

Ep #309: The Art of Quitting: How to Craft a Life You Love with Goli Kalkhoran



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, you're in for quite a treat. My girl Goli Kalkhoran is here. She's just amazing. We have such an incredible conversation and I think I'll have her back because there's so much depth to her work and it resonates really well. Like there's a lot of it that overlaps with the work we do here around emotional outsourcing.

She has dope feminist politics. She's also just really fun and we laugh a lot and have a good time. So I'll have her back. Let me read her fancy pants bio to you because it's really good. Goli is a master certified life coach and former attorney who helps unfulfilled professionals create a career and life they actually like. She is the host of The Lessons from a Quitter podcast where she uses her platform to de-stigmatize quitting and provide resources and inspiration to individuals looking to pivot in their established careers.

She challenges people to exceed their own expectations and guide them through the initial steps of starting over in order to build a more intentional, fulfilling life. How dope is that? She's all about quitting the big things, the little things, and I think it's just amazing. It's really super duper inspirational and we had a really fun conversation, so I'm excited to share it with you.

If you are enjoying this podcast, this show, why not head on over to wherever you get your podcast, give us a five-star rating and review. It helps the podcast to be more findable in search. It's a dumb system. I didn't create it. I'm just here hanging out in it. My goal is for this show to be of service. I have such incredible privilege, and here I'm speaking to educational privilege. I've studied quite a few things over these years, and I

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really want to share it with you. You giving a rating and review helps it get shared with more yous.

So thank you in advance for taking just a little millisecond to do that five-star rating, written review. And the review can be podcast so good, like don't get all perfectionist-y with it, all right? All right, my beauties, over to Goli.

—

Victoria Albina; Okay, well, hello, hello. Welcome to the show. I'm so delighted to have you here.

Goli Kalkhoran: Thank you so much for having me. I'm so delighted to be here with you.

Victoria Albina: You love talking about quitting, which I think is so amazing, especially this time of year when everyone's like torturing themselves to start and keep going and things they maybe never wanted to do in the first place.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah. Yeah, there's a lot of that.

Victoria Albina: There's a lot of that going around. It's like its own little plague. And so one of the questions I get a lot in my work, and I'm sure you get every 2.4 seconds, is how do we know that it's time to quit before we've completely destroyed our lives, right, before we've like, you know, had a meltdown in the break room or screamed at our boss or cheated on our spouse or just literally burned our house to the ground? Like, how do we know?

Goli Kalkhoran: Oh, that's such a good question. You know what's interesting? Actually, I was just thinking about this before we jumped on because so much of our work is so similar. And I will say this, because I

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wish I had like an exact science for you to be like, this is the day that you should know how to quit.

Victoria Albina: Step one.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah, exactly. But truly the answer comes down to like, the more you know yourself, the more you get quiet in yourself, the more you are true to yourself, the easier it becomes to answer that question. The reason for so many people it's so hard to know is because we are so disembodied with ourselves and we are so used to doing everything we should do, everything everybody else wants us to do, everything that's the right thing, the safe thing, like you don't quit your job, like you keep that stable job, you stay in a marriage, you don't...

And so, so many of us deep down know we want to leave or we know it's not the right thing or we know like very instantly – I talk about it all the time with like – I knew on the first day that I walked into my legal job that like this is not for me. And yet I worked for seven years, you know, as a lawyer. But I knew like, my problem was that I was afraid.

I was just afraid of what everyone's gonna think of me, I was afraid of what I was gonna do, I was afraid of throwing away, you know, the sunk cost, all that stuff. And so, unfortunately, the answer to that question is like really getting quiet with yourself and really understanding what is it that you want. And I know that's not the answer a lot of people like to hear.

Another way I would explain it though that I do think is easier to maybe get to is for a lot of us, we don't wanna make a decision until we don't realize we're doing this, maybe we do where it's like, you think you're after the “right” decision and what that means is like, I want to know if it's going to work out. I want to know if I quit this job, you know, I'm going to go to the next job and it's going to be wonderful or I want to know if I leave my marriage, I'm going to fall in love again or I'm not going to be lonely or it's going to be whatever.

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I don't know, I'll tell you like when we say it like that, like it's impossible to know how things are going to turn out, right? Like it is impossible to know where your life is going to go. And so a lot of what I like to do with my clients, a lot of people that I help, is like... knowing the reasons why you want to leave. Like, you can't know what's gonna happen afterwards, but we can know, you know, how we got here and why we're staying, why we're leaving. And just knowing the reasons illuminates so much. For so many people, if the reason why you're staying is simply because you're afraid, that's not a good enough reason to stay, usually.

Victoria Albina: Right, right, right, right.

Goli Kalkhoran: You know, if the reason is, like, I'm afraid I'm gonna hurt this person, or I'm afraid that everyone's not gonna like me, or I'm afraid that, you know, I'm not gonna be able to cut it at another job, is that how you wanna live your life, where you're just constantly not doing things because you're too afraid to try something?

But if the reason becomes like, there's a lot of really good reasons, even if it's time to quit, that you know like, I'm gonna hunker down and save money for the next year. I can't quit because I need to pay off my debt, or I need to create that. Okay, that's a great reason, right? And you know it's a short term, like we're gonna stay here until.

So I always try to get people to like, just switch sort of their lens. Like when you're constantly looking at the future and trying to predict what's gonna happen, and like that's gonna somehow indicate the time when you should quit, you're gonna wait forever. You're never going to know when is the, you know, the right time. But when you do know like, what is the reason why I'm doing this? And do I like my reasons? And as long as you do, I think it's the right time to do it.

Victoria Albina: Yeah. Billey and I have studied with a Buddhist teacher, Lodro Rinzler, and he says that liberation is the exhaustion of confusion.

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Goli Kalkhoran: Oh, I love that.

Victoria Albina: Isn't that amazing? It's just so powerful, right? So when you step into like right relationship with yourself and your choices and what honestly lands in the right place for you in your body, there's so much more ease, right?

Goli Kalkhoran: Totally. Totally.

Victoria Albina: And I feel like in my own work to cultivate internal safety was the antidote to that what felt like a need to predict the future. Like I found more safety in uncertainty because I knew I had my back.

Goli Kalkhoran: And that's the only way. I feel the same exact thing. And I think one of the biggest disservices that all of the programming or the society has done to us is this lie that we bought into that we can't trust ourselves. That somebody else has the answer. Somebody else knows better than me. Somebody else has, you know, the path. And so I'm constantly searching.

And I think that that a lot of us mistaken like trusting myself with always making the right, like always choosing the "right" thing that's going to turn out the way I want. But I agree with you. The more I learned like I can trust myself regardless of what happens. It cannot go the way I thought and I can still trust myself and I can still create that safety within myself and I can still have my own back and I can still like, you know, figure it out from there.

Like the more I got grounded and the more I built that muscle, it truly was liberation. It truly was this thing of like, bring it on. Whatever happens, I'll figure it out. It's not going to be an easy ride, but like I know not only myself, but I know that like I will love myself through this, and I will figure it out, and I will like allow myself whatever I need to be able to, you know, move through this next stage. And it made it so much easier to not need to know then because it's like, okay. Like it's like that exhale. Like, we got this.

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And I think too many people are still stuck in this, like, I don't know, but I need the answer and, like, what's gonna happen if I don't know and if it doesn't go the way I want it to, I'm gonna die. And it's, like, no, but you're not. It's gonna be painful, but you're gonna be okay.

Victoria Albina: I think the kitten steps, I talk about how baby steps are way too big and no one should be out here taking a baby step, like, come on. That's ridiculous. That's enormous. You're gonna fall flat on your face. You're gonna beat yourself up. It's antithetical to all of our desires here. Antithetical, right? Don't take a baby steps on goose. Take a kitten paw step, like a newborn kitten paw step. And if that's too fast for you, you can take a newborn turtle step.

Goli Kalkhoran: Oh my gosh.

Victoria Albina: Just wittle tiny.

Goli Kalkhoran: It's so cute.

Victoria Albina: It's so cute and so tiny. And the turtles are hypoallergenic, you know, we have like full accessibility around here. So I'm always like thinking, what's the kitten step? Like, how can I break this down to the minutiae? And what I was hearing in what you said is practice being kind to you.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yes.

Victoria Albina: Because you said so beautifully, I knew I would love me through it. Goli, that is so beautiful.

Goli Kalkhoran: And the thing is that it's so simple and yet it's everything. It can get, you know, we can roll our eyes at it or it can sort of become trite. People have said it so much and it's like, oh, you know, self-love and you have self... But one of the things that I had to learn and I think like what I really try to teach people even though they come to me because they want

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to like quit their career, but part of this is like I started realizing it's really easy to love yourself when everything's going right, when you're winning, when you're successful, when you're doing all, you know, when everything is like going according to plan and everybody else loves you and it's like, oh my God, this is like, I'm killing it.

Victoria Albina: I'm the best.

Goli Kalkhoran: But when you need it is when things aren't going right, when things aren't going right. When maybe you're not showing up the way you even want to show up or maybe things are happening that you didn't expect or whatnot. And I feel like the most powerful thing when I really realize like, oh, I'm still allowed to love myself. Even in my flawed humanness, I'm still allowed to love myself, even if I'm not maybe acting the way I want to act or doing the things I want to do or I took the wrong step or ignored the red flag or I like wanted something more than I should have wanted or whatever.

Like that's I feel like where I learned how to really create safety for myself was really like, oh, even through this, I get to – I don't have to beat myself up. I don't have to like whip myself, I don't have to call myself nasty names. Then it became so much easier. I was like, oh, okay.

Victoria Albina: Yeah.

Goli Kalkhoran: Good or bad, we got our back.

Victoria Albina: Right. And I feel like for so many of the people I work with, there's this, I don't want to call it resistance, but it's like this pushing away of that. Like I'm not allowed to love myself if I mess up. I think what happens is so many of us heard over and over in childhood, right? That if it wasn't A plus gold star, it wasn't perfect. Or like, did your parents critique other people's bodies.

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Like, oh, mira que gorda, look at her so fat. And so, I learned my body had to be a specific slender one to be a good person, right? And so, there's all these scripts where if we're not matching up, we're not allowed to love ourselves. And so, loving ourselves when we are anything less than gold star is a betrayal of our family blueprint. And I think that's where that real deep nervous system work is, is to work with that inner child that's like, ooh, ooh, my mom won't love me. Ooh, my dad won't love me, right? It's like, I talk about how safety, belonging, and worth are the three most essential human needs. And that moment of saying I'm allowed to love myself, even if I F up.

Goli Kalkhoran: So powerful, so powerful. Yeah, and it's fascinating when you say that, like it got such a gut punch. It's like, I, you know, obviously, you know, everything comes from like your early childhood and stuff, but to really think like this is a betrayal of my family to like accept myself like this as a flawed human.

Victoria Albina: Right, right.

Goli Kalkhoran: To not, yeah.

Victoria Albina: Yeah, it's an interesting thing.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah.

Victoria Albina: Yeah, I was talking with a Danish friend the other day who was saying, I don't know why this is like a big conversation that's happening in Danish-American communities right now. She was telling me that like part of why they're so happy is they're comfortable in mediocrity. But it's not because they have this amazing social support network, right? They don't feel that same like - Westward ho, you have to be the best.

Goli Kalkhoran: What a relief that must be.

Victoria Albina: Right?

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Goli Kalkhoran: Breathe. Really just thinking back about my own childhood and stuff, like we've created so many defense mechanisms, right? And like, I know that like that, you know, your little child's brain, even when you heard those things about your body or whatnot, it was like, it was this protective way of like, okay, I'm gonna be so hypervigilant on myself to make sure I never say the wrong thing, don't eat what I shouldn't eat or whatnot.

And that part is still so active because it does think like, I'm trying to protect you. Like, you're gonna say something stupid and embarrass yourself or you're gonna... and it's fascinating learning to like try to comfort that or put that, you know, eat, put that at ease. Like, we don't need that anymore.

Victoria Albina: We don't need it.

Goli Kalkhoran: It's, you know, it's okay if I say something stupid or it's okay if I mess up or it's okay if I fail. And that's such a scary thing because for so long it wasn't okay. That is like, I mean, I know all of our work, I think for me, a lot of my work has just been like, can I be okay with that failure? Can I be okay with not being perfect? Can I be okay with showing up fully human? Can I be okay with my humanness?

Victoria Albina: Yeah. One of my favorite tools, I started this probably about a decade ago. It kind of dawned on me that like, this is before like #ADHD was trending. I didn't really understand being neuromagical. I had a diagnosis, but it was like, whatever. Do you know what I mean?

So yeah, it wasn't whatever, but it was like, I don't know what to do with this. But I know that I do walk into door casings. I don't know how you call that. The frame. I walk into those because I now understand my proprioception's off. But in the 80s and the 90s, I was a spaz, right? And I spill things because I don't always right? That biopic vision.

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There's science to why, but I was teased for it, bullied for it, and beat myself up for it, right? The number of times, oh, Maria Victoria, I can't believe you spilled whatever. And I was like, I don't know how, how did I do that? So now I just go, of course I did. Of course I walked into that frame and the more I can like claim it with some jokey light energy, it doesn't hurt anymore. It's just like, oh, well, doopie-doo.

Goli Kalkhoran: It's such a beautiful example. I think that's the entire point is like we have such absurd standards of like every, like, you know, when you say like even just little things that like, okay, who cares that you bump into things? It's not changing things in life. Like, okay, I mean, it's probably annoying for you because you might hurt yourself, but like, otherwise like, but we take things so seriously, right? I just think that, just that, like, of course I did this.

Victoria Albina: How human of me.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah, like, it's such a calming thing to realize. Every single one of us, all day, every day, is just imperfect, trying things. Like, you know, messing up, whatever. And like, it's wild to think that we thought we could stamp that out of ourselves. Like at some point we were just gonna become this robotic, like I do everything perfectly. Like I don't ever hit snooze. I woke up, like I wake up one in the morning, you know, do all my tasks, I never procrastinate. I, you know, it was never gonna happen.

Victoria Albina: No, no. I'm gonna just pause to say, I think I'm gonna have to make t-shirts that say how human of me.

Goli Kalkhoran: I love that phrase. It's like one of my favorite affirmations.

Victoria Albina: Maybe it should be mugs. How human of me and how human of you. So when like your kid spills, you're like, how human of you. When you spill, how human of me.

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Goli Kalkhoran: Totally. I go through that literally, I can't even tell you how many times a day, is how human of me. And of course, whatever it is, like I just put it in the context. Of course I did it. Of course I procrastinated. Because that is what a human brain does.

And like, I think when you just let go of the stigma, because there's always these shoulds, I should be able to pay attention without procrastinating. I should know what I want to do for my life. I should already, like, I can't tell you how many people, I should have had it figured out. I'm like, who hasn't figured out that you should have? You know? It's like, of course you don't have it figured out because it's constantly changing.

Victoria Albina: Nobody has.

Goli Kalkhoran: Of course nobody has it figured out, you know? Just that, like, it's like this, like, ah, okay, we're all just trying to figure this out, right? Like, yeah.

Victoria Albina: Yeah, and I think that goes back to that not allowing our humanity as a way to attempt to manage the discomfort of the fact that the world is wildly and profoundly out of our control, which is an existentially scary fact. The little Buddhist part of my brain is like, but what about non-duality? We're all just dust, but we'll maybe leave that for next time. That is another podcast, isn't it?

So can I switch gears, but not switch gears at all? We're going to stay on quitting because obvi, you're the boss of quitting. How do we get up the gumption? Shout out to Judith Agaton for putting the word gumption back in my mouth. It's so good. It's so good.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah. Here's the thing. I think that the actual part of quitting is not that hard. It can happen in an instant. Here's the thing. I think maybe the misconception is that you need to have a lot of gumption or you need to work yourself up and I think people think that I need to work myself up to

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the point where I can like storm in there and put in my resignation. I don't think it necessarily needs to be like that. And honestly, the way that I work with people is the first step is simply just admitting to yourself that you want to quit. I think that's the hardest part because I think for so many people it's just this back and forth. Should I? Should I not? Is it time? Is it not?

And I think, like, making a decision is an extremely powerful, like, moment. It doesn't mean I have to quit right now, but it is like, okay, like, this chapter has to end. Maybe in six months, maybe in a year, but I need to make that decision. And then when you make the decision, it becomes a lot easier to plan. And when you have a plan, it becomes a lot easier to do it.

So I think it's not like I'm just going to build myself up. I actually think the worst way that people do it is like they don't like deal with it. It becomes so uncomfortable and then they get breaking point and then they're like, I can't stand it any longer. And so I go quit without any plan or any, you know, which by the way is how I did it. So I'm not, I don't judge anyone like that's exactly what happened. I was so burned out that I was like, I will die if I continue this.

And that's why I try to like stop, help people not get to that point. I think when you really can just admit to yourself beforehand that like, okay, I don't want to be here anymore. This has got to end. Now I can decide, okay, what does that look like? Let's say if it's for a job, what's my financial plan? Do I have enough savings? Do I need to? Can I leave? What am I going to do for the next job? What am I going to do to hold me over? What would I do if it didn't?

Because your brain's going to have a lot of fear and so it's going to be like, what if it doesn't work? Let me come up with a plan. What would I do if the next one isn't what I want or if I'm starting my business and I don't make enough money, like, when I've sort of worked through that, it becomes a lot easier to be like, oh, okay, I have, you know, this kind of a run, like a

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savings, I have, like, I know where I'm going to go, I know where I'm going to start, like making, you know, connections or whatnot.

Then it just almost becomes kind of like a foregone conclusion. It's not to say, like, I think for a lot of people, even when they have their plan, I get people when it's time to actually quit, there's still going to be nerves and fear and doubt and your brain is going to be screaming, this is scary. But it's not as much as like, I'm just going to kind of work myself up into going and doing this right on.

Victoria Albina: Yeah. There's so much. I'm just thinking about how much of our stress, anxiety, angst, how much of it is anticipation? Look at my shoulders going up to my ears, just thinking about the anticipation. And just to science it for a second, when we think about dopamine as an anticipatory molecule, I wonder if that's part of why we're doing it. All right, there's some nerd listening who's like, well, actually, I can explain that. Please send a detailed email or video, but let us know. But I'm curious.

Goli Kalkhoran: Well, this is like – and this is why I love this topic and this is why there's so much to coach on or to – there's so much to deal with because, like I said, the actual quitting is not that difficult and it's not that hard and the actual – even the plan is not that hard. It's like a lot of people that come to me, like, they already know – their finances are in order or they – there is so much, like you said, angst, because it's from a million different directions and it's all the programming, it's all the thoughts, it's all of the beliefs that we've had.

It's, you know, am I going to let down all of my coworkers and my boss? Like everyone's going to hate me. Like I hate, you know, we've brought - a lot of us are people pleasers and we've been, you know, raised to always do the right thing by people. And so we think that it's wrong to leave, right? Then we have all of the stuff that's like my, you know, our parents drilled in our heads, like you never give up a stable thing, like you never, you know, you stay in the same job. And so we, we have that. It's like, there's so much

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ingrained about success, basically equaling longevity. The longer you are somewhere, the more successful you are. So it's like, well, I can't leave. Like we have all these rules. Like people will be like, well, I've only been here...

Victoria Albina: Such a boomer story.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah, I've only been here two years. I can't leave. Who said?

Victoria Albina: Boomers! But the boomers, right?

Goli Kalkhoran: So we just have these like arbitrary rules that we think we have to live by. So then when you have all of these things stacked, it makes it so hard to think that it's "okay" for me to leave, right? So it's like, and then you're going to deal with everyone's thoughts, everyone else is like your family is going to have opinions, maybe your spouse, your friends, everyone's in on the fear.

So it's like, oh, my god, are you sure? What if you regret it? And what if you leave and then they don't want to take you back? And what if the next thing doesn't work out and you're giving up something good? So, truly what I work on with people mostly is just fear. It's just the thoughts around like all of these what ifs that is like plaguing them to take a – and it's – every time this happens, it's one of the funniest things because people are like, I did it. It really wasn't that bad. They think they're jumping off a cliff and they're like stepping off a curb. And they're like, oh, that wasn't that, okay, I guess I'm on to the next thing.

Victoria Albina: So bad.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah, exactly. And it was the same thing for me. I honestly thought my world was going to crumble when I quit law. I thought like I was going to die, I was going to lose everything. And it was so fascinating where

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I was like, huh, the world is still turning. Nobody actually cared. Nothing really happened. It was so anticlimactic.

Now quitting is just so much easier, but because I feel like with each jump, I was like, oh, I'm allowed to change my mind. I'm allowed to change – other people don't need to understand. I'm allowed to decide that this chapter is over. And so I just say that to say like I think the angst, the anxiety, you know, is very real and it is likely around a lot of just made up beliefs that you don't have to hold on to anymore, that you can sort of decide for yourself.

I mean, one of the reasons I have this platform is because I just think that the connotation around the word quitting is so ridiculous. To have this stigma about growing and deciding that a chapter is over and this change that happens to all of us, we all change, we all grow, and yet we are so terrified to change anything is absurd. It's just learning to shed that so that we don't have as much anxiety, we don't have as much angst around it.

Victoria Albina: Yeah, less cortisol.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah.

Victoria Albina: That's way better for our bodies. Yeah, for sure. For sure. So one of the tools I use very early on in my clients is helping them to see, and stay with me for a second, what it feels like in their mind and bodies when they're making sort of bad decisions. So that at the end of Anchored, at the end of six months, they're like, I can trust what I want to say, what I want to do, because I have this sort of thing I measure against, and I know I'm in intentionality, I'm out of default, right? Like I'm in my values.

So I just want to give something to the people listening who are like, but I've quit like four things in the last year. And am I a bad person? How do I know if I'm terrible? Because you know, she's out there. She's listening.

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Goli Kalkhoran: Oh, there are so many of them. And I want to hug everyone.

Victoria Albina: Me too. Put them in my pocket, their hair. Little snacks.

Goli Kalkhoran: I'm going to tell you a really quick story about this because I think that it's sometimes easier to see it in other people or like how absurd it is. But I'm going to first answer that question. I think when we go back to like, you know, accepting yourself or how human of you or realizing like this is your flawed humanness, part of it is even understanding that like you were just saying, you know, your brain operates in a different way.

All of ours does. And part of it – and so many of us, I think so much of what has messed us up is that we are trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. We're trying to fit ourselves in a society that wasn't really built for us. And so it's like why can't I focus this many hours or why can't I - it's like my brain was never built like that. Same thing with this. I think for some people, like some people are much more multi-passionate than other people.

So someone might be really happy staying with the same thing. Like they may actually be a super hyper-focused person and working on the same thing over and over again might excite them, right? And you might just be different where it's like you have the attention span of like a couple of months and then you're on to the next thing. And that could be a beautiful skill, right?

But when you spend your time comparing yourself to someone that that might stick to something, then you're like, there's something wrong with me, but there isn't. It's just simply like learning how your brain works. One of the things that I really, really hope to do with this, the platform that I have built or like the podcast that I have, is showing like how natural and normal it is to constantly want to change and evolve. Like we are truly built for that.

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And simply because we made up this society that was like, you should pick one thing and you should go to school and pick one major and then stick with it for 20 years does not mean that is how the human brain works. And so it's like, I always ask a question, I ask all the time in my program, in my membership, is always like, well, people are like, I quit four times, and I'm like, okay, so what? And then they're like looking at me like, no, but that's bad, who said? Like, when did you make this, right? Like, who cares if you quit 12 times, you're trying things, how can you know until you try something if you like it? And then you tried it, you didn't like it, now you moved on, right?

It could be as simple as that, but we make it mean like, I don't stick to things and I don't have any discipline or whatever other bullshit we try to create for ourselves. But the story I was going to tell you, because I think it just drives it home, it's so wild. My niece was 12. She's a very highly anxious child, so she always had anxiety. But my niece, just by way of background, like she had been, started gymnastics from when she was four and she was very good and she was competing and she was like, and then she got, she hurt her leg very badly at like 10 and so she had to stop gymnastics. So she, they tried basketball. She tried that for a season, didn't like it, she quit that. So she was in swimming. She was on swim teams.

And my sister was like telling me how she's like having these like panic attacks before swim meets. Like she was up to the point of like vomiting, crying, hysterics. She's 12, you know, and my sister and my niece's father, like they could care less. Like they were just like don't do swimming anymore. Like no, we're doing it for you, you know. But my niece was adamant. Like she would not quit. And she was like, no I have to go, you know, whatever.

And so I took her out one night to like talk to her and I was like, we were saying, I was like, I don't understand. Like, do you like swimming? And she was like, no. And I was like, then why are we doing this? Like why is this

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happening? I was wondering like, is the coach mean to you? What's going on that you're this worked up?

Victoria Albina: Right.

Goli Kalkhoran: And she's like, I've already quit gymnastics and I quit basketball. If I quit swimming, I'm a failure. She was 12.

Victoria Albina: That's so heartbreaking.

Goli Kalkhoran: I literally - it's so heartbreaking. And the thing is, I know that her parents are the ones that were putting that in their head. Because they honestly - but society, like I was just like, what, how did you internalize this messaging this deeply at 12 that you were allowing yourself to have such a level of distress over something that does not fucking matter?

Victoria Albina: Who cares?

Goli Kalkhoran: You could literally try every sport under the sun. And how would you know? Like I was trying, I was like, how would you know if you tried basketball, how are you gonna know if you like swimming? Or how are you gonna know if you try tennis without trying tennis? Like there's no fucking way to know until you do it. And then you're like, I didn't actually like this. Good to know, move on to the next one.

She's now 17 and she's doing a lot better. But I remember like that was such a gut punch to me, like watching this child, you know? And I see this, again, it's easy to look at it in children. It's easy for people to be like, well, that doesn't matter. But I would just offer that all of this shit that we do is made up, and all of it doesn't matter. If you tried a career and it didn't work, it doesn't fucking matter, and it doesn't mean anything about you.

It simply is that you tried something, and maybe you try something, and I look at myself now, and I know a lot more about myself, but I'm terrible with details. If I was in a job that had a lot of spreadsheets, I would fucking say

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okay, good to know, like that's not where I belong. Okay, now we move me to somewhere else. And I feel like it could be as easy as that if we didn't assign all these arbitrary things to something that has no meaning, where it's like, okay, I tried it, it doesn't work with my personality or my brain or whatnot, on to the next thing.

Victoria Albina: Forget about it.

Goli Kalkhoran: I know this is the longest answer in the history of the world.

Victoria Albina: Oh, I'm loving it, keep going.

Goli Kalkhoran: But what you were saying about this person is like, I've already quit the four things. Okay, great, look how much you've learned about yourself. Like, this is the thing I would say. If people slow down enough to actually just learn from those things, like, huh, get curious. What did I not like about it? Why did I want it? You would get so much further faster than most of us just spend the time beating ourselves up. Like, it's just like, what's wrong with me? I can't stick to anything. I'll never be successful. I'm never consistent, which doesn't do anything. It just sends you into shame and like, you know, your body shuts down.

But if you just take it and it's like, okay, I got some information. Clearly I don't like this. Why didn't I like it? Why do I like this other stuff? Like now I can learn more about myself and kind of help myself guide like myself in the path that's probably better for me. We would be so much further than spending all of this time telling ourselves how terrible we are because we haven't like figured it out on like take one, end rant.

Victoria Albina: I loved your rant. I actually just subscribed. I liked and followed on Apple podcasts and gave it a five-star rating and review.

Goli Kalkhoran: Thank you so much.

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Victoria Albina: No, thank you so much. That was such a good rant. Put that on a t-shirt.

Goli Kalkhoran: It's going to be a long t-shirt. I mean, I get very fired up about this because the amount of suffering that people create for no reason. Like it doesn't...

Victoria Albina: So unnecessary.

Goli Kalkhoran: Feel like it's not actually real, you know? Like that's... I want to shake them and be like, you are allowed to try. So I still get very amped about this because I just - I see it every day. Every single day people come and they're this like a shell of themselves because they have beat themselves up over the most arbitrary things.

Victoria Albina: No, I'm just – I just had a thought and I don't want ADHD lose it. Something about the suffering Olympics, right? Are we taking on suffering and making this worse because of the guilt and shame of leaving the thing or this whole failure story? So if we don't make ourselves appear outwardly and inwardly like we're suffering like frigging hell, then we have no justification.

Goli Kalkhoran: One million percent. One of the biggest – I have a podcast episode about this and I have this as a thing that one of the phrases I always say is you don't have to hate it to leave. Because a lot of us, what we do is we make ourselves hate it so that we can feel justified to leave. We think that if I complain about it enough to everybody in my life and if I grow it and I make it this bigger deal, then everyone will be like, oh my god, this is much –

Victoria Albina: Get out of there.

Goli Kalkhoran: We've got to go.

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Victoria Albina: Codependent thinking does the same thing where we're like, which – I'm going to pick something banal, which dress should I buy?" And you externalize it because if you don't like the result, it wasn't your fault.

Goli Kalkhoran: Totally.

Victoria Albina: Right? So if your mom's like, but honey, you have to quit that job. It's terrible. And then you regret it. It's her fault.

Goli Kalkhoran: We're like looking for permission too. Because we're scared of like, what if I'm going to regret it? But then if everybody else is like, you should quit this job, you're like, oh, maybe they're right. Like they gave me... and that's like going back, like this is full circle of like getting like really quiet with yourself is most of us know what we want to do. We just want other people to rubber stamp it. We want other people to tell us like, yeah, that's a good idea.

So then if it doesn't go right, I can be like, well, you guys all said it too. You guys all thought I should leave. As opposed to being like, I'm an adult and I'm going to make this choice and I don't want to be here anymore and I don't have to hate it. And actually, it's totally fine. Like everything is fine. It just isn't the type of work I want to do and it doesn't stimulate me and I hate doing it, whatever. So many of us have such a hard time with that, that we make ourselves so miserable in that situation for so long just to feel justified. So I love that you brought that up because I think it's dead on.

Victoria Albina: Brains are so wild.

Goli Kalkhoran: So wild.

Victoria Albina: So wild.

Goli Kalkhoran: Wild.

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Victoria Albina: Jeez, Louise. So I'm going to do what I do, pull out the kitten step, like the super practical kitten step. Tell me what you think about this. Let's workshop it.

Goli Kalkhoran: Let's do it.

Victoria Albina: And so one of the things we've been doing, like as a practice, is being really clear about the things we don't want to do as we're both stepping into more an interdependence and like flexing those muscles. And so like I've recently quit emptying the dishwasher because I don't like it. I'll hand wash for 20 hours. I won't leave that sink. I love it. The hot water, the soap, like, oh, it's so satisfying when you get the grease off the pan, but I don't want to empty that dishwasher. So is that maybe the kitten step of like quitting tiny things and getting support?

Goli Kalkhoran: Yes.

Victoria Albina: Go. What came to your brilliant mind?

Goli Kalkhoran: What I was going to say is like, honestly, a very small amount of what I do is helping people like quit big things like their career or like relationships. Most of it - and this is why like I think it's so absurd to like have a bad connotation with quitting, is I think we're always quitting things in our lives.

And part of life is really figuring out like what works and what doesn't. And you can call it what you want, but it's like, you know, in order to try something new, you have to let go of other things. And so one of the biggest things I teach people, especially women, is there are so many micro-quits. There's so many things every day that you get to decide, I no longer want to do this. It no longer should be on me to do this.

And I think for so many of us that are burned out, it is not just because of, yes, it's work, but it's also the millions of other obligations that we've put on ourselves. So maybe it's, you know, I don't want to decorate the house for

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Christmas this year, or I don't want to, you know, go to like the in-laws for this holiday party, or even smaller. The kitten step might just be like, I don't want to do a deep clean of the house. Like maybe I'm going to hire someone just to come every two weeks to do that, or whatever.

One of the things I have people do, so like an exercise that people could try to do, just to see the absurdity, is sit down and just write down everything you think you have to do. And break it up in areas of your life. Just start with work. And I mean, write everything. Everything you think you have to do. Everything at home. Everything for your partner. Everything for your kids. Everything for your health. Everything for your eating. Everything for your mental health. Like, when you see the list, it's wild. You're like, it's obviously so much.

Okay, what are the things I really don't actually have to do? And quit those, like even in your mind, even having it as a thing of like, I should organize the closet and I should, you know? And like taking that and being like, no, I shouldn't, I shouldn't, I don't wanna do that anymore. And I feel like starting there really does help you realize like one, nobody's gonna die, the earth is not gonna swallow me whole if I stop like decorating my house for Christmas, it's gonna be fine.

Most people don't even notice half the stuff if I don't do them. And I do have a lot more control over this. Like I have a lot more control over like when I'm feeling exhausted all the time. Like I do get to say like, no, I don't need to do that. Like we did that last year, we're not doing that this year. Super powerful.

Victoria Albina: Super duper powerful. And I'm just seeing how it echoes out into, I can quit talking to that relative who just monologues at me. I can quit answering that phone. I can quit calling her. I can quit, right? Those, the millions of interpersonal things we do attempt to source belonging. And when we're remembering that we're allowing ourselves to, how human of me, and of course I did, then we can allow ourselves to, we tell the story, I

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have to be in this role. It is vital I'm in this role. And this is what that, those manuals for ourselves, that's what this role looks like. What if, and I'm hearing you say, rewrite the role.

Goli Kalkhoran: Even just start with questioning the role. You know, I think for so many, like, I will say, for me, like, as a mother of young kids, I found myself thrust into this role, not just a mother, but, like, Pinterest mom and, you know PTA mom. And I very quickly, like, luckily, like, I just can't handle that stuff, so I, like... all moms that do that. And I was like, nope, I'm not doing it. I'm not volunteering. I'm not coming to the school. I'm not doing all this stuff. I can't do it.

And there was a lot of guilt because it's put on you that you should and that this is the role of of a mother. And it's really even questioning like, is that what I'm supposed to be doing? Is this like, does this mean, you know? And the more I question like, how do I want to show up for my kids? What do I want my role to be?

There are some things that are very important to me that I do want to do. And then there's other things that it was basically placed on me. And I'm like, no, this isn't mine. This isn't mine. And I feel like it's not easy. There's a lot of guilt still. There's a lot of like working through that because so much around you is like, you know, and my kids will be like, why don't you ever volunteer school. Why don't we ever see you?" You know, and I have to have these conversations. But I'm telling you, I'm so much happier because I have so much more time because I'm not trying to be everything to everybody.

Victoria Albina: Right. Well, we forget there's physics and that like you can't actually be in two places at the same time. And I remember when it dawned on me that everything I was choosing to do meant I was not doing something else. And it sounds so simplistic and almost insulting to say to someone, but it was mind-blowing that if I volunteer to do X, Y, and Z for all these other people, I'm not reading, I'm not taking a bath, I'm not studying

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the dharma, I'm not on my trampoline. I'm obsessed with my trampoline. I'm not living my life, so how can I quit that? It starts with the dishwasher, doesn't it?

Goli Kalkhoran: Starts with the dishwasher always.

Victoria Albina: My God. I just don't.

Goli Kalkhoran: Listen, I'm going to give you a little life hack. Children, turns out they're great at emptying a dishwasher.

Victoria Albina: Really?

Goli Kalkhoran: That's the one chore. I felt the same way. I hated it. And then I was like, oh, I can make them do it.

Victoria Albina: Make the children do it.

Goli Kalkhoran: I feel the same way. Like I don't mind washing the dishes, but I hate...

Victoria Albina: Could I invite the neighborhood children in?

Goli Kalkhoran: Yes, you could. It might be creepy. People in your neighborhood might question why you're inviting children into your home, but...

Victoria Albina: Every morning at like 7.30, we just unlock the door, come forth, children of the neighborhood, empty the dishwasher, and be gone. But put the kettle on before you go. You know what I'm saying?

Goli Kalkhoran: They like doing that. A little job for them. I like it. I think it's great.

Victoria Albina: I mean, that sounds great. What's a living wage for an eight-year-old, like a quarter a week these days? What even is an allowance anymore?

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Goli Kalkhoran: I don't even know, honestly.

Victoria Albina: I'm so out of touch, man.

Goli Kalkhoran: So am I, and I have them.

Victoria Albina: What are you going to do? Nothing to do. Nothing to do. Just keep on. Just keep on moving on. That's all there is. You and me and the dishwasher. I love – there's probably somebody doing a PhD in neuroscience right now who's like, I know the reason.

Goli Kalkhoran: Yeah, that you hate – I know. No, there's absolutely a reason. There has to be.

Victoria Albina: I think it's a little similar to laundry. It's fine doing it, folding it, but putting the clothes back in drawers makes me want to kill myself.

Victoria Albina: Hateful. Hateful.

Goli Kalkhoran: There's something about that.

Victoria Albina: There's something about it. There really is. But meanwhile, I want to buy every container and acrylic box with a lid basket. Girl, do not come at me about a basket.

Goli Kalkhoran: Stores to give her containers because it's a huge deal.

Victoria Albina: Because I love them.

Goli Kalkhoran: My addiction is real.

Victoria Albina: I just got this set of bags, this is not an ad for Baggio, they don't care about me. But there's a hot pink one and a little blue one.

Goli Kalkhoran: That's so cute.

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Victoria Albina: Do I need more containing? I don't know, because I don't want to put anything in it, but I want everything to be in it already. What are brains?

Goli Kalkhoran: Brains are fascinating.

Victoria Albina: Brains are fascinating.

Goli Kalkhoran: Hot messes. I love it.

Victoria Albina: How human of them. How very human of them indeed. You are what studies call a delight and a half. And thank you for sharing. That is the actual scientific technical term, and if you're a neuroscience studying awesomeness, keep your mouth shut. And that's enough out of you. Everyone listening, I'm sure, wants to follow you in all of the places. Where can they find you?

Goli Kalkhoran: You can really find me everywhere at Lessons From a Quitter. So I'm mostly on Instagram. You can come say hi, but my website is LessonsFromAQuitter.com, so you can go get some freebies there. I have some free classes and all the stuff about quitting. And again, we focus on career, but it's really quitting all the things. So come on. I have a podcast. Since you listen to podcasts, come find me. Say hello. I would love to chat with you.

Victoria Albina: Thank you. Thank you.

—

My sweet love. Thank you so much for joining me for that conversation. It was so much fun. Goli is like, she's just so amazing. And we had such a blast. And there are so many more kitten steps that we could talk even more about. So many more like organizational ideas to talk about. I love a basket. There's so much more. I will definitely have her back. She's a gem. Go check her work out.

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And let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart should you feel so moved. And remember, you are safe, you are held, you are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my beauty. I'll talk to you soon. Ciao.

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