

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

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 have a delight for you this week. My sweet and wonderful new friend Lily is here. She is an amazing woman, and as a new book coming out. I'm going to let her introduce herself.

Victoria Albina: Hello, Lily.

Lily Womble: Hi.

Victoria: I'm so happy you're here.

Lily: So happy to be here. When I met you through Kara, I was so excited, because I had been following you on the internet for a very long time. So, I'm very excited that we're new friends. Hello, all y'all listening. I'm Lily, and I'm an intersectional feminist dating coach.

I am the founder and CEO of Date Brazen, which is a company that helps badass feminist humans build joyful-as-hell dating lives that make the right relationships inevitable. I have a book coming out called *Thank you, More Please: A feminist guide to breaking dumb dating rules and finding love*, through Hachette and Legacy Lit. And I have *The Date Brazen Podcast*. I'm so excited to talk about all of the things today.

Victoria: I love it. I love it. I'm so happy you're here. I have to start by asking about matchmaking. How did you become a matchmaker? We don't have to stay there very long. But how did that happen?

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

Lily: Well, you know, and the listeners may not know, before I was a dating coach, I was a professional matchmaker. When I moved to New York... Because I wanted to live in New York. I was in the feminist nonprofit advocacy space. And then, I burnt the fuck out so quickly. Of course, yeah, makes sense...

I burnt out of that nonprofit life, moved to New York because I wanted to pursue musical theater at the time. Which was a joyful pursuit and also incredibly difficult. I had like 50 side hustles; I was a nanny, a preschool teacher, and I made balloon hats at Señor Frogs in Times Square.

Victoria: Oh, wow. That's amazing. Can you sing me a line from *Joseph*?

Lily: Not mine. What can I sing you a line from?

Victoria: What can you immediately go?

Lily: Now, I'm so nervous. Wavin' through a window... I don't know. My favorite musical, I can't even think of it on the spot. I'll think of it, and halfway through this interview I'll start singing.

Victoria: I can't tell you how much I look forward to that. So, I'm a Joseph girl, through and through.

Lily: So, you sing, you sing a line from *Joseph*.

Victoria: Oh my gosh, okay. I played the Pharaoh at all girls camp, Camp Kiniya in Colchester, Vermont, when I was maybe 14. I cut all my hair off for it, which was so exciting and so amazing. I'd wanted to do it for years but didn't have an excuse. And I was like, "I am the Pharaoh. I obviously have to give myself a crew cut," in a funk house bathroom, right?

Lily: Yeah. Oh, what a romantic thing, I feel.

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

Victoria: Yeah, I'm sure I took lefty scissors from the arts and crafts room and just chopped at it. It looked terrible, because a 14-year-old did it herself. But I was just thrilled.

Lily: Can you sing us a little part?

Victoria: So, I'm not actually a good singer. What I am, is a charismatic performer. So, musical theater wasn't always my thing. Just regular theater, I am quite the thespian.

Lily: Amazing. Well, my husband is as well. He is an MFA act-or. I'm over here like, I'm really glad I didn't pursue this as a life path, because I do not love it as much as you have to love it. Because it's a tough, tough life trying to audition at 4am, in the lines for the Shrek non-equity call, and people get in a fistfight because somebody jumps the line. I mean, it happened and it was wild.

So anyway, while all this was happening, I needed another job, needed more money. And a friend was like, "I heard about this matchmaking company." It was like, "What, that exists?" I say, "I auditioned for the matchmaking company."

I submitted an application, went through their rigorous interview process where they would put you in a Zoom room with 10 applicants and one moderator, and they would say, "Okay, Lily, you're the client and MV is the matchmaker. Lily, your date was a no-show for the day and ghosted the client. How do you talk to them on the phone? Go."

I became a matchmaker because I needed money, but then when I started doing the work, I realized that dating was this place where I could help women be well. That dating wasn't actually frivolous. It wasn't something that didn't matter.

I grew up in the Deep South, and I saw how much a woman's worth was tied to her relationship status with a cisgendered man. You know what I'm saying? So, I grew up sort of a young feminist bucking against that norm,

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

and feeling, swinging to, “We don't need.” Which we don't, we don't need partnership to be whole. We don't need to center men in this. Both/and dating.

I was like, “Oh, dating actually is really important to our wellbeing, if that's something that you desire.” I became the third most successful matchmaker out of 160 at that national firm; brag.

Victoria: Oh, my goodness, love the brag.

Lily: While I was doing that, my love life was a dumpster fire. I really believed that I was too much. My mom, bless her, told me that I was too much at age 12, that I would have a “hard time finding a husband” because my personality was too much of a strong spice.” Which is a life sentence of loneliness, in my mind as a 12-year-old in the Deep South, right?

So, I entered adulthood feeling eternally behind. I hadn't had sex yet. I felt like I was an outcast. I had this whole identity of “you're too much.” So, I started dating to try to prove that story wrong. I was trying to be like, “No, I'm not too much. Let me go date.” And I ended up attracting people where I just was with them because they liked me, or I was with them because I really liked them and they just deigned to be around me.

That ended me up in maybe the worst relationship of my life. I count friendships and romantic, among relationships. But while I was matchmaking, I was with this person who I met on Bumble, who met all of my checklist items. That person also made it very clear they were not interested in a communicative, adult-healthy relationship. He was the first person I had sex with; in my mid-20s, I was behind in that way too.

Anyway, I was settling majorly in my relationships. Then, in matchmaking, I was telling my clients, “You deserve so much more. Let's get you on some great dates.” So, when I was no longer willing to be in that disconnect, when I was no longer willing to live out of alignment, because it was literally breaking me down physically, I found the courage to break it off with him, through my therapist.

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

But then I was like, how am I never going to settle again? So, I looked for support and solutions. My therapist hadn't dated in 30 years. My friends just told me to swipe more and, "Why don't you play the numbers game? Are you sure you can trust yourself? Are you sure you're aren't being too picky?" Wasn't going to work.

Matchmaking was this first date solution, and I wanted something much deeper, so as to never settle again and find the right relationship. At that point, I started coaching myself and building what I now teach in Date Brazen. The magic that happened is I started having so much more fun in my dating life. It was joyful. I was in fuck-around energy. I was in my body more. I was leaving my number for cute waiters and I was flirting.

Eventually met my husband, Chris, who was somebody who may not have been on my original checklist, right? So, I started coaching my matchmaking clients, and they started to find better dates for themselves, and I or anybody else could find for them. And then, I broke up with matchmaking six or seven years ago and started Date Brazen.

Victoria: Oh, what a journey. So much of what you said piqued my interest, but particularly the settling. I want to talk about that. Because the focus here at *Feminist Wellness* is emotional outsourcing; our codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing survival skills that got us through our childhood. And are still with us now. Like baby sweaters that are way too small, but we keep trying to squeeze into them because they make us feel safe in the world.

And so, one of the things that comes with that, as you know, is this fear that we're deeply unlovable and unworthy. Which leads us to settle. That leads us to say, "Oh, you like me? Okay. Yeah, then you can have me. Oh, you're mean to me? It's okay. You said you like me, right? You treat me like crap? It's okay. You don't communicate with me? It's okay."

We just like settle and settle and make excuses. "I'm sure it'll change. They say they want to change. They say they want to get better." We get so

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

rolled up in that, because we fear so deeply that it can't be different. We're not worthy of it being different.

And our nervous systems are doing reenactment, right? They're replaying the past in the hopes of it changing, which we know it won't until we change, right? So, what are a couple of things that our listeners can do if they're like, "Yes, it's me. I keep settling, help."

Lily: Yes. Oh, my God. When you were talking, I was having so many flashback moments of inflection points that I can remember, of making the choice to settle, and thinking I'm asking for too much because he can't give it to me. I must be wrong. I must be asking for too much.

Victoria: There's something wrong with me.

Lily: Because I didn't even expect him to change. I was like, "Well, I'm not doing a good enough job at being real." So, for me, because my parents had just divorced in my adulthood, I didn't have healthy relationships around me romantically [crosstalk]. The first step for me, if I was talking to myself seven years ago or eight years ago, or the first step for anybody listening, is to just acknowledge the context that you're in that has led you to believe that this is okay.

Acknowledge, put on paper, "Okay, of course, I'm settling." In a selfcompassionate voice, not in a judgy way, but loving witness energy. I talk about it in my book, my patterns felt like a haunted house; the settling felt like being in a haunted house; and the pattern just kept jumping out and doing the jumpscares.

So, I think, first acknowledging looking back and being like, "Okay, here are the inflection points in my history that might have taught me as a child to perform settling in order to be safe." Literally, just dump it on paper, and bring so much compassion to it. Because I think a lot of people, in their settling, get into self-blame-me territory of, "Well, I just need to fix this right now."

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

And I think that rigid, self-blame-me, fixing energy is like a version of you that wants to be safe, right? Of course. But first putting it on paper and acknowledge the context with a self-compassionate lens. Be kind to yourself about it. And then, acknowledging the thoughts, that are beliefs that you have. Just start doing 'the thoughts, not facts,' right?

Victoria: Right. I think it's important to pause. This weekend, I was part of facilitating a retreat, and we were talking a lot about self-compassion, and several women came up to me pretty shyly and said, "How do I do it? I don't know how to self-compassion."

This is what I shared, and I'd love to hear what you share, what I supported these women around doing was getting into meditation. And if you're like, "Yo, I can't meditation," this is going to be a little different. Because it's not aiming for silence. I have the ADHD, silent jam can be challenging for my magical, special brain. We're going somewhere else. So, before you go, "Not for me," take a breath.

The invitation is this, it's to get into a comfy, cozy physical space, so your physical animal can feel soft and gentle. If that means the back of your closet... And I'm not kidding, I'm being for real. Sometimes, when I'm feeling very tender, I need small spaces, and cozies, like a heavy comforter and a lot of pillows in the corner of the closet; that was like my special place as a kiddo. So good, right?

Or under all the covers in your bed, or in the shower, or in the bath or in your car. My darling, it doesn't matter. But find a cozy physical place where your animal can relax, orient your nervous system. Which means looking around and reminding your nervous system, "I'm an adult. I'm in this time and place. Right here are five things I can see. Here are three things I can smell. I'm not in the past."

Then, from your adult self, picture the smallest "you" you can connect with; if that's newborn, if that's two, if that's three, if that's 12, it doesn't matter. Start remembering that the you that is you now, the thinks and the feels, and the dos that you'd have now, are because what that teeny, tiny, little mammal went through.

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

And so, for me, when I hold little, tiny Maria Victoria Albina Corvedo, and I just tell her she's such a perfect little pumpkin pie, it really helps bring compassion to adult me. Because everything I do now is because she had this big family, and then we emigrated, and then we had no one, and then I went from speaking Spanish to speaking English, and all the things, and then all the families... Meow, meow, meow, meow, meow.

So, that's my big trick.

Lily: It's such a good trick? Oh, that's good.

Victoria: It's a good one. [crosstalk]

Lily: I felt so many feelings in my body when you shared that. It's such a warm, fuzzy, comforting way. What a beautiful practice for people to do. I love.

Victoria: I'm glad.

Lily: When people ask me how to do self-compassion, it's very much feel your feelings. It's like, "I'm feeling them because I have them. What do you mean?" So, I like to go back to, first validating the shit out of wow, I love your practice, and everybody needs to do it today. Number one.

Number two, I work with a lot of people who would self-describe as high achieving. And so, the idea of self-compassion a lot of times brings up resistance, because there's the narrative of 'if I slow down'... To them, self-compassion is slowing down too much, or going so soft on yourself that you're self-indulging. Like that's something bad.

So, first, I like to level set with a 2014 study out of Stanford. It showed that self-compassion...

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

Victoria: Nerd alert.

Lily: Nerd alert. Self-Compassion is a proven practice that reduces stress and increases resiliency. So, if we're talking about you want to create these incredible things in your life, but you don't want to slow down, actually, scientifically, you've got to do self-compassion, if you want to reduce your stress, reduce your cortisol, and increase resiliency.

Victoria: Side note, I cite that in my book too. It's in chapter two or three. Look at us nerding out so hard.

Lily: Nerdy-nerd.

Victoria: Go on nerd. It's evidence-based.

Lily: I like to go into Dr. Kristin Neff's Three Pillars of Self-Compassion, to make it really concrete for people. So, if people don't know the three pillars of self-compassion, as defined by Dr. Kristin Neff, the self-compassion expert, and the author of the book *Self-Compassion* and *Fierce SelfCompassion*.

Number one, kindness over judgment. Very simple. If you hear a judgmental thought in your brain, how can you be a little bit kinder to yourself? I imagine sitting next to myself, or sitting next to a friend on a park bench, looking at them and being like, "Oof, that's really hard. I'm here for you." Instead of trying to rush to fix. Instead of trying to rush it.

Just imagine you're sitting at the park bench, there's nowhere else to be but right here, you turn towards her, and you're like, "Ooh, that's really hard." I like to use the phrase, "Of course, I'm struggling. It makes total sense." Instead of being like, "I should be over this by know." No, "Of course, I'm struggling."

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

Number two is mindfulness over identification. So, as your listeners know, as you know, as I know, over identification is like, “I’m having the thought, I’m wrong for feeling this way. Or I’m having the thought I’m...” whatever. Just being mindful of that thought. To me, I like to say mindfulness doesn’t have to be a five-minute silent meditation. Mindfulness can just be a literal, “Oop, there it is. There’s a thought in my brain.”

Victoria: Did you just say, “Woop, there it is?” Was that a 90s moment? Yeah, you did it. You did it. Thank you.

Lily: The third and final is community over isolation. So, I think that so many people, especially in dating... I’m sure in the work that you do, it’s so easy to feel isolated, alone, the only one who’s struggling. So. really putting yourself mentally, imagining yourself as a part of the human experience and the human collective can be helpful.

That also is a call to action. Self-compassion can look like reaching out to a friend for a conversation. Self-compassion can look like reaching out to your coach, if you’re in a coaching container. Or self-compassion can look like bringing yourself into the human collective in any way that feels supportive. And that, in and of itself, can be a self-compassionate act. So those three things decrease stress and increase resiliency.

Victoria: Boom, well done. To the third, I would like to add this bit of nerd-atory. So, when our nervous systems are living in functional freeze, which we’ve talked about here, 473 times; check it out, if you’re like, “What’s that?”

Or if you tend to be more in the dorsal state, and your nervous system... which is the freeze or shutdown, collapse response... it can be really challenging to reach out to actual humans. Because your nervous system is screaming, “Danger lies there. Don’t do it. There are lions and tigers and bears.” So it’s hard to go against the nervous system.

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

So cool, cool, cool, we've got a solution, nervous system resourcing. I have a podcast episode all about it. But it's when we connect with our beloveds who have passed, with artists and poets and people who matter in the public eye, our friends. We visualize them. We use the visual cortex. And of course, not everyone can use their visual cortex to visualize things and people. Some can't, that's cool.

But for those of us for whom this works, it's a great thing to lean on. So, you can picture... I'll talk to Audrey Lorde, I'll talk to my dead abuela, whom I'd never met in this human plane. I will resource Francis Bacon, the best dog that ever existed; she went by Frankie; she is also not on this earthly plane.

I will talk to these people and creatures when my nervous system says, "Back of the cave, nope." I haven't been there since my divorce, which gray is right, but those were dark days, because I too was settled with someone who was very cruel. But I couldn't get myself out in that moment, because I was so deep into settling.

And so, these resources literally saved my life day after day after day, because they were a place that I could connect outside of my physical reality when connecting with "real humans", IRL flesh and blood humans, didn't feel super accessible, right? So, I just want to offer that to folks. You're using the visual cortex, the medial frontal cortex, to create a new experience.

This is what we do in somatic experiencing, in your nervous system, of connecting with a human, is you don't actually have to talk to one if you don't want to. Talk to ghosts.

Lily: That's great.

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

Victoria: It's science. Talk to ghosts. Simon says talk to ghosts. Thanks, Peter Levine. Thanks, Pat Ogden. So, let's switch gears a little from talking to ghosts.

Lily: I love that though. I needed that.

Victoria: It's really helpful, right?

Lily: So good. Very good.

Victoria: It's super helpful. And trees and plants.

Lily: Especially for folks like myself, who are struggling with perfectionism, recovering from it, or whatever. It doesn't have to be all three of those at the same time. It can just be one of the things, it can be a little baby bit like you're talking about. Just starting with one little thing can be helpful.

Victoria: Yeah, that's it, just talk to one plant in your house. Keep it small. This is very cute. I talk about kitten steps, because I say that baby steps are way too big. And a listener recently shared that kitten steps are way too fast for him, that it freaks him out to think about moving at that speed. I was just thinking about the size of the step, and he was like, "Oh, the speed of kitten, way too fast." So, he does newborn turtle steps. Oh, isn't that just the sweetest, cutest, most adorable thing?

Lily: Very good.

Victoria: I love it. So sweet. Really, I want to hear about your book. I know that your biggest bits of magic are helping people to drop bs dating rules, right? That don't actually support us in having a joyful and successful love life. What are some of those rules? You're a feminist dating coach, which is just such a beautiful thing. So, what would you tell the good people listening?

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

Lily: I think that one of my favorite parts about my book... There are many favorite parts about my book. I love her so much.

Victoria: Is she your primary partner now?

Lily: She's my primary partner. She's my emergency contact. No, I'm very proud of this creative act that I've finished. Also, finishing something is also really nerve racking, because then it's like, "Oh, I can't update it." It's such an interesting being that lives, and is no longer going to be only mine very soon.

Anyway, dumb dating rules. I think in the first two chapters of my book, I'm unpacking how the patriarchy and intersectional oppressive forces, like white supremacy and capitalism and ableism, homophobia, transphobia, impact how we find love, right? Of course.

Victoria: I love how the NYPD just started making noise as soon as you said 'all of us'. Just a little pressure.

Lily: Oh, yeah. Makes sense. Makes sense. We need to be reminded of the...

Victoria: Anyway, dumb dating rules.

Lily: I think it's important to really look at and call your dating life of any forces that have told you what you should or shouldn't want, especially those that are influenced by patriarchal forces that are keeping you small and shrinking.

For example, about preferences. I think a lot of people, when they list out what they want, are carrying with them expectations of family members, carrying with them expectations of 'how I should behave,' if you're a

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

woman. 'How I should behave and what I should want' as a woman in this world.

And I think giving yourself permission to acknowledge the 'shoulds' in what you want, and really, bless and release them. So that you can start to come into 'what do I want on my terms, in my agency.' And that, in and of itself, is a subtle proofing force.

Another dumb dating rule that I think exists, that is sneakily influenced by the fucked-up patriarchy but people don't realize it, is the numbers game myth. Which is, "I just need to go on more dates to find what I want." Or this idea of 'if I'm not on a dating app, I'm not trying.' Or coupled people especially, tell single friends, implicitly or explicitly, "If you're not on a dating app, then maybe you don't want it as bad as you say you do," a relationship.

Yeah, people can be kind of really tough on their single friends, which is another impact of the patriarchy. That we treat coupled people as ahead of single people, and that coupled people somehow have an answer that single people don't, when that couldn't be further from the truth. Anyway, stop me anytime, because I could talk about this literally forever. I'm loving it.

Victoria: I think it's really helpful for people to make note of what Lily is saying. She's a boss at this, right? And so, then you can take a look at, like you were saying, not just your romantic dating but your friends, right? Apply this to the Career Search. Are you considering grad school? I feel like we can apply these taking back your choicefulness and your agency and the story of 'what is okay for you want'. We can apply it to cake, right?

Lily: I think this idea of... On TikTok there's a cultural conversation going on that I love listening to, and love contributing to, about de-centering men and whoever you date. De-centering men or de-centering your exes, whoever

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

they were, in whether or not you believe what you want is possible in your love life, right?

A lot of people say, “What I want isn’t possible because these five people couldn’t give it to me.” So, re-centering yourself and your desire, as evidence that what you want exists, is a radical act of feminism, in my opinion.

Victoria: That’s profound. I’m letting that sink in. It’s profound. It reminds me of something my friend Danny said to me. A while ago, before meeting Billey, I said I was worried I wouldn’t be able to find anyone who had all these characteristics, and I listed them out. And he goes, “Yeah, dude, do you realize you just describe yourself?” And I was like, “Oh.”

He was like, and this is the line that’s indelibly written on my soul, “Because you exist, someone as amazing as you does also.” Woah! And I literally met Billey the next day. Literally. I just believed it, and boom!

Lily: Wow. That’s incredible. Magic. And, it makes sense. You know what I’m saying? Thank you, more please; it makes sense.

Victoria: Yeah. Thank you, more please. The title of her book, folks.

Lily: Which is a fun thing, because it’s also a challenge that I give my clients. “If you don’t believe what you want is possible, that’s okay. Acknowledge the part of you that has gone through what you’ve gone through, and is carrying that into this moment with you. Whatever, okay. Acknowledge that it’s okay that you don’t believe it right now, at this very moment. Don’t pressure yourself.”

“Both/and, why don’t you write on paper, What is the essence of what I’m looking for? What does it feel like to be in the right relationship? How is that person showing up in the world? Then, go out into the world for just a

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

week, just a baby week, and look for evidence that that thing exists, or how you want to feel exists? And every time you encounter it, say, “Thank you, more please.”

I mean, it's the Red Car Theory. It's the Baader–Meinhof phenomenon. The more you pay attention to something, the more you'll see it. The only reason people fully, deeply believe that what they want is impossible, is that their brain is over indexing on the data that is in confirmation-bias land of “It doesn't exist. See? Here's this x, here's this relationship, here's this interaction, here's this dating moment...”

I just want to challenge people to go out in the world and just do a baby ‘thank you, more please’ for what you do want. To build that evidence trough that what you want is actually in the world. Like your friend did for you. You exist, and therefore...

Victoria: And therefore... Yeah, it's a beautiful, beautiful thing. I love it. It really is the tiny newborn turtle step, huh?

Lily: I think so. And it grows, the turtle grows, and you take a bit more turtle steps that you want. But also, that baby turtles get moving forward too.

Victoria: It's true; its own perfect little pace. I think folks who are already in relationship... Because a lot of the folks who are working on their emotional outsourcing with me, here on *Feminist Wellness* and in *Anchored* and in my programs, are already in relationships where there's love and struggle together.

Where there's love and codependent behavior together. Where there's codependent thinking on one side or both. That's leading to miscommunications, and to a lot of pain, struggle. And I think it's so beautiful to invite those folks as well to say, “I can apply this. I can look for the good.”

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

And of course, we always caveat this does not apply in abusive situations. Get the eff out, be gone from there, my angel. You deserve better.

But otherwise, how can you see the good? You and I talked about this at that Hanukkah party. That regardless of what Billey does, it's a thing we do, we've just decided we will always see the positive. We will call each other a 'cute, silly goose' when we eff-up. Start with that positive regard. It seems like it's the same red car thing, right?

Lily: Yeah, absolutely. I think it can be a fun game, together as a couple. "Fun, silly goose," is a great example of bringing more playfulness into the realm of your relationships, to create safety and to also create more connection. I think joy is inherently connective, and that's why I think that for single folks building a joyful dating life is directly corollary to making the right relationship inevitable. Because joy is connective.

Same with my romantic relationship, with my husband, Chris. The more joy we can access... We're still having deep meaningful conversations. We're still rumbling when we need to, both/and... I think that finding that playfulness leads me to feel more safe and connected to myself and my partner.

Victoria: Oh, yeah. This is sort of mildly tangential, but I'm just thinking about how often back in the day, I would really notice the absence of something that mattered to me, I'm thinking fun and play here, while dating, but would just sort of brush that off.

Lily: Tell me why you think...

Victoria: Yeah, for me, it was the settling part, and was the deep belief, misguided, deep belief from my childhood, that I was a bother and a burden, and I was too much. And so, I was lucky if anyone liked me. And so like, we were talking about, 600 hours ago when we started, if somebody

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

was like, “Hey, I like you,” I was like, “Okay, you can have me.” I didn’t pause to check in with me. Right? Things are extremely different now.

Lily: I’ve seen you and Billey together, and it is lovely to see you two together. And the love that you to share is so beautiful.

Victoria: Thank you. It’s so sweet. It’s a good time. Yeah, we’ll double date soon.

Lily: I would love, are you kidding? And Chris would love. We need to talk about Billey’s incredible paper that she just got published for the librarians of... I don’t know, something huge. I started strong and then I petered off.

Victoria: And then you petered off. It’s very cute. She’s publishing a book for the American Library Association about DEI in libraries. That’s the amazing focus of her work, inclusivity and equity in libraries.

Lily: I was going to say, about the joy part, “Oh, it’s not playful? That’s okay.” Maybe that’s not necessary. I think that this denial of joy as like a birthright... In a relationship, there gets to be play and joy. But the idea that it’s not allowed, or it’s too much to ask, I think is inherently born of... I don’t want to over index on this, but the patriarchal idea that it’s not okay for you to feel pleasure. It’s not okay for you to feel at ease.

I think that that’s another dumb dating rule, that dating has to suck until you just happen to meet your person. And I think that suckiness that a lot of people endure in their dating life leads to big settling, right? Unfortunately, because you’re small settling for a sucky dating life.

And then for folks who are in relationships, I think in my relationship with Chris, as it continues through the years, we’ve been together about six years, I want to keep taking inventory of how do I want to feel in this relationship? I still want to keep checking in. I keep having those

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

discussions and evolutions with him, because it leads to more connectivity and joy.

Victoria: What I'm sort of distilling out of the last couple of things we've been talking about, is the importance of knowing yourself and trusting yourself. So that whether you're on a first date, or you're married six years, you know you, and you know what matters to you, and what actually brings you joy.

And not more important than joy, but in a parallel vitality, for me, is enrichment and fulfillment, right? They're an inside game, right? It's being fulfilled, and others enrich our lives. But the point is enrichment and fulfillment. Really understanding what that looks like for you, given who you are in the world, and how you look at the world; your astrological big three, your Human Design. I don't care.

Whatever the methodology is through which you best understand yourself and who you are in the world, are you prioritizing that in your dating life? In your romantic relationship? Your friendships? Your career? And your time alone with yourself?

Or are you doing scrolling to buffer against the fact that none of that is present? There's zero judgeys in there, because baby, I've been there. It served me so hard when it was the only skill set I had. So, I'm never dissing it, but I'm saying there's other skills. Like presence. Like finding actual comfort in silence. I used to not have that. But now I do, and it feels really amazing.

I love that both of our work is really about teaching humans, particularly human socialized women, new skills for finding more fulfillment in life, in all places. Because we both work on relationships, and it's applicable to shoe shopping, and it's applicable to getting a new job, or finishing your PhD, or being a dog mom. There is a chihuahua... Can you hear him snoring? It's

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

amazing. It's the cutest this little sound. And he does not like to be petted except for first thing in the morning, and I just want to go kiss his snout. He's a really good communicator. He has clear boundaries, Ziggy Star-dog.

Lily: "I love you and your boundaries," is one of my favorites. What I want to also just plus one on is, I don't remember the word you said, but it sparked me. A lot of people that I work with have the fundamental belief that what they want it's not possible, or it's not possible to feel better, it's not possible to feel more fulfilled. And I just say these are all learnable skills.

It's okay to normalize that these are all learnable fixes. It's not like I have them perfectly. I am learning still. I love the turtle step, baby turtle steps. I talk about baby steps as well, because we're not fixed. It's not over, this is all playdough.

Victoria: We're just all playdough, you and me. We're just all playdough. That's so true. When we treat ourselves as pliable, as moldable, as plastic, we reinforce that self-compassion, right? Because it takes us out of the perfectionist paradigm that we're supposed to know it all.

I know a lot of people. I'm a Leo, I'm a talker. I know a lot of people. I know very few people who I would say grew up with secure attachment. And so, for those of us who did not, which I think is so many of us, these are some skills we get to learn as adults. I love to think of it that way. French was a language I got to learn. There was nothing wrong with me because I was not born speaking French. Studies show I was not born speaking it, thank goodness. That would have been way too exhausting for my parents.

Lily: Very intense.

Victoria: Yeah, because I haven't shut up since. So, thank goodness. I'm glad they got a five-minute reprieve.

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

Lily: You don't have to do that for them. You would have said such insightful stuff at age three months.

Victoria: I did, at probably around eight. Yeah. Do you know what your first words were? We're going way off...

Lily: No, I don't. I need to ask, I don't remember. My mom told me what they were, not that I would have remembered.

Victoria: Let me know. On account of science, you couldn't have remembered. Mine were, if you know me you won't be surprised, they were "Pam," which was my attempt at 'pan', which is bread. Followed rapidly by "Obo," which was my attempt at 'huevo', which is egg. I was asking for an egg sandwich, and that's just who I am. There are a few things I'm as interested in psychology, mental health, and snacks. Yeah, love and snacks.

Lily: I really am [crosstalk] an idea of an egg sandwich, right now. Delicious.

Victoria: Listen, you're welcome. It is almost lunch time, which means that it is elevenses; that is one of my top 27 favorite meals of the day. So, I say you get it. You're in New York, what are you doing if you're not eating an egg and cheese right now?

Ms. Wonderful Lily, it's been over an hour... Because you are so fantastic and brilliant and amazing, and I love talking to you. So, I'm going to come on your show, you're going to come back here, we're just going to just keep talking because this is not a one and done. Right? Dating, romance, relationships, the heart, that's complex. And I'm glad that we have scratched the surface and gone deeper. And there's much more deeperer to go.

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

So, I'm excited that you're here. Thank you. Everyone, please go buy Lily's Book. It is called *Thank you, More Please: A feminist guide to breaking dumb dating rules and finding love*. We're going to put a preorder link on the website, so go to VictoriaAlbina.com, head on over to the podcast page, you'll find it right there; Bada-bing followed by bada-boom. Preorder; preorders really help.

When my book comes out next year, you're going to hear me talk about preorders for months. It tells the publishing company, "Everybody likes this, print more." And that's a really good thing.

Listen to *The Date Brazen Podcast*. Lily, where else can the good people find you?

Lily: Amazing. So if you want to work with me, you can learn about all the different ways to do that at DateBrazen.com. My TikTok is also fabulous, if I do say so myself, [@datebrazen](https://www.tiktok.com/@datebrazen) on Instagram and TikTok. And thank you so much for having me on.

Victoria: Thank you for being here. This was an absolute delight. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, and we'll see you soon.

Lily: Bye.

Oh my goodness, what a magical and amazing conversation. What a delight. I hope you enjoyed that conversation with Lily Womble as much as I did. She's a delight. I'm so excited to read her book. I will have her back on the show sometime this fall, because she has a lot of wisdom to share with us. She's a real smarty pants, just like you.

Thanks for listening, my loves. If you are enjoying the show, you know what to do. Head on over to wherever you find your podcasts, subscribe, follow,

Ep #259: How to Create an Epic, Settle-Proof Love Life with Lily Womble

like, review, rate. It really helps the show get found by more listeners. And that's what I want, to share this free resource with as many ears as want it.

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.