

# Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Victoria: Albina, NP, MPH**

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

Hello. Hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well.

This week we are talking with Pam Covarrubias. I was recently on her podcast and we just had such a fun conversation. You'll hear this in this conversation, but we're both eldest born Latina immigrants. She's from Mexico. I'm from Argentina.

There was just so much overlap in our story and our relationship to life, to our coaching, to our practice so I just had to have her on the show. Pam is a certified life and business coach, a certified clinical EFT practitioner, speaker, podcaster, grounded in liberation principles and trauma-informed practices.

Pam supports first generation women and femmes in the U.S. rejecting Calladita Culture. She says it "ca-ya-dita" because she's Mexican. Don't worry, we're going to define that for you. She advocates against silencing and submission.

As the host of the globally acclaimed podcast *Café con Pam*, so "coffee with Pam," Pam shares candid, thought-provoking insights from diverse voices, offering valuable resources for mental health, business success, and community-driven positive change.

That was a really good bio. Good job writing that one, Pam. I had such a beautiful conversation with Pam and I can't wait to share it with you. I hope you enjoy it. Take it away, us.

Victoria Albina: Hello, Pam.

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Pam Covarrubias: Hola, bea. How are you?

Victoria: Hola. I'm doing so well. Thank you so much for coming on the show.

Pam: Thank you for having me. I'm so excited.

Victoria: Me too. I don't really do a lot of interviews and conversations on the show, but your message and the work you do is just so powerful. I knew I needed to be another voice amplifying your incredible voice. So I'm grateful that you're here to share your work with all the *Feminist Wellness* listeners.

Pam: Thank you. Thank you for having me. I'm glad we crossed each other's paths.

Victoria: Isn't it so magical?

Pam: I know.

Victoria: I know, it's really great. So I introduced you; but there's something else when we introduce ourselves. Would you tell the good people who you are, what you do, and what you're passionate about?

Pam: I think I am most passionate about optimizing my existence. In a good way, and not in a hustle and grind. But how do I exist in the best way for this moment?

Victoria: Huh? What does that mean? How do I exist in the best way? Because I just heard every perfectionist listening being like, "Whoa!"

Pam: Right. So that's why "it's in the best way possible for me."

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Victoria: Right. But what does that mean?

Pam: Well, earlier, before we started recording, we started talking about age. And as I am getting closer to the fourth floor, I am noticing my ADHD... It's well known that the closer women get to 40, the more your ADHD starts acting up.

Victoria: Or acting magically. I'm just going to also put that out there.

Pam: Rebel. In all the ways possible. And so I'm noticing how my energy shifts by the minutes, and how my focus also changes. And I'm choosing to listen to that versus... And that's a great way for me to exist in the moment and give myself permission to not feel pressure by whatever the world expects of me.

Victoria: Oh, that's beautiful.

Pam: Which took a long time.

Victoria: What are some of the things that helped you to get to that?

Pam: Burnout first.

Victoria: Oh no. But you're not like, "Listen, you've got to burn out."

Pam: Right. You don't have to get to that extreme. I think what has helped me the most is to embrace silence. Because when I allow myself to... especially with someone with an ADHD brain, silence was a friend I had to meet and really get to know that friend. Because I didn't know that friend. And I would say silence, also, is in my way. For me, silence is, I go for a walk. Because my body needs to have some sort of fidgeting.

Victoria: Of course. Yeah.

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Pam: And so embracing silence and allowing myself to truly listen what's within is what led me to understanding, "Well, maybe you have this deadline that it's due in two hours. And maybe you give yourself five minutes to go for a walk," right? That's what you need in the moment; and honoring that.

Victoria: So what I'm hearing, your living in the best way possible, what I'm hearing is attunement to self. Am I hearing that right?

Pam: Mm-hmm.

Victoria: Yeah. And what I'm also hearing in there is letting go of meaning making and stories that don't serve you. Yeah?

Pam: Mm-hmm.

Victoria: I remember when I first started doing spiritual work, and everyone was like, "Well, you need to meditate for 400 hours a day." And I'm like, hmm. It's really interesting, because I'm married to a Tibetan Buddhist. Billey could meditate for 4,000 hours a day and not even blink. Just be like, "Well, whatever. I did a short one." And I'm like, oh.

We just laugh so much because we're the tortoise and the hare around here. She does things very slowly and meticulously. She breaks zero dishes. She spills nothing. And I've done 45 things in the time it takes her to do one thing. But then I have to spend a half hour cleaning the floor. You know what I mean?

And so what I'm hearing in there is some attunement to 'we are the mammal we are.' And some are tortoises and some are hares. Tortoise is not a mammal. I'm very well aware of this, my nerds. But stay with me.

Pam: Yeah. And sometimes you have to go fast.

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Victoria: Listen, I always have to go fast.

Pam: I do too. I was working with one of my team members yesterday, and I have like my Mars...

Victoria: We can go to there. We can always go there. Where's your Mars?

Pam: I don't remember. I would have to pull my chart. The point is that I work really fast. And so one of my team members was like ... I don't remember the exact situation ... but she was like, "Hey, do you need this graphic?" I literally had five minutes between phone calls. And I'm like, "I do need the graphic. Give me a second."

And she was asking so she could create it. And I said, "Of course." So I went and did it and then sent it to her. I was like, "What about this?" And she was like, "Oh, okay. I was opening my computer and you finished it." So sometimes we do have to go fast and sometimes we do go slow.

Victoria: That's true. I loved what you said about... I think you said something like "silence was a friend I had to meet." Which I both loved, as a fellow ESL kid, because it was such a traducción. It really was; the sentence structure was so in Spanish. And I love that because we hear each other now. And silence was a friend I also had to meet.

With the word "friend" being like, got the opportunity to make that choice to tell that story. And in so doing, realized the friendship, the kinship, the support, the love that silence can offer. And I love that silence and stillness don't have to go together.

Pam: They don't. And even spaciousness. Because for me, existing so much, for a long time, with the brain that was filled with ideas and to-do lists and expectations as an eldest daughter, and responsibilities, whether it's

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

self-created or inherited or whatever, when I got to meet silence, I got to experience spaciousness and what it felt like to truly tune into breath.

Victoria: Yes.

Pam: You know?

Victoria: I do.

Pam: And the difference it makes.

Victoria: Yeah. Wow. So nearly a year and a half, two years ago, I don't even remember. It doesn't matter. I had this weird upper right quadrant pain that made no sense. I got blood work, whatever. It made no sense. So what do you do? You get an MRI. If something doesn't make sense, make sure it's not a tumor.

And so I did the dumb thing you're not supposed to do in an MRI, I opened my eyes and I panicked. Historically, if my brain's too busy, I go to the back of the closet ... I like the coat closet, the one with lots of textiles and smells ... and I get small. I love to go under the bed. I love confined spaces, but whatever.

This was not okay. And actually, I have panicked very few times, but I panicked. And then, for the last year and a half, I have, on airplanes ... Which I spent my twenties working in Mexico, Nicaragua, and traveling for work. I love planes. It's like my happy place, is planes ... And this last summer we traveled for a friend's wedding, and I got a little panicky when the door closed.

I'm sharing this to say the work that I did recently in meditation was to connect with the expansiveness of the universe and the stars and the skies as the expansiveness within my body. As a way to remind myself that I'm

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

never actually enclosed, right? My physical animal might be in a small space, but I am never enclosed.

Pam: As expansive as can be.

Victoria: As expansive as can be. And it was this somatic shift that changed everything. I took a puddle jumper — New York, Toronto — a couple of weeks ago, and I was fine. It is interesting to see what we push up against and what ... I don't mean to be too heavy ... but what liberation is on the other side of that, no?

Pam: And how many times it's within, if not all?

Victoria: Yeah, for sure.

Pam: Because what did the MRI do? It told you nothing.

Victoria: Nothing.

Pam: It was when you went in that actually the answer came. That's where the magic is.

Victoria: That is where the magic is. Pam, your work is also magic, which is why I invited you here. And if that was not one hell of a segue, I don't know what is. That was Oscar level.

Mira, your work is so incredible. The philosophy you bring to Gather, to your work, is so powerful. Would you please just pontificate? The floor is yours, cariña. Tell us all about this philosophy.

Pam: When I was young, I didn't know it was ADHD, it was just, "You're anxious."



## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Victoria: The secret gift.

Pam: Yeah, right. “You're anxious and you're depressed.” And so I had to deal a lot through all of those various things. Of course, as you know, the body keeps a lot of trauma. I come from a family of alcoholics, so there's a lot of layers. There is so much.

Victoria: So many layers. And wait, but let's not sleep on that “eldest immigrant daughter”.

Pam: It's very real.

Victoria: Ooh, that is some realness, right?

Pam: It's very real.

Victoria: The pressure, the stress, the push away from being self and into this caretaking, parentified role. Plus, add to ours, every time you're watching a movie, “¿Qué dijo? ¿Qué dijo? ¿Qué dijo?” Which means, “What did they say?” Every two seconds. We have to be the translator. It's beyond translator, it's interpreter, no?

Pam: It's interpreter, it's the parent, it's the bill payer, it's the technology, IT person.

Victoria: Oh, the technology. It's a lot. I interrupted you. Pero...

Pam: No, no, no. It's real.

Victoria: It's a huge point. So, go on. So you were this kid with undiagnosed ADHD, undiagnosed “eldest daughter syndrome”.

Pam: Right.

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Victoria: ¿Qué más?

Pam: I grew up with a very Catholic grandmother and a brujo dad. So my dad was a... Brujo is the wizard. So my upbringing was always kind of like this opposition that I had to experience. Because one was religious, in control, and the other one was freedom and acceptance and magic. This is his mother, you know?

Victoria: Oh, that's fuerte. Wow.

Pam: It's really fun. So long story short, I grew up with these parallels my whole life. And in a way, it was normal. It was normal to exist with magic. It was normal to exist with this element of control. Because that's in a form what religion is, in my opinion. And so Gather came once I got to that place of accepting my dualities, embracing the spaciousness, and bringing the magic into my work.

I mean, of course, there's lots of context behind it. But to get to the present moment, I've been playing a lot with launching programs, with doing so many things. I was in this quest of being practical, because people seek the practical. And in my journey of looking to be practical, my essence was left.

And so with Gather, finally, my body was like, "You can't just exist in the practicality. You have to bring your right brain in, and the magic and all the things." And so Gather is kind of the culmination of my body of work and how I've been working on it and developing it for a few decades now.

Victoria: It's amazing to be at this point in life where we have a body of work. You know what I mean? It's kind of wild to be the grown-ups. I'm just going to say that. It's wild.

So, mi amor, what is Gather? Because I know, but tell them.

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Pam: Si, bueno. Gather is an annual program. It's rooted in the five wounds of Calladita Culture.

Victoria: That's what I want to talk about.

Pam: So, Calladita Culture. I am very Mexican. I grew up, like I just said, in a very Catholic household. And growing up, I kept hearing, "calladita te ves mas bonita," which means, "you look prettier when you're quiet." And with all the context we've been giving — eldest daughter, curious, ADHD, all the things — I had a lot of questions. I still ask a lot of questions.

Victoria: I had a lot of questions.

Pam: I feel like coaches... I'm like, "Were you *that* kid that was told you're asking a lot of questions?"

Victoria: I think we were all "that kid". All of us.

Pam: That's what I think all the coaches are. And so the five wounds of Calladita Culture are my body of work. They have come from coaching hundreds of first-generation women and femmes, immigrants, lots of firsttime business owners, first time graduating college, first time doing all the things first.

It started with seven principles, and then I realized you can unlearn principles. But in reality, what's happening is that we need to heal the wound. Because, as you know, scar tissue is stronger than skin.

Victoria: It's true.

Pam: And so when I realized this, I was trying to get a piercing, a re-pierced. And the person was like, "We can't re-pierce the same hole because it's scar tissue, and scar tissue is stronger than skin. And so you

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

would have to go around it because the skin is just not going to let us do it.” And so that I ended up not re-piercing anything.

But that just gave me a huge lesson of how those wounds, once they are healed, they just make us stronger.

Victoria: Yeah, that's beautiful. I've been thinking a lot about the beauty of recognizing our wounds as a catalyst. I love adding that it's a little Buckminster Fuller, like tensegrity, right? Adding that in too. That's beautiful.

Mira, for the not Latinas, or not hispanohablante, what does “calladita” mean?

Pam: Calladita means little quiet, basically. It's a saying we have in Spanish that is often told to women. Because women are socialized in many ways in Latin America to be quiet, to be submissive, whatever; gender roles. And anytime I talk about Calladita Culture, people from all over the world, they're like, “Well, we may not have that saying, but we've been socialized this way.”

Victoria: Absolutely.

Pam: And so what I realized is that I created my body of work from my lived experience, which is a Latina, first-gen immigrant, eldest daughter experience. And the wounds can apply to everyone. So there's five now. So we start with seven principles, and now we have five wounds. And what I've realized is that we can over- or under-compensate the wound.

So there's alignment. Once we're in alignment, then that means that you're not being pulled, but you can be pulled in one direction or the other. Do you want me to tell you the five wounds?

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Victoria: So much I want you to.

Pam: We have the wound of silence that keeps us quiet. And this is when undercompensated, when you don't speak up at work or when you don't ask for what you want. Overcompensated is when you're told that you're too loud or you're oversharing or you are overpowering in a way because you're speaking too much. So you could over or under.

We have the wound of power. That one's a big one. So the wound of power keeps us stuck. The wound of power is the wound that we basically give our power away. So eldest daughter is very much the giver, because we give everything and leave us behind. We become the caregiver, so we give our power away. We become the supporters, the translators, the interpreters, all the things we talked about; we give our power away.

Victoria: But we also can power over the younger siblings. So it can be sort of two iterations of the same wound, right?

Pam: Correct.

Victoria: Both in the same animal, different person. With different people. Okay, great. So quiet, power, and three?

Pam: Silence, power, and identity. The wound of identity is the wound that many times... One basic story is your parents wanted you to be a lawyer. So you begin to lawyer and you embraced the identity of the lawyer, but you forgot what you truly wanted was to be an artist and to paint. And so it's kind of like you give your power away, but your identity at the core is who do you choose based on whose expectations and you forget about yourself.

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Victoria: Right. With emotional outsourcing. My whole message is this. We're always seeking safety, belonging, and worth. And so we give away our identity and the story of who we are. Beautiful, beautiful. All right, four.

Pam: Four is the wind of commitment. So we overcommit, under commit. So basically, "I can do everything. I don't need help. I'm fine. I'm fine."

Victoria: "I'm fine. Everything's fine. I don't need help. I'm fine. I'm fine."

Pam: I had a coaching call with a client and she literally ... I'm sure this happens to you ... We got on the call, she saw me, and she started bawling.

Victoria: Oh yeah. All the time.

Pam: "What's happening?" And she's like, "I can't keep it together anymore. I've been keeping it together for everyone." That's commitment. So she has over committed when her capacity no longer allows to sustain that.

Victoria: Yeah. Two things came to mind. One, my dear friend, Asia Ophelia, who I love so much, made me business cards that had my name and said, "Making women cry since 1979." And I feel like... Yes, that just sums it up.

Anyway, my tía Vici, my favorite aunt, went and played rugby with the boys. She was probably 10 or 12 and she was not allowed. And she got tackled really hard and broke her femur. And so she limped home and hid in bed because she didn't want anyone to be mad at her.

Pam: Oh my God. That's commitment.

Victoria: Yeah. That's that commitment to, "Don't upset anyone. I'm fine." And to this day, you can't help her for trying. I lived at her house for two

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

months, a couple of years ago. When I left, I had to hide money around the house because she wouldn't let me pay as a fully grown woman to eat her food. For two months, "I've got this. I'm fine." She's a retired school teacher in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Hiding money.

Pam: That's wild.

Victoria: But so typical, so committing to the bit.

Pam: The last one is the wound of worth, which you talk about: belonging, safety, and worth. I mean, all of them are powerful, but basically the wound of worth keeps us underpaid many times, or also empty. So one of my clients, for example, she has achieved every single thing in the success book. So if we were to give the success manual, she's checked it off. Done.

And when you ask her, how full, how whole, how present are you? It's not there because she's still seeking for that worth. It's the success checking off the list, but truly the worth it's within. And so in that case, she's over aligned or overcompensated. And to bring it back to alignment it's, how do you find your inner self worth?

Victoria: It's a really beautiful framework. And I think all of us can start to pause and see how being over- and under-compensated on these five different wounds can take us out of presence in our own lives and out of our authenticity so powerfully, no?

Pam: So much. Especially identity. Because many times I do a workshop on the five wounds and people come to me afterwards and they're like, "Literally, I've just realized I haven't been myself for 30 years," or whatever. It's real.

Victoria: Yeah. It's super real. I mean, I hear that. I'll have women in their 60s and 70s in Anchored who say the same thing, "Wow, I just realized

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

this.” It's wild. And how brave though to want to, at 50, 60, 70, be doing this introspective work and continue to grow and heal and create that scar tissue stronger.

Pam: Giving ourselves permission to say, “I'm just going to go for it instead of staying in the familiar.” Because we know the brain, it goes back to what feels familiar.

Victoria: Yeah. I mean, it hasn't killed us yet, right?

Pam: Right.

Victoria: Right. You and I are both very practical immigrant eldest daughters, and so for people listening who are like, “This is philosophically very cool and stuff”... My whole thing is sharing remedies, right? How can we actually actionably start to change this? Where would you recommend people start?

Pam: Ooh, I mean, I would say with what I started, which is how could you create spaciousness?

Victoria: People don't understand that ‘till they do. So let's really break it all the way down. How would you define spaciousness? How do you know you don't have it? What does it feel like to have it? Let's go like super basico, because it is such a big conceptual thing. And I think if you'd asked me 20 years ago if I had spaciousness, I kind of would have looked at you like you had 16 heads, and been like, “I don't know, I have a master's in Public Health. I don't know.”

Pam: “What language are you speaking?” Yeah. So I think the first step is to choose to take an intentional pause. And an intentional pause, what does that look like for you? What feels good? And I think the first step is to



## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

understand feeling. We exist in our head so much, and the world invites so much thinking, and so how do we get in the body to feel?

It could be as simple as wash your hands, and take 15, 20 seconds to wash your hands. Feel the water in your hands. It's a very simple exercise.

Victoria: Right. So I hear you saying one of the first steps to spaciousness is moment-to-moment awareness. And stepping into practical mindfulness. Yeah, practical mindfulness. It's kind of my jam, right? Because I too love the philosophical thinking. And at the end of the day, your girl's a nurse.

Like, what do I do Wednesday morning? Let's go. Let's go. Okay. So that moment-to-moment, washing your hands, feeling the texture of the water, smelling the soap, right? The things we can do.

Pam: You do every day.

Victoria: Yeah. But also while meeting the work deadline and making sure the kids are fed and the dog, ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba. Slowing down the hand washing. ¿Qué más?

Pam: Think about the daily rituals that we already have. Brushing your teeth. So how could you invite moments of pleasure in brushing your teeth?

Victoria: Ooh, so not just mindfulness, but pleasure.

Pam: Yeah, because that's how we can feel and start connecting back to the body.

Victoria: Beautiful.

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

Pam: So something we already do every day. Washing your hair. I used to despise washing my hair. I have curly hair. It's a whole ensemble hair wash day.

Victoria: It's a lot.

Pam: I have to plan it out, you know?

Victoria: Listen, mine takes hours to dry. Right? It's three o'clock right now, and I washed it... We went to boxing this morning, and it's... Yeah, I think I washed my hair at 10 a.m. and it's still wet in the middle. So that's fun. Right. Changing the story.

Pam: Changing the story. How could you take that moment, that could be a form to create space, to feel pleasure and to enjoy it. How could you make it enjoyable?

Victoria: So how are you defining spaciousness?

Pam: Spaciousness, I define it with presence. Without thinking about what you didn't do, and thinking about what you need to do.

Victoria: Yeah. So being in the here and now. Beautiful.

Pam: And spaciousness could be one minute. I tap; I'm an EFT practitioner. And so I sometimes give myself spaciousness by doing one full round of a tapping sequence. It takes 30 seconds.

Victoria: I mean, it makes so much sense, right? These five wounds, like any habitual story, it's just a heuristic, right? It's just a shortcut in the brain. It's the body's and the brain's way of saying ... Brain, spinal cord, and neurons, these are the parts of our nervous system ... It's just our nervous system and our body saying, "I don't feel safe. I don't feel okay. I feel

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

worried. I'm in discomfort. I want that to end," so we go to the patterning around these wounds.

And so I'm hearing you say that when we come back into presence, into mindfulness, we can tap into our own expansive capacity to bring in spaciousness. Perhaps agency is within spaciousness, right? In my world, I talk all the time about how choicefulness is *the way* to rewrite our habits.

Whether we're talking about the three essential human needs and emotional outsourcing, or these five wounds that keep us quiet to ourself and quiet in the world, creating that space to make a choice is key. Because sometimes we choose the old habit intentionally for physical safety, for emotional safety.

Because when we balance actually being ourself, or going with this particular flow... We'll say, "I'll just be myself with my friends." And right now, I'm just going to say, "Si, señora," to my grandmother. We're just going to move on and it's going to be fine. It's an active choice we might make.

Pam: Totally.

Victoria: Yeah. But we get to make that choice.

Pam: And it creates awareness.

Victoria: Creates awareness, right. And awareness creates the capacity to make choices. That's beautiful. What else would you like to add? Anything you haven't had a chance to say?

Pam: So we do a lot of inner niña work; inner child. I'm trained on another form of tapping that allows us to go into the subconscious brain and have a conversation with our inner niña, our inner child version of ourselves. But

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

basically what we do is we ask that version, what support do you need? And present self, as we are present, then...

I mean, we've gone through so much, right? We've already dealt with so many things. So we can go back to that six-year-old and say, "Well, how could I show up better for you?" And so then that younger version can say, "Oh, well, I just need you to tell me I'm beautiful. I just need you to tell me I'm enough. I just need you to tell me my voice is valid." And that capacity that we create with spaciousness allows us to get connected to the body.

Victoria: So beautiful. Pam, you're doing such amazing work. I am so grateful that you're out in the world doing this work, that you came here to share it with us. I know everyone listening wants to hear more about how to work with you, about your podcast. Will you give them all the goods? Where to find you?

Pam: Yes. So I have a podcast that bea was on, and so you can find the episode. It's [CaféConPam.com](http://CaféConPam.com) — coffee with Pam, in Spanish. [CaféConPam.com](http://CaféConPam.com). And you can find all the links, all the episode notes in there; at *Café con Pam* podcast, on Instagram and Facebook. My body of work is already on there. So it's super easy, [CafeConPam.com](http://CafeConPam.com).

Victoria: Amazing. I'll put a link on my own show notes so you can find that easily as well. Thank you so much for being here, Pam. You are so special, and I'm so grateful to be in each other's worlds.

Pam: Well, likewise. Thank you so much for having me. This is awesome.

Victoria: Thank you so much for joining us. I hope you enjoyed that conversation as much as I did and it got you thinking, because it got me thinking. How are these five wounds showing up in my life? Where am I really enacting them? Where am I over and under? And what would coming into more coherence with self really look like?

## Ep #306: Healing the Wounds of Calladita Culture with Pam Covarrubias

And that's what we talk about every week here on the *Feminist Wellness* podcast, is tapping into the attunement and coherence with ourselves. So I know you've got the tools. I know you know how to start doing this powerful work.

And if you're like, "Yeah, but I would like my little hand held," come and join me in Anchored. We are starting a new group in the new year. I'd love to have you with us. [VictoriaAlbina.com/Anchored](http://VictoriaAlbina.com/Anchored).

Alright, let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart should you feel so moved. And remember, you are safe, you are held, you are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my beauty, and 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](http://VictoriaAlbina.com/somaticswebinar) for a free webinar all about it. Have a beautiful day, my darling, and I'll see you next week. Ciao.