

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits



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With Your Host

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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, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. Picture this, my beautiful human. You're sitting at your desk. You're drowning in a sea of sticky notes that say, "Remember to be nice." You're replying to emails you definitely didn't need to take on, and nobody expected you to, but here you are, doing it again. RSVPing "yes" to an event that makes your soul shrivel like a forgotten grape at the back of the minivan, offering to bake three dozen cupcakes for the office party even though you are already running on fumes, prayers, and the last drops of that vanilla latte you also forgot you had. You're not even conscious that you're saying, "Yeah, sure, of course. I'll be there. I'll do that." You're just living from obligation, from shoulds, from "they expect me to" and "it's just what I always do." And somebody has to do it, right?

You're doing it because you've always been the reliable one, the go-to person, the like human Swiss Army knife of emotional labor because it's just what a loving daughter does. And somewhere deep inside, you feel that familiar cocktail of exhaustion and pride swirling around like the world's most confusing smoothie. You're tired, yes. Bone deep, like soul-level tired, but you're also thinking, "Well, at least I'm still the one people can count on."

Ugh. Whoof, I say to that twisted little dopamine kaboom that keeps us coming back for more. Am I right? That right there, my love, that whole freaking morass, that's what I call emotional outsourcing in action. Our beautiful, brilliant habits of sourcing our worth, safety, and belonging, the vital human needs, from other people through perfectionist tendencies, people-pleasing patterns, and over-functioning codependent behaviors that would make a circus performer dizzy. And before we start throwing shade

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits

at ourselves, before we slip into that delicious spiral of, "Ugh, I can't believe I still do this. What is wrong with me? Why am I like this? When will I learn?"

Oh, my darling. My sweet love, we need to pump the brakes. We need to take a breath. And we need to actually celebrate the absolute genius of it all. Because those habits, all of that, they kept us alive, darling. They kept us connected, thriving. They kept us belonging when belonging felt impossible. They are not defects or character flaws or proof that we're fundamentally broken humans who miss some crucial life memo. No, no. They're survival skills that worked their adorable little hearts out for us.

Now, I know what you're thinking. "Celebrate? Like, really?" My perfectionist tendencies that have me rewriting the same email seven times because God forbid someone thinks I'm too casual? The over-functioning that makes me clean my friend's entire kitchen while they're taking a shower because I literally cannot sit still in general, but especially when there are dishes in the sink? Yep. Yes. My sweet tender ravioli, really, truly, actually.

And here's why this matters so very much. Because if we skip this step, if we jump straight into this narrative of fixing ourselves, we're just going to repeat the same patterns in our healing that got us here in the first place. And, you know, we don't want that, right?

See, I coined the term emotional outsourcing to name what happens when we learn to get our emotional needs for safety, belonging, and worth met through other people's responses to us. And those habits are not proof that something's fundamentally broken in you. I continue to say, quite the opposite. They are proof of your adaptability, your resourcefulness, your resilience, your brilliant little nervous system doing exactly what it was designed to do under pressure, which is to adapt.

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits

So your nervous system, your body, your wicked smart little mind, every gorgeous part of you looked around in your early environment, surveyed the landscape like some kind of like emotional anthropologist, clocked the rules of survival, and played the game well enough that you are here right now, listening to me ramble about nervous systems and probably nodding along like, "Yep, that's my life." And the fact that little you did that is pure genius.

So let's science this. Our autonomic nervous system is this incredible, never-sleeping surveillance system that's constantly scanning for cues of safety and danger. It's like having a full-time security guard in your brain, except this guard never takes coffee breaks, has absolutely zero chill, probably drinks way too much espresso, and definitely has strong opinions about whether that person's tone of voice is acceptable or whether it actually means that you're in trouble. "Oh my god, are they mad at me?"

In childhood, if the cues you absorbed told you that love and safety depended on being the good kid, the A-plus kid, the helpful one, the good girl, the good little boy, the one who never makes waves or needs too much, if you learned that belonging, being loved in the family, meant anticipating everyone's needs before they even knew they had them, keeping the emotional temperature just right, being the family thermostat or barometer, your brilliant little system logged that as essential survival information. Your nervous system was being resourceful under constraint, doing whatever it took to keep you safe and connected in the only way it knew how.

So, can we please, for the love of all that is holy, please stop treating this kind of brilliance like it's pathology and throwing little us under the bus? Here's where it gets absolutely fascinating. In our adult lives, as we work to understand and shift these patterns, if we jump straight to, "I need to stop being such a people-pleaser," or "I have to fix this broken thing about me," without first honoring that these patterns worked, like really, truly kept us

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits

alive and belonging worked, and for so many of us got us into the C-suite or advanced degrees or whatever, we inadvertently slip right back into self-abandonment mode. We repeat the same internal script that got us here. I'm only valuable if I'm different than I am right now, which is just conditional self-worth with motivational quotes embroidered on it. Right? Which is like a very sneaky little thing.

This is where I see so many healing journeys, like face-plant spectacularly, and it breaks my heart every single time. Because when we start from shame, from this place of, "I am so messed up for doing this and for being this," then our nervous system stays in threat mode. And change feels like danger because it's encoded with danger. And so of course your body resists, not because you're lazy or self-sabotaging or fundamentally flawed, no, no, but because your body is essentially saying like, "Hold up. Why would we throw out the strategy that kept us alive and got us love? That seems like a terrible business plan." And frankly, I was not consulted on this decision. Which totally makes sense.

Your survival strategies deserve a standing ovation, not criticism. They deserve appreciation, not just elimination. Because here's what's absolutely wild, and this is why the celebration piece is so crucial, my darlings. When we can genuinely appreciate our survival strategies first, when we can look at them with curiosity and gratitude and love instead of just judgment, we land our nervous system in what's called ventral vagal safety. This is the part of our autonomic nervous system where we feel calm, connected, curious, and maybe even a little bit giddy about the possibilities ahead.

And from this place, from this sweet spot of nervous system safety, we can actually make real changes. Not the like white-knuckled forcing ourselves to be different kind of changes that feel like trying to perform surgery on ourselves with oven mitts, but the organic, sustainable kind that emerges from self-compassion. Because there's a massive difference between

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits

shame-based change and love-based change. And your nervous system can feel the difference immediately.

Shame-based change sounds like, "Ugh, I'm so pathetic for needing everyone to love me and like me and take care of me. I need to stop being such a doormat and so needy, and why can't I just have boundaries like a normal person? What is wrong with me?" Love-based change sounds like, "Of course I learned to prioritize everyone else's comfort. It kept me safe and connected when I was little. That makes perfect sense. And now I get to experiment with prioritizing my own comfort too because I'm safe enough in my grown-up life to try something new."

Do you feel the difference, my love? One constricts possibility, like wearing a turtleneck made of anxiety, and the other expands them. It makes you feel like you could take on the world or like at least successfully order coffee without like checking in with everyone in the office. "Do you need something? Do you need something? Can I take care of you? Can I take care of you?"

When we're in that ventral vagal space, we can hold complexity. Right? We can say, "This pattern served me beautifully, and it's also limiting me now, and I can evolve it without betraying everything I've ever known about survival, and I can change it without betraying me." That's integration. And your nervous system can actually get on board with that because you're not asking it to throw away its entire playbook and start from scratch.

Let's be real for a hot minute. This whole "celebrate your patterns" thing might be making you squirm, and I get it, because it goes against pretty much everything we've been taught about self-help and self-improvement. You maybe likely, probably, grew up thinking you had to be mean to yourself to get anything done, right? I mean, so many of us did. There's like this internal drill sergeant who calls you lazy, reminds you of every time you've ever failed, threatens you with worst-case scenarios if you dare to be kind to yourself, right? You're going to fail, you're going to be lazy, you're

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits

not going to get anything done. That voice has been your primary motivator for so long that self-compassion feels not just dangerous but like stupid. Like if you're not constantly criticizing yourself, you'll just become some like blob on the couch who never accomplishes anything and never takes responsibility and probably forgets to wear matching socks and is just not good or worthy.

Like we don't trust ourselves to function without that harsh inner voice keeping us in line. And so the idea of celebrating our survival strategies instead of beating ourselves up for them feels like we're being too soft, right? Like we're letting ourselves off the hook. But here's what's absolutely mind-blowing. That mean internal voice? It's just another survival strategy. It's your nervous system trying to keep you safe by making sure you never get too comfortable, never stop performing, never risk being seen as weak or incompetent, or heaven forbid, needy because like what's worse than a woman, right? Than being a human with needs. And just like your people-pleasing habits, it worked for a while until it didn't.

So, celebrating your emotional outsourcing habits, which might feel very, very weird at first, I totally get it, doesn't mean you want to keep them forever or you wouldn't be listening to this show. You wouldn't have bought End Emotional Outsourcing and a dozen copies for your friends. It means you're integrating them into your story with compassion instead of shame. You're not erasing your past self. You're expanding beyond those old patterns with love and appreciation for how hard they worked on your behalf.

In nervous system terms, this celebration is actually a regulation cue. When you feel genuine appreciation for your survival strategies instead of shame, your system can move from that like jittery, fight-or-flight energy or that flat, disconnected freeze mode toward ventral vagal safety. And that's when magic happens, my love. That's when new possibilities emerge, not as shoulds hammering at you from your prefrontal cortex like some like overly

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits

enthusiastic life coach, but as felt possibilities that naturally arise from a place of self-trust because you're trusting yourself.

So, how do we actually do this without it feeling like spiritual bypassing or toxic positivity? How do we celebrate these patterns in a way that feels genuine and creates real and thus lasting change? Three tiny, doable ways you can start today, because I'm all about kitten steps that actually stick, and if you're new, kitten steps are way tinier than baby steps.

First, get curious about the brilliance instead of criticizing the behavior. When you catch yourself saying yes to something you don't want to do, like maybe you just volunteered to organize the neighborhood block party even though you're already super overwhelmed and your idea of fun is definitely not coordinating 17 different committees, pause and ask yourself, "What was my nervous system trying to protect here?" Maybe it was trying to ensure you stayed connected or avoided conflict or maintained your reputation as someone reliable. Thank that part of you for working so hard.

Second, trace the timeline with tenderness. Remember back to when you first learned this pattern. See the younger you who figured out that being helpful meant being valued, that anticipating needs meant staying safe, that keeping everyone happy meant keeping love alive. Aw. That kiddo was doing their absolute best with the information they had. Send them some love.

Third, anchor yourself in present moment choice. Remind yourself, "I learned this pattern for good reasons, and I can choose differently now because I have more resources and safety than I did then." You can still organize the block party if you want to. Go for it. But you can do it from choice rather than compulsion, from love rather than fear, from "this sounds fun" rather than "I have to or they won't like me."

The goal isn't to stop caring about people or to become some kind of boundary-wielding robot who says no to everything just like as a knee-jerk

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits

thing you do. No. The goal is to source your sense of worth and safety from within yourself, so that when you choose to care for others, it's coming from your energetic overflow rather than depletion, from choice rather than compulsion.

Listen, my beautiful, tender squash blossom, celebration isn't a detour on the healing path. It's the foundation. It's how we move from viewing our past through a lens of self-criticism to seeing it through the lens of nervous system intelligence and survival brilliance. You did what you had to do to stay safe and connected. And now with that safety acknowledged and honored, you get to practice sourcing that sense of belonging from within yourself.

This is exactly the kind of work we're going deeper into in the book, and I am practically bouncing with excitement to share it with you because understanding your patterns isn't enough, my darling. We need to rewire them from the inside out with your nervous system leading the way, with your body as the guide, with celebration, self-compassion, and love, love, love for all the parts of you as fuel for transformation.

Your emotional outsourcing habits weren't mistakes, my love. No, no. They were masterpieces of adaptation. Now, let's celebrate them as we create something even more beautiful together, a version of you that can love others deeply while never abandoning yourself in the process. Ready to dive deeper into this work? My book is available for you to order now, and I cannot wait to share it with you. Let's celebrate our way into healing one nervous system appreciation at a time. And if you're ready to take this to the next level and to work with me, check out Anchored, currently enrolling at BeatrizAlbina.com/anchored.

Thanks for listening, my love. Take some time today, celebrate those little parts of you so you can move forward to create the life you truly desire. All right, my love, 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.

Ep #352: Why We Celebrate Our Emotional Outsourcing Habits

And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my beauty. Talk to you soon. Ciao, ciao.