

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Brea Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Brea Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, somatics and nervous system nerd, and life coach Béa 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, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. I'm here today to tell you why I wrote my book, *End Emotional Outsourcing: How to Overcome Your Codependent, Perfectionist, and People-Pleasing Habits*, and why the world desperately needs a new framework for understanding something that's been keeping so many of us feeling trapped. If you've ever felt like you're living your life in the audience of your own experience, watching yourself perform for everyone else while quietly dying inside, this is for you. If you've ever wondered why you can give the most brilliant advice to your friends but can't figure out what you actually want for lunch without checking at least three people's faces first, this is for you.

If you're running on autopilot through your days, saying all the right words while feeling like you're watching your life through bulletproof glass, nodding along to conversations that should matter, and like in your brain, do, smiling at jokes that register as funny in your head but never reach your heart. Like you can't remember the last time you actually laughed. If you're going through the motions of caring while feeling like you're performing empathy from a script you memorized so long ago, this is for you. If you've ever felt like there's this version of you that everyone loves, but she's not really you, and you're exhausted from keeping her alive while the real you just withers in the shadows, this is definitely for you.

You know those moments when you look around your life and everything should feel okay? You're checking all the boxes: career, relationship, family, maybe even therapy or coaching on the calendar. You're doing all the things you were told would make you happy. You were promised would make you happy. You're succeeding in every socially acceptable way, and yet, somewhere deep in your chest, there's this hum, this quiet hum of wrong. Like something inside you has been waiting so long to be heard, it

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

just, it stopped trying, stopped talking to you, just hushed up. That was me. And if you're listening to this, I'm going to hazard a wee guess that to some extent or another, might be you too. For the longest time, I thought this was just life, that everyone walked around feeling a stranger in their own skin.

I spent years in that hum, thinking it was normal, thinking everyone must feel this way until I realized what was actually happening and why everything I'd been taught about emotions and relationships had it all backward. This book exists because I found a way out of that hum. There was a time when I was the picture of on-paper success: UCSF-trained family nurse practitioner, board certified, running a fancy private practice in Manhattan, Master's degree in public health, clinical herbalist. I mean, I have so many letters after my name, I had to leave some off of my business card. I was married, and we looked so happy in public, even owned a wee postage stamp of an apartment in Brooklyn, but wow, from the outside, I had it together. But I was living a life that didn't belong to me, a life I did not like, hadn't liked in decades. A life I was struggling inside and desperate to shift out of in every way.

After a lifetime of going along to get along, trying to fit in with the cool kids and bending over backward to try to keep my emotionally immature and explosive spouse happy, after doing the same with my parents, I didn't know what I actually liked. I didn't know what I wanted or needed. We can have whatever you want for dinner. It's fine. It's fine. Don't worry about it. I didn't know how to say no without a full PowerPoint presentation about why I deserve to have a boundary or a want or a need. And I knew I wasn't going to be listened to anyway, so what was the point?

I was the person everyone came to for support, and then I'd go home crying because I had no idea how to ask for support for myself, and I found no comfort at home anyway. I never had. I thought that if I could just be good enough, helpful enough, accommodating enough, whatever they needed enough, then maybe I'd finally feel okay inside. Maybe then I'd be

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

lovable. Maybe then I'd be shown some frigging respect around here. Maybe then I'd stop feeling like I had to earn every breath I took.

Though I didn't have those actual thoughts, I never thought, if I do these 473 things around the house, then maybe my spouse will respect me or see how hard I work and will want to support me and show me care. Come on now. Or if I just answer every patient email within 27 seconds, then everyone will know that I am a good and competent provider, which means that I am a respectable and smart and good enough human, right? Right.

Those kinds of subconscious whispers created my entire experience of life. And here's what actually happened instead. While I wasn't thinking those things out loud, I found myself staying late at work when no one asked me to, saying yes to plans when I was bone tired, apologizing before I even opened my mouth to speak, swallowing my wants and needs instead of asking my partner for help that wasn't going to come, and lying awake at night replaying every conversation to see if I'd said something wrong. Sound familiar?

In my years seeing patients, I kept seeing the same thing over and over. Smart, accomplished women coming in with gut issues, autoimmune concerns, migraines, endless fatigue, thyroid chaos, anxiety that won't quit. They were burnt out and breaking down. But what got me wasn't, it wasn't just their symptoms. It was how they talked about themselves and to themselves, about their lives and their place in it. My patients took responsibility for everything. They apologized for being difficult when they were just advocating for basic needs. They said, "I feel bad taking up your time," more than they said, "I'm in pain." And by the way, they were literally paying me for my time, but we're apologizing for taking it up.

They were caretakers, over-functioners, always tuned into everyone else, never to themselves, suffering from being nice over being them, from being good girls and martyrs, prioritizing others over themselves at a great and never-ending cost to self. And nobody had told them that this way of being could very well be part of why their body was screaming. What I was

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

seeing was women who'd lost touch with their own internal compass, who were in no way their own North Star. Their nervous systems were constantly scanning other people's faces for safety cues instead of turning inward to their own knowing.

The more I spent time with them, the clearer the patterns became. What they were experiencing wasn't just biology. It was biology but shaped by years of abandoning themselves, a physical somatic experience of nervous system dysregulation at the deepest of levels, an experience of emotional outsourcing. The tools we were giving them, they weren't enough. So I did what nerds do. I started looking for resources, for frameworks, for something that could help them and help me understand what was actually happening in our minds and bodies. I dove into books and research and trainings, trying to find the words to describe this thing I was seeing everywhere.

And you know what I found? I found that the existing language for this experience is just, ugh. Let's go through it. Codependent. I very dislike this word so much. It is clinical and cold and carries all this shame. When you're codependent, you're sick. You're the problem that needs fixing. It's all about you, the individual who's a disaster and defective. But what does it actually tell you? That you care too much, you love wrong? It's just another way to pathologize the survival strategies that probably definitely saved your life when you were younger. It doesn't explain anything. It just makes so many of us feel broken because of when and where it came from.

And here's what really gets me. It's dangerously apolitical. It makes it seem like an individual problem instead of recognizing how systems of oppression literally create these patterns in folks who grow up in families with this blueprint. And people-pleasing? Ugh. This one makes me want to scream because it's so dismissive and cutesy. Like, I don't know, we're just choosing to be extra nice and could stop anytime if we really wanted to. Ugh, it just completely misses the terror underneath, that bone-deep fear that if you displease someone, if you're not what they need you to be, you'll

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

be abandoned. It reduces this complex nervous system response, this thing that lives in your body and guides everything you do to like some kind of charming personality quirk. And again, zero mention of how patriarchy, racism, capitalism, colonialism literally profit over our compliance.

Then there's perfectionist, which has also become completely meaningless. We throw it around like it's this cute little flaw. Oh, I'm such a perfectionist. But nobody talks about what's underneath that need to get everything right. Why we're so terrified of being messy, of being human, of taking up space, or being seen as too much. These words are just hot air we use to judge ourselves with, more ways to criticize who we are without actually understanding why we are this way. And they keep us laser-focused on what's wrong with us instead of questioning the systems that taught us we were broken to begin with so that they could profit off us. Meanwhile, in my decades of experience working with people, you can call yourself codependent and people-pleasing and perfectionist all day long, but where does that actually get you?

You still don't know why your body freezes when someone's tone changes. You still don't understand why being your full, authentic self feels like death. You're just labeled now. And the labels don't actually help you heal. In my experience, they trap you in this story that you are some kind of way. You are that label and probably for good. I couldn't find a word that told the truth about what this experience really was. A way we learned to survive and a way we are now aching to stop surviving and start living. So I made one up: emotional outsourcing. Because that's what it felt like, like I had handed my sense of self over to other people, places, things, asking them to tell me if I was okay. And in doing so, I had completely lost touch with me.

Here's what's happening in your body when you're doing this. Your nervous system, the network in your body that controls your experience of safety and danger, controls fight, flight, freeze, fawn responses. It's constantly scanning your environment for approval, safety, and belonging. Not internally, not in your knowing, but in other people's faces, tones, and

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

reactions. If your survival once depended on being tuned into others because a parent or caregiver was angry, labile, withdrawn, or just inconsistent, then your nervous system learned that the safest place to focus is not here in your own heart, but outside of you.

Now, here's what makes this so tricky to change. This learning, these childhood survival skills, they don't live in your thinking brain. They live in what's called procedural memory, the same part of your brain that remembers how to ride a bike, tie your shoes, drive a car. You don't have to think about those things. Your body just knows how to do them. They're rote, and so it does them automatically, unintentionally, as your default. You just do it.

Because of procedural memory, that's why you can be the smartest person in the room. You can understand exactly what's happening and why. You can understand all of your patterns, have all the insights and therapy or coaching, and you can still find yourself apologizing for existing or freezing up when someone seems upset with you. That's because the pattern is written into your nervous system at a level way deeper than conscious thought. So even as an adult, when nobody's actually mad at you, your body still reacts like your life depends on reading the room correctly. My beauty, that's emotional outsourcing as a nervous system experience. Hypervigilance, constantly being on alert as a love language, as it were. Self-abandonment as safety.

And this is why traditional talk-only therapy or coaching is helpful as it can be for changing your stories and your self-talk and your mindset. Often isn't enough on its own. You need what we call somatic work. That's body-based healing that works directly with your nervous system to literally rewire these automatic responses. And my beauty, you deserve both: the thought work to change how you talk to and about yourself and to understand your patterns, and the bodywork to shift what's coded into your system below the level of conscious thought. Because the cost of living this way is steep. Your digestion slows down or revs up, your sleep gets fractured, your

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

immune system goes haywire. You wake up one day in a body that feels like it's falling apart, not because you're broken per se, but because you've been surviving in a way that disconnects you from you and impacts your physiology at its core.

And that's exactly where I found myself, where so many of my clients and patients found themselves burnt out, breaking down, living in a body that felt like it was betraying me. So I did what any good overachieving nerd does when they're drowning. I threw myself into finding a solution: therapy, coaching, books, retreats, trainings. Some of it helped, some made things worse. But here's what I kept running into.

The tools told me I just needed better boundaries but didn't explain why having them felt like death. I was told I just had to love myself, but not how to do that when authenticity felt dangerous, what to do when my partner was cruel and all my careful requests and really careful strategic language and coping mechanisms had failed. I felt like I was failing at healing, and I started to see why. So many of the approaches were individualistic, no mention of the social forces at play, no understanding that your identity, your race, your culture, your gender, your religion, your everything impacts how safe you feel saying no, having needs, taking up space. No framework that said, you're not broken, you're not defective. You're responding exactly as you were taught to. And there was a way forward that doesn't shame your nervous system for doing its job.

That's the book I needed. That's the book I couldn't find, so that's the book I wrote. Renaming my experience emotional outsourcing was an act of reclamation, rescuing our child selves from the labels that kept us small, stuck, stagnant, and doing everything but celebrating ourselves for getting through. It's my way of saying, my beauty, this habit that makes us so miserable now. I get it. I get it. But at its core, it's freaking brilliant. It's amazing. It's not a personality flaw. It's a survival strategy. And celebrating it as a survival skill creates the capacity to change it. I am allowed to change it, and I am changing it while honoring younger me and younger

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

you. My beauty, it was renaming it that helped me stop blaming myself and start getting curious.

Where did I learn to abandon myself? When did I start believing other people's needs mattered more than mine, that their thoughts, their feelings, their everything were more important? How is this showing up in my body, my relationships, my work, my career, everything? And how could I start making different choices, tiny ones at first, that helped me come back home to myself? Not just in my head, but in my body, with my whole being. This book is a result of that work. It is a love letter to everyone who's been living as the icing on someone else's cake. Chapter 5 is all about this. You know what I mean by that?

You've become the sweet, pleasing, decorative layer that makes everything look perfect on the outside. You're there to make other people's lives more beautiful, more palatable, more easy, but you're not the main thing. You're just the pretty coating that covers up what's really substantial underneath. You've been trying so hard to be what everyone else wants, while quietly collapsing inside, forgetting that you were never meant to be the icing. My beauty, you are the cake. You are the substantial, rich, complex, whole thing. You are what nourishes, you are what sustains, you are what people actually need, not just what looks good on the surface. And this book, it's your invitation to not just remember that truth but to step into it.

And it's also deeply political because emotional outsourcing doesn't happen in a vacuum, right? We've been talking about how it's shaped by systems: patriarchy, racism, capitalism that benefit from your self-abandonment, systems that profit when you're compliant, complacent, disconnected from your needs, too exhausted to say no, and convinced there's something wrong with you. Healing from this isn't just about you on the outside. It's about creating a life where your nervous system can belong to you again.

It's about living from the inside out. It's about truth, voice, agency, legacy, wholeness. And that kind of deep and substantive healing, it's revolutionary. Because when you stop abandoning yourself, you stop accepting systems

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

and relationships that require your self-abandonment to survive. When you trust your body's wisdom, you become ungovernable to forces that need you small. When your nervous system feels safe in your own skin, you become a threat to any system that depends on your fear, your cowering, your self-doubt, your self-judgment.

I wrote the book I know we need, the feminist reframe that's been missing for years, the compassionate, kind reframe we all need. *End Emotional Outsourcing* comes out September 30th. This isn't just another self-help book telling you to love yourself more. Insert eye roll. Oh no, my beauty, you deserve so much more than that. This is a step-by-step guide to literally rewiring your nervous system. So you can stop living your life for other people's approval and can start trusting your own body again.

Inside, you'll get the exact practices I use with my clients to help them recognize when they are outsourcing their emotions, how to notice themselves in the moment, and of course, concrete tools to come back home to your own knowing. You'll learn why your body reacts the way it does when someone's disappointed with you, when someone doesn't agree with you, when someone questions you, and how to teach your nervous system that it can be safe to be authentic.

I walk you through how to have conversations you've been avoiding, how to set boundaries without the old guilt spiral, how to stop apologizing for existing, and how to trust your gut when it tells you that something's off, even when everyone else says that you are being too sensitive. My beauty, my darling, this is the manual for living I wish I'd had 20, 30 years ago, the one that doesn't just tell you what's wrong but shows you exactly how to change it, step by step, in your body and your life. You can pre-order it now, and when you do, you get immediate access to body-based practices, exercises to help calm your nervous system, workbooks to help track your progress, and a private podcast workshop with real examples of how this shows up.

Ep #345: Why I Wrote My Book

I'm also offering a book club with community support, and for those who order 10 or more copies, a live six-week course with me. And I offer all of this because we were never meant to heal alone. My beauty, I hope this book helps you feel named, seen, and not alone because you are not. This isn't self-help fluff. This is a map home, to belonging to yourself, to rewiring your body and brain for a life of presence, not performance. Your nervous system has the capacity for healing. Your body can learn to trust your own internal wisdom again. And if you are ready to stop handing your worth to other people to hold, this book is for you because I wrote it for you. Because you are the cake, and it's time you lived like it.

Pre-order at BeatrizAlbina.com/book. Grab a couple extra copies for your gals, your cousins, your siblings, your kid's teacher. I mean, come on, why not, right? Holidays are right around the corner. And if this resonated, share it because someone in your life needs to hear this. Until next time, trust your body. It's been waiting for you to come home. Thanks for listening.

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 BeatrizAlbina.com/somaticswebinar for a free webinar all about it. Have a beautiful day, my darling, and I'll see you next week. Ciao.