

Ep #254: Reframing New Year's Resolutions for More Self-Love, Connection, and Healing in 2024



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.

Oh, my goodness, I cannot believe that this is our last episode together in 2023. It's been a year, y'all. Wow, I feel like I blinked and it's New Year's again. Yeah, this year has had a lot of ups, a lot of downs. It's been a complex year for humanity and the planet.

I just want to send you all a lot of love, and share an episode with you all about the ritual of resolutions. A lot of us engage in the resolution process without really thinking about it. We just do it, because that's what people do.

As always, my goal is to move us ever towards more mindfulness and more intentionality. And so, that's what this week's invitation is. It's an invitation towards being more thoughtful. Just asking yourself, what's up, what you're doing, and if it's something you want to continue to do.

So, I hope you enjoy this episode. If you have not subscribed to the show, if you've not given it a rating and a review, that would be just such a lovely little New Year's present, not just for me, but for the world. Because this is a free program that I put so much effort and research and thinking and everything into.

And when you subscribe, rate and review, and share it on your social media, tagging me, it really helps get this free resource into more ears. That's why I do it each and every week, to be of service. So, thank you, thank you. I'm sending you lots of love. Have a safe and happy New Year. And, I'll see you in 2024.

Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. If you're celebrating something this time of year, I hope your holidays were and continue to be delightful. If you spent time with family, I hope you were able to use some of the tools we talked about here at Feminist Wellness, to set

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and hold your boundaries, to communicate lovingly, to respect your body, to stay present. And above all, to honor yourself while holding nonjudgmental, loving space for the people in your life.

One of the things I've recently celebrated, and I'm bringing this up because you can probably hear it in my voice, is that Argentina, my homeland, we won the World Cup. Now, I have complicated feelings about the World Cup, as you might imagine given my politics. At the end of the day, it's just so fun to root for the home team. We haven't won since 1986, and it was a pretty big deal.

I did something, that's like super not me; I went to Times Square. Midtown, New York City is just not my vibe, but I went because it's where a whole hot mess of Argentines were gathering. So, I took my date, and we went. It was so much fun. It was just such a delight to scream along to all these chants that I've been hearing since I was a little, little girl.

To cheer on Lionel Messi and the whole team. You can hear it in my voice, tengo la voz tomada, as we say; my voice is strained. It sounds so much better than it did right after the game. But here we are, sounding a little froggy, but very, very happy for that frogginess, because it means that I had an amazing time in community; feeling connection with a whole mass of humanity. It was such a delight.

My beauty, the New Year is upon us. There are so many beautiful rituals and celebrations that people have to help them mark the start of what many, though not all humans, would call the New Year. In my homeland, Argentina, as in other parts of Latin America, it's customary to wear a brand-new pair of pink undies for the New Year.

Okay, Latinas listening, if you know why pink undies, please let me know. Drop me a DM, a little email, podcast@VictoriaAlbina.com. I have not yet been able to get an explanation for this, but I do it every single year. And then, we stand up on a stool or a chair or whatever, and right as the clock strikes 12 you step down into the new year, on your right foot. I love that.

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It's all those little things of ritual and tradition that serve as this beautiful way to mark time, to honor transitions. Many of us will gather with friends or family. We'll stay up late. We'll count down, and then, the new year starts.

And so today, I want to take a look at another ritual that so many of us will either engage in or feel pressured to engage in, and that is the ritual of the New Year's resolution. If you've been listening for a while, I'm sure you won't be surprised by my general ambivalence towards New Year's resolution.

So many people really love using the concept of a clean slate at the new year to start fresh and recommit to themselves, while so many others find that resolutions are just another way to unwittingly beat ourselves up. To shame and blame, and give into the pressures of this patriarchal, consumerist society.

Today, my sweet love, I want to discuss this tradition and some alternatives. We'll tease it apart to help us better assess what parts of New Year's resolutions simply do not serve us, so that we can let those go. And also, identify what parts we want to rename and reframe, so they can be a part of our journey to more and more connection, self-love, and healing.

In the United States, the most common resolutions are consistently about exercise, losing weight and eating "healthier" foods. Now, on the surface, those are not terrible things to want to do. Our human bodies have evolved to move, and so many of us are not getting the movement our bodies crave because, desk jobs.

Meanwhile, so many of us really rely on the mood and mental health boosts that come from exercise. I mean, I know I do, for sure. Likely, because genetically I'm half rabbit, half Labrador Retriever, and also half cartoon character; that's true, check my genetics. I love a good sweat session; I'm not going to lie. It really helps me and my magical ADHD brain to have the focus and presence I so value.

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A lot of us could find it supportive and loving to make shifts towards intentionality and choicefulness around things like meditation, journaling, connecting inward, doing breath work. And with things like, what we eat. Perhaps, one might want to ditch the processed stuff and eat more whole, nutritious foods.

Perhaps, one might come from an orthorexic, or really highly focused on the “safety,” and “clean” food. I don't believe in food being clean or dirty; that's a different conversation. But maybe, we come from a real focus on that, and we want to lighten up and let ourselves enjoy our food more.

A lot of us could find it supportive and loving to make shifts towards intentionality and choicefulness around things like when we get up in the morning; our evening routine, blue light exposure, sunlight exposure, wearing sunscreen, journaling, meditating.

Many of us, this time of year, contemplative of what we eat. Perhaps we want to ditch the processed stuff and eat more whole, nutritious foods. And so, we start to make a resolution about, “I won't eat this, and I will eat that.” We make these resolutions that sound pretty good on the surface around food, movement.

If we go deeper, below the surface, these resolutions and the thoughts, feelings, and nervous states behind them, are often pernicious and have a disproportionately negative effect on our overall wellness. Especially, for those of us who identify as women.

Writ large, we have been told by society that our bodies are everyone else's business. Both, in that others get to comment on our bodies and have opinions on our bodies that matter more than our own. And in that companies make millions, probably billions, convincing us that our bodies are flawed; too big here, too small there, too loose in the skin in that certain kind of place, in need of nipping and tucking, and starving.

Or, whatever else we have been taught will make us more attractive to others, in particular, to the male gaze. When this time of year rolls around,

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and people set a resolution to go to the gym, to eat more vegetables, to lose 10 pounds, more often than not, it doesn't happen.

New gym membership numbers spike in January, and then fall, almost immediately after. Those 10 pounds that came off in the first few weeks are very likely to come back. Then, the commitment to better nutrition. Well, you get the idea.

What's worth exploring here is, why? Why is it that New Year's resolutions don't stick? I would offer the idea that, by and large, these resolutions don't become part of your daily ritual, don't become a part of your life, because they're not grounded in love.

I'll say it again, resolutions will not come to full fruition in a lasting and meaningful way unless they are grounded in powerful and present self-love. That is, historically, resolutions can have a tendency to be an exercise in beating ourselves up, because they're coming from our emotional outsourcing habits.

Which is the term we use here on *Feminist Wellness*, to describe the mindset of codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thinking. Which is, chronically and habitually sourcing our sense of self-worth and value from everyone and everything outside of ourselves. Which presents as codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing habits.

From those humble beginnings, our New Year's resolutions end up being taken as an opportunity to say, "This is the year I'm going to fix all the things that are so desperately wrong about me." From this deep belief that there is, in fact, something wrong with you. As opposed to, "I'm going to grow what's working. I'm going to do these things and improve my wellness because I want to, and I'm worth it."

From an energy of self-love, in which your choices are very much truly about you loving up on you, for you. They are not coming from that old emotional outsourcing habit that leads us to say that we're doing it for us, but really, the underlying story is, "I want to lose weight, so that these other

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people, my parents, my partners, folks at work, strangers, whatever, will think better about me.”

The old cassette tape sounds like, “I need to be more fit, so I'm more successful in dating. So, my partner will think I'm sexier. So, people won't think I'm lazy.”

Meanwhile, the choice from self-love sounds like, “I'm going to work on my fitness because I want to be healthier, and be able to kick butt, and dance to Lizzo and also Paula Abdul, into my 90's. I just started playing in a local sports league's thing, and I want to be better at it. And so, I want to increase my strength and my lung capacity, because being in the sports ball community brings me joy, and happiness, and connection.”

Those are things that feel more authentic and real as drivers towards change. Those are the resolutions that are born from the wellspring of true self-love within you. Those are the reasons why, that keep us going when the workout is challenging, and keeps us motivated for the long-haul because they're connected to our values.

Here in this example, lifelong wellness versus being based in an emotional outsourcing script about what makes one a lovable, desirable, good, and worthy person. Which sadly, is coded as being a person in a thin some places and thicker others kind of human. Who fits a societal norm built by systems, namely the patriarchy, that don't honor our humanity, and our perfect and super variable human bodies.

The other insidious reason we set New Year's resolutions is because we believe that taking action can create our emotions. If you think back to Episodes 35, 36 and 37, where I first introduced the think-feel-act cycle, you'll remember, that it's your thoughts, in conjunction with your nervous system state, that creates your emotions; not the actions you take.

So, I invite you to ask yourself; are you setting resolutions in an attempt to feel something, or not feel something? In so doing, are you coming out of presence with yourself by focusing on how you think you will feel about

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yourself and your life, at some point in the future, if you do this thing? Instead of remembering that you, my perfect darling, tender ravioli, you have the power and capacity to regulate your nervous system?

And that you can use your brilliant prefrontal cortex, the executive function part of your mind, to create your own emotions. To feel, whatever it is you want to feel, right now. Because you do. You can. You can do that. I believe in you. Also, because, science.

Let's look at an example. In case you're like, "Wait, girl, what?" So, if you are believing that you'll only be lovable if you; lose or gain the weight, eat a specific kind of way, or don't eat a specific thing like gluten or cake, if you don't drink the booze, if you find the perfect partner, have the baby, get the job, the degree, the promotion, buy the house.

Because when we do that, when we decide, we'll be happy, content, lovable, at peace and ease, when we take actions or don't take actions, when something changes, when the future comes, we are not living in our agency and choicefulness, to generate those emotions now, from a resource and grounded regulated nervous system.

When you're saying, "I don't like myself and don't feel good about me. But when I lose those last 10 pounds, then I'll feel happy. And, I'll like myself." Well then, my love, you're forgetting that you truly can choose to love yourself right now. Exactly as you are; the weight, and size, and muscle mass, and exercisingness, and job title havingness; that is true now.

To believe otherwise, is simply delaying your own joy, and it's truly not necessary. You can make the decision to love yourself now. And can do the actions you want to from that love, and not from the story that you're not perfect as you are right now. Because the truth is, that you are.

And your socialization, and conditioning, and emotional outsourcing habits have convinced you you're not; but it's not true. So, you can hit pause and remind yourself to come back into the here and now. To quote ye ole Jon

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Kabat Zinn, "Wherever you go, there you are." We take our minds and our habitual thoughts with us, no matter what actions we change in our lives.

So, if you start to exercise because you hate yourself, you're going to hate yourself the same amount when you can deadlift a horse in each hand. If you start grad school because you think getting doctoral training will finally win you your father's love and approval. And then, then you can finally love and approve of yourself. Then, my darling, you are cruisin' for a proverbial bruisin'.

Because there's no amount of degrees in this world that can make you feel lovable, if you haven't already decided that you're lovable. That decision needs to come first, before you enroll. Or, you're likely to wake up seven years down the doctoral road, sweating in the midday sun, in May, somewhere outside an ivy-covered building wondering, why you don't feel lovable.

You did the thing, and that's great. But the feelings don't come from the thing. The feelings come from your mind. So, my beauty, do the thing. But don't expect the doing to make you have the feeling. That's not how brains and bodies work, my perfect little sunflowers.

The path is this: Learn to map your own nervous system. Learn to regulate your nervous system. Change your thoughts using the thought work protocol in a real way, that resonates in your body, to create the feeling you desire. And then, from there, from already feeling the feeling, then take aligned action, guided by your intuition; which we've been discussing these last few weeks.

That process, not the setting and keeping of a resolution, is what will create the feeling you most desire. Again, with that being said, do the thing, do it. Just do it with intention, presence, and awareness. So, if the story in your heart is, "After I drop my kids off at school, I'm going to walk around the block three times before I go home. Because I know that if I get that fresh air, early morning sun exposure, and exercise, I will feel better all day." Do it from that.

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Not from, "There's something wrong with me now," but rather from, "I love myself, so I'm going to move my keister in a way that honors me and my needs." And as you're exploring the change you might want to make; remember, you don't have to make any change just because the calendar turned over.

Remember, that so many resolutions fail because we don't actually trust ourselves to do the thing. We make a massive proclamation, but haven't built the internal trust that we're actually going to come through. So, when we don't do the thing, we're like, "Typical me, failing again." Pause, breathe, and consider focusing this New Year's on building self-trust.

Of course, I've got an excellent tool for that. Which is, the minimum daily baseline, which we talked about in Episode 78. Tldr, it's about making a small promise to yourself, with the goal being less about doing the thing and so much more about keeping the promise to yourself because you matter.

So, it's all about building self-trust, and stepping out of the self-abandonment cycle; Episodes 163 and 164; by focusing on you. And what you commit to doing, could not matter any less. Because it's not about the action, it's about the intention behind the action.

I recommend you tie this new intention to something you already do anyway. Instead of putting one more thing on your, likely overloaded, to-do list. Because it's about the creation of internal trust, after a lifetime of not trusting ourselves because of our emotional outsourcing habits.

So, your minimum daily baseline could be, "Today, I am going to drink one glass of water from a place of love." And so, you drink. But not just because, you know, you're drinking water, you're thirsty, but with the intention now of saying, "I'm doing the thing I promised myself I would do."

In so doing, you're reminding yourself, "I do, in fact, follow through on things and take care of me. I am trustworthy and capable. Not just for others, but for me." Isn't that lovely? It needn't be about introducing

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something new. It could be, if you want to. It's about focusing on what you're already doing that's good for you. With a new driving why, a new intention.

To that, I'll bring in another one of our absolute favorite things in the Anchored community, which is, A-B-C; Always Be Celebrating. We have a whole channel in our Anchored Slack that's all about bragging on ourselves, because it matters. Episode 96 talks more about the importance of celebration.

In homes with emotional outsourcing as the norm, celebrating ourselves and being celebrated for doing the things that actually matter to us, is usually not exactly the norm. So, in reclaiming our connection with ourselves, it's vital, absolutely vital, to celebrate ourselves. I share this ABC process from Anchored on my Instagram each week, because it's so important.

I pose the question to you; what are you celebrating? I want to see you all bragging all over yourselves over @VictoriaAlbinaWellness on the 'Gram; you know I give good 'Gram. And maybe, just maybe, focusing on celebrating yourself at least once a day, and doing it with both vim and vigor, could be a more loving New Year's resolution than anything external.

Because we cherish what we celebrate. And my darling, what could be more important than you, cherishing you? I want to invite you from a place of love to ask yourself; if you would actually like to use the new year to make some self-loving, love-based change? To mark this time and to make a commitment to something from presence and care?

If you do, I'll remind you to be gentle, and compassionate, and to take your time, to check in with yourself, like a lot. If getting more exercise comes up for you, from a place of self-love and care, ask yourself: What is a gentle way to start? What can you commit to for a short period of time, so that you can lean into self-trust?

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So, that you can work on building not just your muscular and cardiovascular strength, but your emotional and mindset strength? So, that you can take that walk around the block, while reminding yourself, "I am perfect, just how I am, right now. And I am doing this because I love and care about myself. I deserve to feel good. And look at me, making it happen."

Maybe for you, New Year's doesn't really matter or it's not actually the New Year in your tradition. Or, it may just be too layered with old stress and yuck to even want to start to reframe it this year. And, that's fine. Maybe, the Spring Equinox is a time to check in and see if there are new things you want to try. In order to help your already perfect and wonderful self, feel even more awesome.

Because, my beauty, it's about adding more love, connection, wholeness, and wellbeing. Not about taking away or expecting your actions to make you feel marvelous; because you already are. I hope that this has been helpful for you.

Alright, my beauty, 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 are loved. And, when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my beauty. I'll talk to you next week. Ciao.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *Feminist Wellness*. If you want to learn more all about somatics, what the heck that word means, and why it matters for your life, head on over to VictoriaAlbina.com/somaticswebinar for a free webinar all about it. Have a beautiful day my darling and I'll see you next week. Ciao.