life will always feel chaotic, dramatic. Full of circumstances that are wild and unruly, and that you believe create a swirling maelstrom of a life for you.

That maelstrom, that constant and unrelenting storm, keeps you from living an intentional life, which we talked about in detail, in Episode 84. When you're living from intention, you are present in your mind and body.

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

Somatically here, in this moment, this place, this time, this reality, and are not rolling around in the past or the future. You are embodied. You are present in your body and truly feel, not feel, you know that you are the boss of you.

Not subject to other people's whims and stories, not subject to circumstances. Not believing that circumstances have to make you feel anything at all. And your emotional bandwidth is no longer taken up with managing your own wild weather, or attempting to manage someone else's for them, by diving right on into their drama.

So today, I want to show you where you may indeed, be creating or participating in drama. So, you can start to shift the habits and the underlying stories that keep drama alive in your world. And of course, we can't talk about drama without talking about feminism. In Anchored, my six-month program, we have a channel in our community hub for memes. And someone recently posted one that said something to the effect of, 'men aren't emotional, because anger isn't an emotion in our culture.' Wow.

And I think, that hits the societal nail right on the head. Men, or masculine presenting humans, aren't called emotional or dramatic for punching another dude in the face or punching a hole in a wall. But women, humans socialized as women, femmes, are called dramatic for having an emotional response to life, especially when it gets really lifey.

And within that framework, our emotional reaction, which is like, oh, my God, she's being so dramatic, is denigrated. Is put down, is talked about as a problem, when in fact, it's simply an emotional reaction to life, which last time I checked, is what mammals do; because, science.

So, I want to be thoughtful here, in drawing a distinction between having and honoring your emotional reaction, in relation to your thoughts about life, which is a beautiful thing that I am all about. My darling, have your

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

feels always, please don't shove them down or push them away. That's never going to work out well in the long run.

And so, the distinction is between that, feeling your feels and creating drama. Which is something humans of all the many, many genders and humans of no gender at all, do. Drama is having an oversized reaction to the circumstances of life that doesn't serve to move life forward, doesn't get you anywhere, it leads to more spinning, more stress.

Drama begets drama, chaos begets chaos. It's a painful feedback loop, where the more drama you put in, the more drama you create, to then ruminate on and spin in. So, my darling, so my perfect little, tiny chipmunk, feel the feels, honor them in your body. Allow them to process through your body and out with your breath. Through grounding, through somatic practices, be present with them, and with you.

And pause before you work yourself up and make something bigger than it needs to be. An extra pause before you loop other people, in an attempt to get them to emotionally match your dramatic energy. That's what we do. Right? That's what feeds the drama.

Pause before you complain, in an attempt to get validation from others. And, we talked about this in Episode 89; why complaining never helps. It's such a good one. Pause, before you turn a moment that doesn't need to be dramatic into a full-blown Greek tragedy, played out on the massive proscenium arched stage of your own dramatic life.

Pause. Ground yourself. Resource your nervous system. Connect with your breath. Feel your feels, but pause, before you head into drama. All of this brings us to my central point for today, which is this; drama only exists in your own mind. You heard me right.

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

Nothing is dramatic, until you decide it is. And you never have to decide to call something or someone, a feeling, a sensation, a moment, dramatic. It's a judgment that is thoroughly optional, never mandated, and frankly, never serves you. Unless you're, like literally, at the theater. And then, yes, call the thespians dramatic, why don't ya. But that's about the only time, my perfect kitten, and we want to be so clear here: Drama is optional.

And other people do not create drama in your life. But we have learned to believe that they do. And I hear it all the time from my clients; Ugh, my kids cause so much drama for me. Or, oh my god, they won't do this simple thing that I'm asking them to do, and they're being so dramatic about it.

Can you hear the judgment just dripping off that last thought? And the former, 'they create drama in my life,' at the core, is this total abnegation of your own agency, and your own capacity to create the life you want, the experience you want. And decide what you will and won't feel, based on your own thoughts in the moment.

Do you see that? You're letting someone else's energy impact you in this huge way. And you're saying that they create your feelings, your emotional state; they create drama for me. So heavy, right? So full of unnecessary gravitas and such an important place to pause.

And to remember the central tenets of thought work, no one else creates your emotions. Your own thoughts in response to and in concert with your perfect nervous system do, which is beautiful news, indeed. Right? Because it reminds us that we can restore our own sense of agency. Hmm.

So, let's say someone comes at you with energy you would have historically and habitually called drama or dramatic? Yes, your nervous system might indeed react to that energy. You might begin to get riled up and go towards some fight-or-flight sympathetic activation, that adrenaline state. Or, you might already be exhausted emotionally and in your nervous

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

system, because you've spent a lifetime seeing drama everywhere, since you were a kiddo.

So, when you feel that drama is coming towards you, you might shut down, disconnect, pull back, and your nervous system might head towards dorsal vagal, the freeze or checkout response. And if you're new to the show, and new to my nervous system-based world, and you're like, what is she talking about? Check out Episode 174 after this one; it's Polyvagal Theory 101. And, we'll let you know what all of these words are. Okay?

So, you'll either go into sympathetic activation, fight-or-flight, or dorsal vagal, freeze, check-out response. And that, that is automatic. That process starts in the blink of an eye. And when you're aware of your nervous system, you can feel it coming. You can feel the little sign of it when it's like 0.4 on a 0-10 scale, right, you can start to feel it; I'm getting worked up.

And, you can start to regulate yourself. To connect with your breath or the ground beneath you, to bring yourself back into ventral vagal, the calm and collected, safe and social part of the nervous system. And from there, thought work can start. You get to use your amazing prefrontal cortex in your mind, the executive function part of your brain, to decide, on purpose, that you are no longer available to engage with or match the energy of drama you're being offered.

My darling, just because someone hands you a rope doesn't mean you have to agree to play tug-of-war, you know what I mean? You don't ever have to go to there, and decide that you want to take a spin on the drama-rama cyclone.

You don't ever have to borrow anyone else's thoughts or feels. You never have to choose drama or any other thought or feel, just because someone else has gone to there, or is inviting you to go there with them. You have

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH



## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

the power within you to pause, and to decide how you want to feel about what someone is serving your way.

And I, in my own life, in my body, now that I've done all this somatic work and work around presence, I just don't like the way drama feels in my body anymore. I don't like the way it scrambles my brain and takes me out of presence. I'm not into it. It's no longer my jam. So, it's not something I'm out here to choose. Because it's a lose, lose, lose, lose, lose way of living.

So, why? Why would someone develop the habit of creating drama? Well, some of it is a byproduct of being the amazing mammals that we are. We've evolved a pretty remarkable survival mechanism called, negativity bias. And we've talked about this on the show before. My regular listeners know that our brilliant brains have evolved to pay attention to the “negative”, it's air quotes negative, right?

Because the evolutionarily negative things in life, are the things that might hurt us, or in the worst-case scenario, kill us. Those negative things are the proverbial ‘lion on the savanna’ of life and we must always be on the lookout for their sharp claws and fangs.

So, our nervous system gets its initial programming ages zero to seven. If we grew up in homes where perfectionism, people-pleasing, codependency were the norm, then most of us grew up there walking on eggshells. Either because there was real danger or the perceived danger, and a kid's nervous system does not know the difference. Right? Perceived danger is just as scary as real danger.

So, the perceived danger of misconnections, missed attunement, or pressure to be the good girl, the good kid, the perfect straight-A kid. Whatever those pressures were, those things that kept us feeling less than safe, our brilliant nervous systems can become hyper vigilant, thereby



## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

really focused on tuning into the negative. Seeing potential harm everywhere.

Every text from your date becomes a lion. That person, whose eyes you met on the bus? Your brain interprets them as making a threateningly rude face, when in actuality, maybe they just farted. That fellow grocery store shopper bumped you with our cart? Thoughtless and disrespectful, says your brain, a potential threat.

Or, maybe, they too, were so distracted by the lions they were seeing everywhere, they didn't even notice. They didn't do it on purpose at all. We can, if we get into the habit, see threats, and malintent everywhere. Especially because our super advanced brainy parts have evolved to register the negative in Technicolor®.

We can also develop our negativity bias when we are raised in or spend a lot of time in an environment where drama is the norm, or where there's chaos, whether the chaos is physical, emotional, mental, or a combination. When we start to perceive chaos or drama as normal, when erratic behavior, emotional enmeshment, triangulation, immaturity, codependency are our baseline, we start to seek those out.

Because they feel, well, normal to our nervous systems, and our minds, to our bodies. This came up a lot with a former client, Anchored alum, Brit, who was raised in a family where there was a lot of blaming, shaming, and anger. That like, real subtle, like New England, kind of, 'I subtly don't approve of you'.

She felt like the people around her were emotional landmines that were bound to go off at some point. So, her drama meter was super fine-tuned. It came to be what she was expecting from life. And without realizing it, she brought this way of relating into her friendships, romantic relationships, even interactions with strangers.

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

Normal everyday interactions: being cut off in traffic, someone asking her to please move out of the way. Her body, her mind, read these as slights and personal insults, as drama. And under that, as a moment of being not safe. And given her past, of course, they were interpreted that way by her mind and body; no judgment here.

Her nervous system was so amped up, so ready for a fight, so set on protecting her from the assumed ill intentions of others, that without realizing it, she became a drama machine. Seeing negative intention, interpersonal crises, everywhere in her life.

We can also develop the habit of creating drama as a way to get attention. And by the way, I don't think wanting attention is a bad thing, right? So often, we hear like, that kid's just doing that for attention. And I'm like, yeah, because that kid needs attention. Right? And you know, I'm really thoughtful about the words "want" and "need".

And sometimes, what our nervous system needs is attention, which means attunement, which means presence, which means connection, which at its base, means safety. So yeah, sometimes we develop the habit of creating drama as a way to get attention, because we're not getting it. Right? And so, it makes sense that we would do that if we weren't attuned to in childhood.

When our so smart bodies and nervous systems realize, we were out to sea on our own, emotionally speaking. And when, as kids, we felt like we had to take everything to 473 on a 0-10 scale in order to get noticed, to feel like we had significance, and to attempt to form connection. And I get that.

I did it a lot growing up, and quite frankly, well into my 30's. In childhood, I learned that having a regular sized reaction sometimes would not lead to getting my needs met. So, I made things big and dramatic, because it felt

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

like the only way to get attention. When actually, what I really wanted, was attunement and co-regulation for my nervous system and, of course safety.

So, my brilliant child brain and body spun these big dramatic tales. Made things enormous, that really didn't have to be. Developed a mindset for looking at life, the world, and my relationships, as drama-based and drama-prone. Seeing drama as a lifeline for getting the external validation I was craving from my codependent mindset.

And so of course, examples are very helpful. So, I will use one from my own life here, as an example of top-notch drama creation, that was totally subconscious. I had no idea that that's what I was doing, but did it I did.

So, I once had this super lovely neighbor, who I would walk my dog, Francis Bacon. She went by Frankie; she was brown with a black nose. She's the bestest girl, ever. So, we would walk our dogs together. We would hang out here and there, and often texted about like, neighborhood, and dog, and life stuff.

So, I hadn't heard from her in like, two, maybe three weeks. And my brain went right into that old neural groove, that old drama spin. And from that wounding of my codependent thinking, that not worthy, always messing up thinking, I decided that I must have done something terrible without realizing it.

That she must absolutely hate me or something, which in hindsight is so cringe, and also like, so understandable. Right? So, without pausing, without breathing, without resourcing, without grounding, this is like a decade ago, I texted her. "Hi there. I haven't heard from you in a minute. Are you mad at me?" Oh brains.

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

Because my brain immediately went to drama, to a problem, to something being wrong and my fault. And she replied, “No, I'm in Florida visiting my grandparents.” Like, what are you talking about? What would I be mad at you about? What could you have done? Why did you go to there? And, I was chagrined, to say the least.

And in that moment, I realized my brain's penchant for and bias towards, the creation of utterly unnecessary drama. It was wicked humbling, which is hella humbling for the West Coast.

Another way our codependent mindset can lead us down the drama path, is by making us think our lives aren't interesting if they're not dramatic. Remember, that I define codependent thinking as chronically and habitually sourcing our sense of worth, value, and wellness from everything and everyone outside of ourselves, instead of, from within, as a survival skill from childhood.

So, key in that definition, is us not feeling worthy of love, care, attunement, affection, attention. So of course, we believe our lives are boring, and not something anyone wants to hear about. So of course, we make it all super dramatic from that insecurity, which makes sense from our codependent mindset.

We talk a lot about how people-pleasing is part of this mindset, in that, from our codependent thinking, we put everyone and everything ahead of us, because we aren't important or interesting, because we're not worthy or valid, right?

So, we worry about others and if we'll bore them with our stories, if they won't be interested, or won't care. And so, you guessed it, we turn to drama to spice it up and attempt to people-please those around us, with a story we deem more interesting, than our perception of our lives and reality as humdrum and boring. Isn't that fascinating? Right? I love brains. Look at

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

the somersaults we do in conversational midair, to attempt to protect our tenderoni underbellies. Wowza.

Now, drama can also be a form of buffering. For more about buffering, check out Episodes 14 and 105. And the quick hit on buffering, is that it's any action we take, or thought patterns we roll around in, to keep us from facing our emotions, challenges, and struggles. It's an attempt to sidestep the discomfort of whatever we're feeling internally, by focusing on the external.

People can buffer with substances, sex, TV, exercise, thought work, you name it, and we can also buffer with drama. One of my Anchor participants, Amber, shared in her coaching session recently, that she tended to lean into family drama. To go all-in on being the go-between. Between aunts and cousins, also known as triangulating.

She recognized that she would be the one stirring the emotional pot at the holidays, adding fuel to the fire of complaints about this sibling or that one. And through our somatic or body-based coaching, Amber came to see that she did this, because it kept her from seeing the struggles in her own life. And more importantly, feeling the pain of the fact that her own marriage was falling apart.

It was easier to find fault and focus her attention on everyone else's lives, and to create a cloud of drama, than to look in the mirror and begin to really take stock of her own. And remember, let me say it again, I'm always gonna say it 1,000 times, this is a survival mechanism at its root; based in not being present.

So, we can be honest and gentle with ourselves if some of these stories are resonating. And since we're here to do more than just survive, we can use tools, like the thought, breath, and somatic work we do in Anchored,

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

and that I teach here, on *Feminist Wellness*. To get under the habit of drama, and to choose a different path for ourselves.

So now, is when we get to the remedies. First, is to remember that creating drama or a dramatic scene is fully optional. So, the first remedy is that; to recognize when you're creating drama and to pause, ground yourself, honor and soothe your nervous system. Or, if you have the capacity in your nervous system, you can stay with the feeling, with that urge. And you can learn from it.

And we do that, we learn from a feeling, by befriending it. Like we talked about in the Resistance series, Episodes 180 and 181. And from there, we can remind ourselves that creating or engaging in drama, gossip, general stirring of the proverbial pot doesn't serve us, and keeps us stuck in old patterns.

And from there, we can decide to choose a different path. To accept other people as they are versus judging them. To journal our thoughts and feels, and to do thought work. To create a new way of thinking about the circumstances in our lives. And we can make note of when others come at us with energy we have historically viewed as dramatic, and can hold loving non-judgmental space for them, instead of getting into the fray, in any way.

So, let's talk about that in more detail. What do we do when someone comes at us with what we would previously call drama? This takes time and practice. But what I do is, I honor however they're saying they're feeling, is how they're feeling.

They get to feel insulted, slighted, frustrated, angry, irritated. And, I don't have to jump into the wreck with them. Imagine a coworker coming to you to complain about another colleague, because how dare they? A simple, "Wow. It seems like what they said really bothered you." Shows respect, attention, that you care about their feelings, but spares you the drama that

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

comes with; wait, what? How could they? That jerk. They are the worst. Let me tell you what they did last year.

See the difference? When we honor someone's feelings and experience, we stay with them, while also staying present in ourselves. When we get sucked into the drama, when we dive headlong into the abyss, our attention generally goes to someone who is not even in the room.

So, we can listen and show compassion without going down the drama rabbit hole. If you recognize yourself, and some inner children within perhaps, who have that drama habit for the same reasons I did, to attempt to get validation, attunement, care, etc. I'll say this: Creating or participating in drama, is not doing what you think it is doing for you.

It's not a pathway in, to getting you real love, care, attunement, and attention. Because that attention, once again, isn't really about you, and your feelings, and your experience. Once we get spinning in drama, it's about someone or something that's not present. It's not a nourishing kind of attention and connection, because it's not really attention or connection at all.

Instead, it's this like scratchy, icky, yucky, kind of attention to you, as the victim, and someone else as the villain. And when I remind myself of that, it helps me to be able to share about a situation that doesn't feel good, or where my feelings were hurt, or where something was unfair, with a totally different kind of energy.

One that's really focused on me and my feelings, and 'not what a jerk someone else is and you better agree with me', which is the demand that drama creates for the people in your life. And of course, my darling tenderoni, my perfect little ravioli, I am not saying not to share about the challenges in your life. Please do that.



## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

And I know, I trust, and believe, that you can do it from an energy of venting. Because around here, we love venting. And I talk about the difference between venting and complaining in Episode 89. And sharing and connecting without having to go to drama to feel like your experience is valid, or worthy, or something folks want to hear about, is an amazing gift to give yourself.

This process is where you get to practice getting consent before sharing; Episodes 27 and 28. And you get to check-in, to ask if the person you're talking to has the bandwidth, the interest, the room, to hear you. And if they consent, if they say yes, then share away.

Also, practicing trusting them to let you know if they're not interested. And then, if they're not interested or can't hold space or whatever, you get to practice having your own back. To bring yourself back to ventral vagal, the safe and social part of the nervous system, with yourself and for yourself.

You get to regulate you and love you up. Because if you think your story is interesting, that's really all that matters at the end of the day, right? You don't need to create drama to feel heard, to feel important. And no one else needs to agree with the gravitas of your story, for it to matter to you.

Finally, if all this talk of buffering struck a chord, you get to ask yourself; what you're buffering against, by getting all dramatic about it? Are you uncomfortable, lonely, bored, tired, annoyed, angry? What's really up, for you? And what do you need to do, for you, to address your own discomfort?

Sometimes the fix is simpler. We need sleep, a friend to confide in, more exercise, more opportunities to connect with nature, to put our face in the sun, a snack, or some water. And other times, we need the deeper sort of healing from old hurts, deep hurts, that have a way of bubbling up to the surface.

## Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama

Where we can start to openly and honestly see the places in our lives that need tending. We can be deliciously and lovingly focused on attending to our perfect selves, because we matter. We can tend to our own garden, and can allow the people in our lives to tend to theirs, drama free, full of self-love.

All right, my darlings. Thank you. Thank you for listening, as always. I am so grateful to know that you are on the other side of this microphone. I am excited to share, I'm always excited to talk about Anchored. Enrollment has begun for the Anchored group starting November 7<sup>th</sup>. Folks are already enrolled. It is filling up fast, given that it's currently September; the group always sells out completely.

So, if you've been listening to the show, loving the show, you're loving what you're gaining from the show, and you want to take it deeper. You want to get my coaching, my guidance, my support. If you want all the audio lessons, all the somatic practices, all the journals, the worksheets, all the practices that are available only to folks within Anchored.

If you want the community, the collective, the breath work... I mean it's pretty never-ending, what you get as a member of Anchored. And most importantly, if you are ready to transform your life, to live life in a different way; with less drama, less stress, less anxiety, more joy, more pleasure, more excitement, happiness, regulation in your nervous system, easier relationships with yourself and the world. Anchored is the place for you.

Head on over to [VictoriaAlbina.com/anchored](https://VictoriaAlbina.com/anchored) to learn more and to apply now. It would be a delight to welcome you to the Anchored familia, such an amazing group of humans. It's an absolute delight, seriously. What a delight!

Alright, my darlings, let's do what we do. A gentle hand on your heart, should you feel so moved. And remember, you are safe. You are held. You

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

## **Episode #187: Drama, Drama, Drama, Drama**

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 gonna be a good one!