

Ep #258: Needing to Be Needed



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.

Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. As this last calendar year was closing out, I emailed those of you on my email list. If you're not on my email list, I'd highly recommend it, I share some really good stuff. You can head over to VictoriaAlbina.com. At the top of the page there's a teal bar, you can click there, and you can put your name and email in.

Then you get all of my free meditations, orienting exercises, and all sorts of goodies. And, that puts you on my email list, which is great. I love efficiency. You get presents and emails, ba-da-bing, followed by ba-da-boom.

So, as last year was closing out, I emailed those of you on my email list asking for you to tell me what you want to hear on the podcast. What would be most wildly supportive of your most beautiful life, as you work to step away from and rewire emotional outsourcing, towards our favorite way of relating interdependently?

When an amazing human, a *Feminist Wellness* listener with the initials DC, wrote in asking, "How do I let go of that need to feel needed? How do I define the new me without being needed?" I was just thrilled at the opportunity to get to speak with you's all about this topic. A topic that I'm sure you'll be shocked to hear I've wrestled with myself.

So, today we will be talking about this 'I need to feel needed' story. And of course, the obligation and resentment that goes along with it. We will also be decolonizing the conversation by talking about caring collectivist societies. Obviously, I'm not decolonizing the entire conversation, but I'm bringing that lens to a part of this show.

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For folks who are new, who are like, “Wait, emotional outsourcing what?” It's the term I created to describe our codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thought habits. So, this is stepping away from codependency, or ‘I'm a people pleaser’ as a label. We're talking about the behaviors and actions, instead of putting some label on ourselves that's so limiting.

Let's start where we do here, with understanding the root of the need. Remembering that compassion and care are key to change. And, we don't do dumb things, right? We do things that we think and believe will get us what we want. We often just have it a little twisted, right?

So, on that note, to be super real, feeling needed is amazing. It's amazing. I mean people look at you like you're this glorious goddess that knows such smart stuffs, and can do things and can make their lives better. It is a massive ego boost and temporarily feels so good. When everyone needs you, they praise and thank and compliment you. I mean, sometimes, right?

Regardless, being needed temporarily fill that hole in our hearts, that emotional outsourcing we use. That space where our lost selfhood lives. And yeah, it's really challenging to stop because being the helper can become our identity.

Jk, if you're new here, I'm a nurse practitioner and a life coach. Being a helping kind of gal, doing all that selfless healing work, and needing to be needed was definitely an identity. I just jumped right in to feet first from childhood. Yep, right into it. What are you going to do?

You grow, you learn, you shift, you change, you rewire your brain, you do somatics, you change your life. That's what you do, actually. You create an identity outside of being a helper. But hold on, Maria Victoria Albina, you are getting ahead of yourself, as usual. Reel it in, Captain ADHD. Here we go.

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The desire to feel needed, we're getting back on track, often stems from a complex interplay of each of our individual past experiences, our emotional patterns, our ancestral training, and of course, societal conditioning.

For many, it's rooted in childhood dynamics where love and attention were conditional or inconsistent; as is, generally speaking, the case in emotional outsourcing, and for folks with emotionally unavailable or immature parents. Which, again, overlaps greatly with emotional outsourcing. Episode 167 for more on that.

This early environment can lead to us associating our worth as humans, as mammals, with being useful or indispensable to others. As adults, this manifests as a persistent pursuit of approval and acceptance, frequently at the expense of our own needs and boundaries. And for many of us, our own needs and boundaries become so foreign to us that we don't even know what they are when asked.

I see this. I run a six-month program called Anchored, where we work to overcome emotional outsourcing. I see this in that first month of Anchored all the time. We talk about boundaries and limits, and folks look at me blankly. They don't even know where to start. Because for so many of us, we've never felt safe enough to have boundaries, wants and needs, and to trust that it's okay to voice them.

So, don't worry, we have a whole process in Anchored to help folks get to a place where somatically they feel safer and can start to set boundaries. But yeah, we get really estranged from that part of ourselves that, well, wants and needs to say no, instead of just feeling need.

This need to feel and be needed can be understood as a survival skill. A way to feel secure and valued in a world that often feels unpredictable and indifferent. It's a beautiful thing for a kid brain to come up with ways to protect you that were actually effective in some respects. And I say that

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while, of course, recognizing that to continue to feed this need to be needed can lead to a really painful cycle of dependency and self-neglect.

I've seen it time and again, my sweetkins. The drive to be needed is often a cry for validation. And I like it when you get validation, by the way. I'm not saying that's a bad thing. It's a quest for a sense of belonging that might have been, generally has been, elusive since childhood. And like most ghosts of childhood pasts, this belief that you need to be needed to be safe in the world, can be like a shadow that follows you, quietly dictating your choices and actions; like our thoughts and beliefs are wont to do.

It's a response shaped by a world that often values people more for what they do than who they are. Thank you, capitalism. You know what? That really sucks. Lo siento. I have compassion for all of us, because that sucks. And speaking to the side of the patriarchy that I know from living in it, humans that are socialized as women are often taught that our worth is measured in housework, in laundry, groceries, child care, elder care, food prep, etc. etc. etc.

We are judged heavily for any failures noted in any of those departments. Where humans socialized as male and male-identified folks are not held to the same exacting standards around the hearth and home. This is women's invisible labor. You know I am grabbing a pen, and putting that topic on the list of shows to share with you, because it's a whole thing that hurts us all; humans of all of the many genders, and no gender.

Regardless of where you plunk your need to be needed down; at home, at work, somewhere else; it can really eff with your head. Let's talk about the cost of being needed. While feeling or being needed might temporarily satisfy a longing for connection or validation, like all buffers do... you heard it here first, folks... that story 'I need to be needed' is very much a buffer, right? So, all buffers scratch the proverbial itch.

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The problem is it often leads to an imbalanced relationship dynamic, which can result in chronic self-neglect, burnout, and a loss of identity beyond the role of caregiver or supporter. Furthermore, this dependency on feeling needed for your own self-worth, thereby giving it away to others, hinders the development of a robust, independent sense of self, and definitely stands between us and true interdependence; which is based on mutuality and reciprocity; the opposite of being needed in this ouchy way.

Being constantly on call for others' emotional or practical needs can lead to an overwhelming sense of responsibility, and can lead us to make choices *not* from our actual wants and desires, but from that overdeveloped sense of obligation. Often accompanied with a story like, "Well, that's just what the women in this family do. Of course, I have to do this for them, or it just won't get done."

Which not only means you're not getting what you want; because remember, physics, right? You can only be doing really the one thing at the one time. So, if you're doing this something for someone else, what's happening to your wants, your dreams, your desires? What's happening?

So, not only are you not getting what you want, sometimes we end up accidentally infantilizing other people who really could do those things for themselves and maybe just don't want to. And if we don't step in and be the savior, this martyr and the saint, and save them from their own inactivity, their own nervous system, their own habits, they could maybe learn really great lessons about consequences if they don't do the thing.

Obviously, caveat, I'm not talking about danger. If the toddler's running into the street, grab the cub, right? But I'm talking about when we do a kid's homework for them, or a college-aged kid's laundry every week. I mean, one thing if it's the holidays, right? That's cute. That's kind of fun. But every week? I mean, sure it's loving to help. But when we chronically do things for others that they are capable of doing...

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Again, there's a caveat here for incapacitación, in Spanish. If someone has a difference in ability, for an elder, for a wheelchair user, that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about doing things for others that they totally could do.

What we don't realize we're doing is we teach them that we don't believe and we don't trust them. We don't think they're competent and capable, and we don't teach them to care for themselves, take responsibility, learn how to adult. Listen, I'm obviously not saying not to do loving things for your people. I make my partner's lunch every morning, and it brings me so much joy. And I do it from interdependence, not from needing her to need me.

I'm inviting you, with a gentleness I always offer, to pause and to get curious about your reasons why. So, I pack her lunch, because I work from home, I don't have to commute, right? I don't really have to get dressed. And so, I have extra time in the morning. She generally makes dinner and cleans up after dinner. I love making her lunch. I make mine at the same time. It brings me joy. That's my reason why.

So, ask yourself. Just get clear. I mean, you may come to the same conclusion, and that's dope. Why are you doing that thing? Do you actually want to, like for realsies, real, real, real? If offered, I don't know, to do one of your favorite hobbies, to go to some kind of class that you love, or go out for a cup of tea with your girlfriends? Whatever it is, do you actually want to be doing that thing?

Does that person actually want you to be doing that thing? Could they do it themselves? Could you get support somewhere else? Like hiring someone, bartering, leaning on your community, or whatever is accessible and available for you?

Get curious. Because the emotional toll of this dynamic can be significant, and it can lead to feelings of emptiness, resentment, frustration, annoyance with the people you love. Especially when our efforts and sacrifices go

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unrecognized or unappreciated, as our efforts become expected rather than recognized, which can lead to a deep-seated sense of dissatisfaction.

Is there actually any amount of recognition that can make up for not actually living your own life for you? Yeah, right? This whole thing can create a cycle of negativity where the more one does for others, the less one feels valued, leading to an even greater need to be needed.

The irony is stark. In trying to be indispensable to others you risk becoming a stranger to yourself. There are echoes here of the self-abandonment cycle; Episodes 163 and 164. Where we stuff all those feelings down, down, down. Which tracks, because this belief that you're only safe when you're needed is a buffer, right? Only to have them explode either in a fit of rage or annoyance and snippiness, and snapping at others in passive aggressive comments about 'all the work I do, that no one appreciates.'

Or, oh, I heard this so much growing up, "I've suffered so much for you children. Oof, that's a rough one. Or in big 'ole intense guilt trips, because someone else isn't living their life to serve others the way you've decided you need to. Which means, they should want the same thing for their life.

At the end of the day, no matter how you slice it, it's not a cute picture and it doesn't tend to work out well for anyone. The rub here is this, we think we're being of service. We think we're being purely supportive, purely loving, but when we are taking action from the story that we need the applause, we need the validation, we need the appreciation, or 'I'm pissed off that I did this,' we're not really acting from true love. Right?

We're acting from a secondary desire. We're being controlling and manipulative, right? We're saying, "I'm only going to do this for you so that you will praise me as a person. I expect you to take care of me emotionally because I made your bed," and you're six. It's a setup. It's not fair. It's not kind. It's not actually loving.

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I know it feels that way. I know you didn't mean to do it. I know you had no idea. It's okay. It's okay. It's okay. But it's also not okay. You know what I mean? Be gentle, be compassionate, be loving. You're doing your best, and we need to cut it out, right?

Without realizing it, we can make our partners, patients, children, parents, roommates, friends, into babies. We believe we need to cuddle and take a parental role with. That, just let me say it again, does not feel good to anyone after a little minute. I'll say that this is particularly unbecoming and unsexy when we do this with partners.

I see this constantly, and there's a lot of complexity there with the patriarchy, weaponized incompetence, and women often being put into the mommy role. It's complex. How many times can I say "complex" in one show? It's not a great look, right? It doesn't feel good for anyone. I'll also say that the other places we can fall into this really easily is with work.

So, remember Lily? We talked about her a few weeks back, it was in the values episode #255. She grew up in a household where a woman's job was 120% to be the mom and the caretaker, and not to work outside the home. Every mother is a working mother, by the way. I'm just clarifying the cultural milieu Lily came up in.

While her brother went off to engineering school, her sister dedicated herself to being needed by her family, and made that her identity. Sweet Lily, having only the one model of how life is supposed to be, did the same thing but with work. When it came time to switch jobs or careers or make a change to take care of herself, like changing her hours, the guilt and shame were all but suffocating.

Because her sense of self was so rolled up into being needed at work, having the answers, being the go-to gal, all in all, what is needed. All in all, what need to be needed is, is a way to attempt to find safety for our nervous systems, that is not just societally approved of, it's generally

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lauded. Come on, we get points for being the selfless person, especially the woman, who gives him gives and does so much for others.

It can be a real cluster cuss to see through all of that, much less to get away from. So, that's the womp-womp, for sure. Before we move into the remedies, we need to decolonize this just a titch. It's giving very white settler colonialist thinking, to just say, "You know what? Forget about your family, eff 'em. Live your life in Paris, girl. Go get it and don't turn back."

That's not always what's culturally appropriate for folks. Nor might it be how folks actually want to live. They might just want a little more space to be themselves and do them, while also showing up for their gente, their people.

In collectivist cultures, taking care of elders, intergenerational living, is a deeply ingrained cultural value. Family and community often take precedence over the individual. The responsibility of caring for elders is seen not just as a duty but as an integral part of one's identity and role within the family. Which is a beautiful thing and isn't necessarily a problem if one is thoughtful and intentional.

Though, of course, it can create a dynamic where the line between being needed and overextending oneself becomes blurred. Thus the saying, "Let's be less thoughtful and intentional," right? The key is to find a balance between honoring the tradition of caring for elders, and upholding cultural values that matter to you. That's super important.

So, regardless... or if you're from Boston, irregardless... of when and where and how you grew up, who you're from, whoever your people are, and what they believe, if caring for your elders isn't your value, then case closed, right? Fast forward. This part, no importa, it doesn't matter.

Finding a balance between honoring tradition, upholding cultural values that matter to you, while also recognizing and attending to your own needs

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and boundaries. This might involve open communication within the family about the distribution of caregiving responsibilities, seeking external support when needed, bringing professionals in to tell you if the level of care you're giving is really needed, or maybe you could pull back.

When we really have this 'I need to be needed' story, sometimes we can do more than an elder needs. We could do more than our kids need. Like when I was talking about doing the kid's homework, we can do too much, burning ourselves out in ways that aren't actually even helpful. And of course, ensuring that self-care is part of the caregiving equation, that it's calculated in. It's put on a schedule. It's on the calendar. It's a fact of this setup.

There is a huge difference between living from obligation, from the story that you're supposed to, and should, do big old caretaking work for someone from that 'need to be needed' story. Which means you're also selfishly doing it for you, because it fills that gap in your self-worth. It makes you feel good because you're living out that selfless martyr story, or what have you.

There's a big difference between all of that, and living out your cultural values. And doing the things that make you need it because of deep-seated values of intergenerational care. Sit with that for a second if you need to. It's a bit of a trip when you have codependent thinking, because we believe that we're being selfless givers, but we're not.

We're unwittingly controlling, manipulating, doing for others, to feel or not feel something. We're using our selflessness story as a cloak against taking responsibility for ourselves, and how we speak to others, how we act, and how we do. It's a way to keep up a narrative about who we are, to be seen in what we believe is a positive light by the people around us. It is sneaky, for sure.

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This brings me to a really valuable point, not going it alone. In collectivist societies the community often plays a significant role in support and care. It's the village part of 'it takes a village.' Because it sure does. In the U.S. so many of us are going this alone. There's no support for new moms. There's no support for elder care. We are struggling because we are alone.

And if you're struggling with this balance, I want to encourage you to consider leaning on community resources, such as local groups or services geared toward elder care, infant care, whatever you're working with. I will say, honestly, they're few and far between in the U.S.

Where I live, it has one prenatal yoga, and literally no Parent-Infant classes of any kind. So, if that's where you live, the internet may be your best option. It's different than connecting with people IRL, but I'll tell you from running Anchored all these years, we can make really powerful connections by connecting with people on Zoom.

I actually just got a picture DM'ed to me the other day from three women who met in Anchored two, three years ago. Who are hanging out in real life, and they live all across the U.S. But they met in Anchored, they connected over Zoom, and now they're hanging out in real life. Which is pretty amazing. So, not here to knock the Internet, it can be a beautiful way to connect with others.

I'll also say don't forget about your religious or spiritual community, if that's part of your life. Folks want to help. Caring for our family isn't something best kept to the family. The more varied support we can get for them and us, the better it is for everyone in the short and long term.

A communal approach can often alleviate some of the pressures of caregiving from an individual, allowing for a more balanced approach, and letting you take a friggin' day off here and there. Which is ample time to begin to step out of this 'I need to be needed' story.

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What's often called for, is taking some time to consider, reconsider, and potentially redefine, caregiving and the role of caregiver in a way that aligns with both cultural values and personal boundaries. Being mindful that the latter may be a super new concept to folks in your home and world, and compassion, gentleness, for them, too, goes a long way.

Open dialogue within the family and community about the challenges and expectations of caregiving is essential if your goal is a more equitable distribution of responsibilities, and a greater understanding of each caregiver's capacity and need.

In all contexts, it's super important to prepare ourselves for the feeling of guilt, obligation, and duty that are often intertwined with love and respect for elders, family, and taking care of others. Navigating these emotions requires self-compassion. Sometimes, the support of a professional, a coach, a counselor, a therapist, who understands the cultural context.

As a Latina and a Sudamericana, eldest born daughter of immigrants, I get it. I get that push to take care of your parents, to almost baby them in a way. For years, every time I saw them, I would bring tons of presents and treats, and I did so much for them. I'd order my mom's supplements every month for her. I grew up with my mom always talking about how I would care for them when they grew old. It was the air we breathed, that story.

And my tía [inaudible], who's an actual saint, took care of her dad, my abuelo Toto, for years and years and years, in-home, putting her own life aside. Same as my tías on the other side did, because that's what Latinas do. It's often not a question, it's what is for so many of us.

There's a lot of work to be done to support us in finding that internal balance, so we can take care of the people we love in a way that feels good, while not further strengthening that story of 'I need to be needed because it's my identity.'

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So, let's talk about reevaluating and setting boundaries. The journey to shift out of the 'need to be needed' story starts with recognizing that it's actually just a story; one that is deeply ingrained, for sure. At the same time, it's a tale as old as time that someone made up. Which means, that like all stories made up by humans, you don't have to believe it.

And you can rewrite it for yourself, which is not just like snapping your fingers, easy peasy. But it's way easier to do than to change a fact of gravity, right? So, you get to question that story, and to start asking questions like: This story that it's my job to serve others... Oh, I'll wait while you get a pen and paper... Who does this story serve? Who does it hurt? You get to question that story and to start asking questions.

This list of questions will be on my website, VictoriaAlbina.com/258. So, this story that it's my job to serve others, who does this story serve? Who does it hurt? How is it serving me? All buffers serve us, right? What is it keeping you from feeling? What is it keeping you from doing? How is it keeping you small? Does that feel safer to you? How is it serving me? How is it hurting me? What is it supporting me to do? What is it keeping me from doing that I want to do?

Now, having asked, this story that it's my job to serve others, and have asked those questions, we're going to do that with the story that you need to be needed. Because while that might feel like a fact, you don't need to be needed. You just come to believe it after repeating it for ages. That's neuroplasticity. It's how brains work. Nothing's gone wrong here, right? You didn't flop.

What would be different in your life if you didn't believe that story anymore? What relationships would drop away when you stop believing this story, and stop doing things to keep that being needed vibe alive? Who would evaporate? The part of questioning the old cassette tapes in our heads involves reevaluating priorities. Spend some time journaling about what

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really matters to you in your life, and how this old story fits in. Think about your values and your goals for your future.

So, if you were to snap your fingers, and you no longer did things just to feel neat, what are the things that you would stop doing? So, I no longer do things to feel needed, would I stop doing other people's laundry? Would I stop writing thank you cards? Whatever. Write out all of those things, and approximately how much time you spend on each. How much emotional energy? How much money?

Once that's all written now, what would you start doing for you, for joy? To make your life more expansive, feel more better, more joyful, with all of those resources that you're no longer putting out towards a goal of trying to make others feel something about you?

Now, the part of you that does believe it needs to be needed, to be safe, likely was right when you were small. I want to invite you to find some time, even just a few minutes in bed before you go to sleep, to close your beautiful eyes, to slow your breath, and to see if you can make contact with that part.

Thank it for helping you survive, and let it know your plans to step away from and out of this story. Let it know that you will be safe and okay. Love it up and do your best to comfort soothe it. If you get dysregulated, stay with it, and breathe into it. If you feel unsafe, orient to your surroundings. I'll put the link to download my guided orienting exercises on the page for this episode.

As always, when we're doing parts work, if the part doesn't come, if the inner child doesn't come to talk, that's fine. That's cool. They can be shy, nothing went wrong. Still, thank it for helping you survive, and let it know your plans.

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As you step into your new story, boundaries are absolutely key. For many of us who have needed to be needed, they're a new and slippery thing. So, know that, and be compassionate please. Learning to set and maintain boundaries can be challenging, especially for those of us who have spent a lifetime prioritizing the needs of others. It can feel uncomfortable and even guilt inducing at first.

However, it is a necessary step in developing a healthier relationship with oneself and others. Boundaries enable us to define our limits and communicate them clearly. Which creates a space where mutual respect and understanding can flourish.

Setting boundaries is not just an act of self-preservation, it's a profound act of self-love. It's about giving yourself the permission to prioritize your needs, to say no without guilt, and recognize that your value is not contingent on your utility to others. Which is an invitation to grow your self-worth outside of your productivity.

I'll remind you that you were born perfect and amazing, and 100% worthy of love and care, and you're worthy exactly as you are. I believe that with all my heart. As you navigate this process, there may be moments of doubt and discomfort. Setting boundaries can feel unnatural at first, but it's a crucial step towards establishing a healthier relationship with yourself and others.

It's about shifting the narrative from being a perpetual giver, to being an advocate for your own needs. And, of course, we're need to talk about navigating other people's reactions. Because when we step out of this need to be needed and we start to set boundaries and prioritize ourselves, it can spark a whole range of reactions from those around us. Especially those who have benefited from the behaviors we're stepping out of.

While some may respect and support your new you, others may struggle to adapt, and it behooves us to be prepared for when they let us know they're

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surprised, confused, disappointed, frustrated, angry, with the changes. You may encounter resistance, and in some cases attempts to guilt you into reverting to old patterns. Take some time to prepare yourself for the other big feels that may arise as others adjust to the new dynamics in your relationship.

Dealing with these reactions really benefits from clear communication and consistency, along with a blend of empathy and assertiveness. It's about holding space for others' feelings while staying true to your own. Clear, compassionate communication can help others understand your perspective, even if they don't fully agree with it. And of course, there'll be people who are not interested in that compassionate communication, or in understanding or in agreeing, and that's just life, right?

As you communicate, what's up for you? Remember that there's a difference between justifying our choices and explaining the reasons for the change, and the latter can be a really healthy and loving part of deepening your relationships. It can be a kindness to reassure others that setting boundaries, it's about self-care. Which is, say it with me, resentment prevention. And not you rejecting them or saying anything negative about their caretaking choices.

Be prepared. People love to project. When you're like, "I'm not available to do this." They're going to be like, "Oh, well, you're judging me for doing it?" So, just be prepared to address that with love and gentleness. As you progress on this path of stepping away from needing to be needed, and to giving from the heart and not to prove your worth, a new version of you will begin to emerge, a new sense of self.

Miss New You, who understands her intrinsic worth and engages in relationships, not out of a need for validation, but from a place of choice and authenticity. This transformation is often accomplished by a profound sense of liberation, after the panic wears off. It's a feeling of loosening the

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chains of other people's expectations and judgments, as you remember how to have your own back.

My favorite thing to watch unfold, as people do this work in Anchored, is the reclamation of aspects of yourself that may have been overshadowed by your role as a caregiver or supporter, and the core story behind it all. I recommend that you begin to explore passions that you used to hold dear. Hobbies, interests, that resonate with your true self, not defined by others' needs,

I like to look to 'little me.' What did six-year-old you love to do? This process is like reacquainting yourself with a long-lost friend; you, at your most authentic and unencumbered. This transformation is not a one-and-done kind of jam, but a continual process of growth and selfdiscovery that involves regularly checking in with oneself, reassuring boundaries, and nurturing our sense of self.

Over time, this leads to life where actions are driven not by a need for external validation, but by a deep inner conviction of one's worth and purpose. I have found that creative self-expression is a beautiful thing to really dedicate ourselves to in this process, as a way to connect with ourselves and to get to know ourselves better.

It's part of why we dance and move our bodies together each and every week in Anchored. It's a beautiful way to connect in with and express yourself. Drawing, ceramics, writing, or other forms of expression provide a means to process and articulate your experiences and emotions. It's been so helpful for me and hundreds of my clients.

One of the key things I did as I worked to overcome my emotional outsourcing, was to spend time getting clear on exactly what I am available for in relationships. For me, it's interdependence; Episodes 193, 196, 218; or nothing. Mutuality around care and support, a healthy balance of give and take, me leaning on my person and them leaning on me, all within the

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boundaries of mutual respect and understanding. Where we can each give without losing ourselves, and receive without feeling diminished.

I want to encourage you to write out what a most loving friendship, parent/child relationship, work relationship, romantic relationship, what does this look like in your world? It's hard to move towards something if we don't know where we're going.

I talk a lot about celebrating, so I want to do it here because it matters. Most of us have these perfectionist habits, and when that's your mindset, you don't pause to celebrate the kitten steps or small changes, because whatever; it's not like you did rocket surgery, you just set a boundary. Whatever, next. That's got to go.

Please pause, celebrate each step you take towards embodied autonomy and interdependence. It's so important. Acknowledge your courage in facing the challenges of change, and rejoice in the small victories along the way. These accomplishments, no matter how small, signify your progress on this transformative journey. These celebrations are affirmations of your commitment to living a life that's true to you.

Finally, as you let go of the story that you need to be needed to feel okay, you'll find that you're not just existing but truly living. Finding safety from within. If you're anything like me, you'll experience a richer, more vibrant life filled with choices that resonate with your true self. You'll find joy in being, not just in being needed.

You'll discover that the most profound fulfillment comes not from external validation, but from the internal realization and belief in your worth, capabilities, and the limitless potential of your authentic self. Aka, you'll realize that you are the cake, and everyone and everything else is the frosting; Episode 166.

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You'll slowly doubt your choices less, and can be assured you're making the best choice for you and all involved, and that you're not just moving with the inertia of obligation that creates resentment. This transformation leads to a life of intentionality and authenticity, where you are valued for who you are, not just what you can do for others.

This transformation also brings about a newfound sense of freedom. You're no longer constrained by the need to constantly cater to others or seek their approval, instead you're free to explore, grow, and engage with the world in your own terms. And, that's an outstandingly gorgeous thing, my perfect, beautiful, magnificent, tender ravioli.

Remember to take it slowly. You've spent years, likely decades, actually probably generations, really getting to be how you are, to think and feel and behave the way you do. So, be gentle with you while you unravel all of this. Okay? This isn't an overnight job, so be patient, please.

I want to thank listener DC, those are her initials, once more for sending in this great question. Thank you so much. Please, keep the requests coming. I love being your self-help DJ. That's so interesting. When I was 12, I said that I wanted to grow to be a DJ, that's very funny. Careful what you put out into the universe right? Here we are, Self-Help DJ.

Anyway, drop an email to info@victoriaalbina.com with your podcast questions, topic requests, and know that I'm on it. Again, we got like 150-something in the mail. That's three years, right? That's years of episodes. So, if you send in a request, and you don't immediately hear it, know it's in the queue. I'm coming for you, my angel.

I've never done a themed month, so I'm going to try it out. February is going to be all about love and relationships. You're going to hear me talking to some of my best friends about platonic love. You're going to hear me talking with my wife about romantic love, and relationships outside of

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codependency. You're going to hear me talking with Danielle and Lily and Maggie. It's going to be dreamy, and I can't wait to share it all with you.

Make sure that you are subscribed to the show, following the show, so you don't miss a darn thing. You can follow me on the "Gram", I give good "Gram", @victoriaalbinawellness. I adore you.

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 soon.

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.