

Ep #219: Allowing Life's Ebbs and Flows



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

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This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine expert, and life coach, Victoria Albina. I'll show you how to get unstuck, drop the anxiety, perfectionism, and codependency so you can live from your beautiful heart. Welcome, my love; let's get started.

Hello, hello my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. I'm doing wonderfully. Loving the longer days. Loving the warming up. Loving my new offering which is the Somatic Studio. It is a 12 week dive into somatics or body based practices, those practices that have been most transformational, supportive. And truly don't mean to exaggerate when I say the most life changing practices I have ever encountered have been somatic ones, body based ones, ones that bring me back into presence in and with myself.

And so I'm so excited. I've been studying somatics and the nervous system and polyvagal and dance and movement for over 20 years and I teach it in great depth within Anchored, my six month program. And I wanted to offer something more accessible, something available to folks of all genders, something that folks who may not have six months to spend doing a deep dive can spend 12 weeks doing well, still a pretty deep dive but a half the time dive.

So if you've been interested in Anchored and it just hasn't been the right time and you're interested in the somatic or body based parts of my work, in the nervous system parts, in the coming back into your body parts. Then the Somatic Studio is the place for you. Head on over to victoriaalbina.com/somaticstudio to learn more and to enroll now. We are starting soon and I cannot wait to share it with you.

So my beauty, my love, my tender, tender, tender ravioli, I am an ocean baby. I was born in Mar del Plata, Argentina to a surf champion and a beach bunny. And I spent my babyhood on the beach until we moved to the

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great state of Rhode Island, ye olde ocean state. I spent some super formative time living in the Bay Area, San Francisco, may she rest in peace. I spent my happiest days by the shore staring at the ocean, watching the waves do their thing, reveling in how small I feel next to the ocean's glory in a most magical and mystical way.

I find the ocean healing, grounding, calming, and edifying, to use a spectacular and most humbling teacher indeed. And if you've recently gotten a full neti pot from the ocean, you know exactly what I'm talking about. So I'm inviting and evoking the energy with the ocean and the tides into our conversation today because of something I hear in coaching often enough that it needs addressing and it is this. There is a powerful story within most of us that says that we are succeeding when we are happy and failing when things are hard or challenging.

That if you are 'moving your life forward' via more schooling, getting married, having kids, getting a raise or a promotion or doing something that gives you a shiny gold star A+ on the outside. Well, then you'll get an unequivocal bold yay, from society a thumbs up, a celebration. You are doing laudable things so well done you. And if you are in a moment of rest, pause, contemplation, questioning, stillness, then wait, what are you doing with your life? I am so confused say parents, partners, friends, colleagues, people we know in the world.

They're confused that you're turning, wait, you're turning down the promotion so you can take care of yourself. I'm so confused. You're turning down being president of your professional organization. But fame comes with that, notoriety, success. You're slowing things down in your relationship even though you love your partner so you can make sure to build depth and not just breadth. Wait, you're doing what? We're taught to focus on, strive for and revel in the go, go, go, the doing as evidence of goodness and success.

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And this is particularly alluring both as humans raised in late stage capitalism, the patriarchy and white settler colonialism as systems focused on doing of way more important than being. And for us as emotional outsourcers meaning folks with co-dependent, perfectionist and people pleasing thought habits. Because most of us learn that we need to perform our lovability through our accomplishments, our accolades, through chores and selflessness, by doing way more for others than we do for ourselves, and more than we would never let them do for us.

So we learn that to allow our spirits and lives to be in process, like the natural ebbs and flows of the tides, is not a worthy goal. It's not an okay thing. It's also likely not a goal or a task or a way of being available to us. We are too anxiously moved towards more flow, always more go, always to expand more, to grow more, to heal more, to engage in more outward performance of our identity and to live that way always. And in so doing we learn and are taught to resist the ebbs and the contractions that invariably come after an expansion.

The slowing down, resting, integrating, nourishing that comes after learning lessons, that comes to invite us to ask questions such that we may learn. Because what good are cathartic experiences, big kapow experiences if we aren't integrating them, if we aren't stepping from flow and grow to quiet ebbs, to give ourselves time to integrate or truly understand and start to live from what we've learned. And I'm realizing I need to do a whole show on integration because there's probably some of you out there for whom that's not really, it's not a word that you use a lot.

I use it every day in my work and my communities but I will make sure to do a show on that. So pausing to say that and to invite you to make sure you're subscribed to follow the show wherever you listen to it so you don't miss out on because this is a really important topic for sure. So I want to invite you to pause and to look at your own life and the ways you may have learned to push against or fight away the ebbs, the slowdown, the shh

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energy in favor of more energetic flow, go, do. What are the stories around choosing stillness, pause, slowness?

What are the emotions that arise within you when you contemplate consciously, intentionally, thoughtfully slowing down, and particularly slowing down such that you might be with yourself? What comes up for you around that? What does that feel like in your body? I'm curious, I want to know. My clients bring this issue of ebb and flow to our coaching all the time, especially in Anchored. They ask me how they can change or shift an emotion that they don't like, don't want to have or find icky and uncomfortable [inaudible].

There is a story that there are certain emotions like anger, sadness, disappointment, frustration, resentment, the 'negative emotions'. PS if you're new around here, we don't call any emotions negative or positive. They're just information. So there's a story that these certain negative emotions are ones that one shouldn't have if one's doing one's proverbial, spiritual and emotional work and you know what I think about that. That's total BS, 100 bajillion percent BS. And here at *Feminist Wellness* we have a very strict hashtag, all vibes only policy because we love the ebb just as much as the flow.

We embraced it all, we embrace all of the emotions, the feelings, the felt sensations because it's all a vital part of the wholeness of you and of me. And when we reject one part of ourselves we unwittingly reject the whole of ourselves. And I know you're not out here trying to do that. Because the work I teach, what we are here talking about each week and practicing, it's all about stepping into our authenticity, that which lies beneath our socialization and conditioning and oppressive system, that lies beneath our training on how to be a good girl or a good boy from our family of origin.

Especially when we are raised with emotional outsourcing because these systems lead us to leave ourselves, to abandon ourselves, to negate

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ourselves as survival strategies. And when we turn away from the ebb and focus only on continuing to prove ourselves instead of honoring where we're at, we continue to prioritize what we have been taught instead of working to build safety within. Because continually proving yourself, believing that that is necessary, that's not a safe way for you or your nervous system to live.

And so building internal safety, it's a whole process for sure and it's one that I have found very much worth engaging in because at the end of the day the most lasting relationship you have is with you. So why not prioritize honoring you and the truth of where you're at in any given moment. Honoring our ebbs is important per se, just because it is, because it brings us into presence with ourselves and it matters.

Because it builds self-trust and offers us the opportunity to ask ourselves some really helpful questions that can support and guide us both while we sit with and in the ebb and to help us understand what the ebb is all about. What it has to teach us while reminding ourselves that a slowdown doesn't have to take us into a mindset awash in scarcity, anxiety, fear or worry. That never serves us my darling, doesn't help us make more aligned decisions or actually move us forward. It just leads to more stuck-ness and that's what fighting the ebb does, leads to more spinning and way more self-doubt.

I just realized, the more spinning, it's like an eddy pool, the tide comes in, it gets stuck, it spins, it spins, it spins and it goes out but it doesn't, yeah, it never comes fully in or fully out, it just spins. You know how I feel about stretching all the edges of a metaphor, so there you go. Fighting the tides creates way more self-doubt and belief in your own heart, in your own scarcity stories and fears.

So instead I'll invite you to remind yourself that like the tides of the ocean, our emotions, circumstances, relationships, experience of being a human

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on this mortal plane comes with some delicious, powerful, flow times and some equally important ebbs or slowdowns. That invites us to get really honest with ourselves, to ask some challenging questions and to bring in so much tenderness, so much sweetness and self-love.

And listen, in case you're like, "Who is she to be talking about the ebb? What does she know from ebb?" I have been downsized. I have found myself unemployed from one day to the next with a mortgage and massive student loans that were 100% on my shoulders because my partner at the time was in grad school and wasn't working. And so I get what a shock an all of the sudden ebb can be to the system and how easy it is to go to fear and worry and anxiety.

And I also know, I know you know that staying there doesn't honor you, doesn't give you the opportunity to learn, opportunity to grow. And it also doesn't get those resumés out the door, am I right? I know I'm right because physics, if you're stuck in the eddy pool, you're not sending out your resumé. So, oh, my darling, let's go over some of my favorite guiding questions to pose to yourself when you're tired, worn down, nearing burnout or overflow or when life pushes the pause button on you. When the ebb arrives at your doorstep.

So you know me and how much I love befriending an emotion. So I start by personifying and befriending the ebb as I want to do. And I might say something like this, "Beloved ebb, why have you come to visit and what can I learn from you? What would you have me do differently in my life? How would you like to see me grow? How can I support myself in getting all that I need from this ebb? What can I learn from this moment so that I can move through and be with myself, not just in the ebb, but in the next flow moment which I trust is coming in a more easeful way, a more self-loving way?"

Next is a question for yourself, what are my values? What do I value the most? What are the most essential and vital things in my life? Not, what do

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I spend most of my time on because we often are focused on the things and places and projects at task that don't move our lives and dreams forward the way we most want. Or we're spending most of our time in a project that is not the one of our choosing because capitalism. So the question is, what do I value most deeply?

And from there and from having written the list out, taking pen to paper, my darling, what are the things I do every day? How many hours of sleep am I getting? How much caffeine and alcohol am I drinking? How am I showing up in my relationships? What is my self-talk like? Am I doing somatics? How am I moving my body? Am I journaling? Am I meditating or not? What am I doing for work? What am I studying? Who am I surrounding myself with? What are the thoughts I let myself think on repeat? Just go through your average day and get curious.

This isn't about a self-interrogation and beating yourself up for the way you do or don't drink enough water. Come on. It's about an investigation, a curiosity, a curious compassionate look at how you're living. So you can ask the question, are these things, are these choices aligned for me in a real way? Are they moving my life forward the way I want or not? For the yeses, get concrete on how you will do more of that and for the no's, get concrete on how you will shift those things.

And then listen to episode 78, Minimum Baseline Thinking and consider starting to change your habits by building self-trust first and then working to change your habits from there, slow and steady, kitten steps, right my love.

Our next remedy starts with remembering the old saying, 'what you resist persists'. So when you feel that ebb, slow down. And I'll remind you of the power of allowing yourself to have your feelings. Whenever I'm in a contraction, in an ebb and I'm trying to use my brain, my prefrontal cortex to do meaning making as a way to get out of it. When I'm pushing through it

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from my brain instead of coming into my body, into my heart to support myself, I'll remind myself of this really vital phrase, I will allow this.

As a way to loosen my brain's grip on trying to control and manage the moment, to loosen any overidentification I may have with a feeling so I can get some distance. I will allow this, loosens the fascia of the moment and creates more spaciousness within me. And from there I can allow the body's sensation of whatever emotion I'm having, being annoyed, being irritated, being angry, being sad, disappointed, instead of pushing against it, making meaning about it, assigning more story to it, beating myself or another person up about it,

I recognize that the emotion, the feeling is just what it is. And by allowing it and actively saying that, "I allow this ebb, I allow this pause, I allow this slowdown, I allow this irritation." I can move towards acceptance and then it starts to become a thing that just flows through me as I stay present with myself. And dissipates the rough edge of an emotion. Listen, trusting that the emotion will flow through, that you will be safe and okay on the other side. That is a huge step. It's work.

For me it's been years of mindfulness and meditation and connection with self and Pachamama or Earth Mother and prayer and surrender and a lot. So I don't recommend you jump to there, instead, allowing is the kitten step, allowing is the kitten step.

Finally, I'll invite you to remind yourself that being in a slowdown ebb part of life, part of your career, dating, marriage, parenting, growth, healing, it's not a problem. It's a natural, normal, totally expectable part of being a human mammal with a mind, body and spirit. And the more you can truly embrace it and not tell the story that something's gone wrong, that there is a problem, the more you can resource your nervous system, episode 62, 135, 174. And can decide using your brilliant prefrontal cortex that being in an ebb, not a problem, that it won't feel so much like one.

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Then you can make the most of this totally natural, normal, expectable tide of life instead of beating yourself up, criticizing yourself, questioning yourself or otherwise living outside of your integrity, your values, outside of self-love and self-acceptance. And the more we can embrace the energetic of ebb, the more peace and learning we can find there, the more stillness and softness and tenderness we can bring in. The more we can learn and can practice simply being, bringing presence and loving up on the version of us that doesn't perform our lovability instead.

And we can just honor the natural, normal ebbs and flows of this human life and can just let ourselves be. Thank you so much for listening, my love. I hope this episode has been supportive. If you're loving the show and you're ready, you're ready to work with me, you're ready to get my support, my care, my love, my guidance, you have two beautiful ways to do it. Check out the Somatic Studio at victoriaalbina.com/somaticstudio. It's my 12-week offering where we dive into all things somatics. And it includes lots of education, nervous system, nerdity. You know I love a nerdy good time.

And of course, actual bodily practice of the new tools and skills that you will be learning, because it's really cool to talk about somatics, but practicing it, bringing it into your own body, that's the jam. And if you're wanting a longer experience, to be in a different kind of container, a six-month container that's when I would turn to Anchored. And you can learn more at victoriaalbina.com/anchored. And it's my favorite place on Earth. I have been leading Anchored for many years now and I just love it.

And both offerings are beautiful. They're just different than. So the Somatic Studio is really focused on somatics. Anchored dives more into emotional outsourcing, codependency, perfectionism and people-pleasing. Yeah, you can learn more about them on my website. And I will be doing some Q&A sessions about both coming up soon. So make sure you're on my mailing list. And if you're not, drop a little line to podcast@victoriaalbina.com. And my amazing team will get you all set up.

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Alright my beauties, 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 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 to grab your seat now. See you there; it's gonna be a good one!