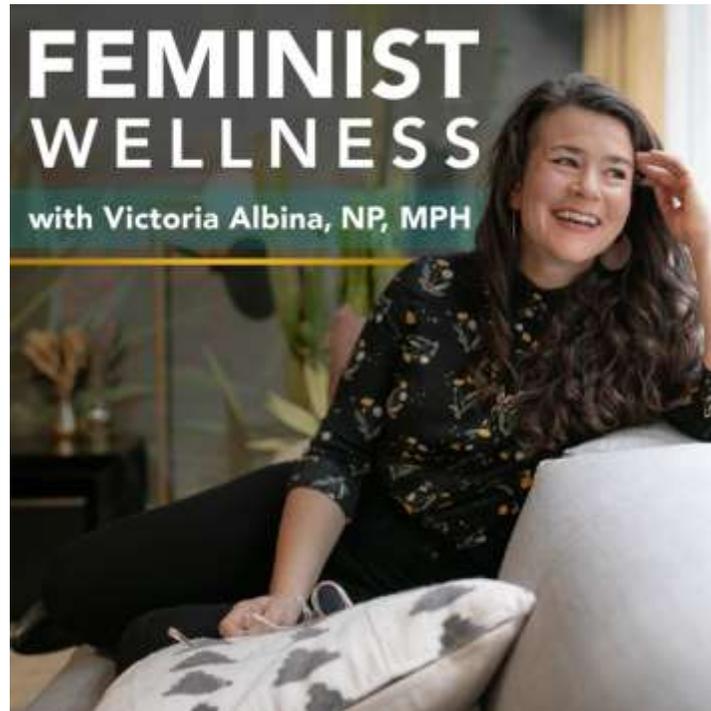


## Ep #54: 6 Surprising Codependent Habits



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Victoria Albina, NP, MPH**

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I lived the first 30 years or so of my life rolling around in codependent thought patterns and habits, until I realized how deeply this way of thinking and showing up in the world had seeped into my mind, into my thoughts and feelings, leading me to act in ways that I now see as not aligned with who I want to be in the world.

Maybe you've been wondering if codependency is part of your own story. So many of my clients, friends, family members have the same question. And so today, we'll be diving in to talk all about codependency and the sneaky ways in which these thought habits can show up in our lives, and how you can begin to shift these patterns from a place of self-love, gentleness, and self-care always.

And because nerds love to nerd, you know I'm going to talk all about the nervous system because polyvagal theory explaining is what I love to do. So keep listening my love, it's going to be a good one.

You're listening to Feminist Wellness, the only podcast that combines functional medicine, life coaching, and feminism to teach smart women how to reclaim their power and restore their health! Here's your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine Expert, Herbalist and Life Coach, Victoria Albina.

Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. I've been loving doing this little miniseries on the theme of love. And it's been so powerful for me because it's got me thinking more about love. Self-love, love for others, and how I'm showing up for myself, the people I care about, strangers, everyone on the daily. Such a gift.

I've also been working on my upcoming six-month master class that starts in May. Oh my gosh, I'm so excited about it. And because I love you, I'll be doing lots of webinars and Instagram Lives this spring to share more with

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you. So make sure you're on my email list and follow me on the socials, @victoriaalbinawellness.

I love hearing from you all and being in touch. And I want to read a particularly amazing and touching iTunes review for the show and I want to thank you, ALTTMK2020! For taking the time to share your experience of the show. This human whose name I don't know because iTunes only shows your Apple ID writes, "Victoria doesn't know me but she loves me. I can feel it every time I listen in. I feel connected, comforted, and understood. She's like a clever, silly, fun friend who is so incredibly smart and she is literally as I live and breathe, helping me through the biggest transformation of my life."

Got a little teary there. "As I navigate through being alone after 31 years in relationships, job changes, financial situations, homelessness, Victoria's right there with me, telling me exactly what I need to hear. And because of her, I suffer less." Wow okay, I wasn't expecting to actually like, start crying that much.

Sweet friend, thank you so much for your words. I'm so grateful. I sit here in my little room in my little apartment in Brooklyn and talk to you all. And it's so touching and amazing to hear back and I feel so privileged and honored to learn the things I've learned in this life and to get to share them with you, so thank you. I can't tell you how much that means to me.

And I'll share my process right now. So I started crying, I had a well of emotion, gratitude, honored, and I'm feeling into it. I'm taking lots of deep breaths and there's a little tightness at the top of my chest that's loosening up as I breathe. My jaw feels kind of a little tight towards the back. My eyes feel as watery as they are. That's how you process a feeling. I'll do a whole show about it.

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But you feel into it, you own it, you talk about it, you name it. Beautiful. Alright my angels, not the plan, but we are rolling with it. So in the last few weeks, I've been traveling a bunch, which I love. And on one of my travels, I found myself witnessing a situation of codependency, a topic I've talked about before on the show for sure. And I was really taken aback in that I totally saw myself in it, in the words my friend was saying, the way she was behaving.

I saw myself pre-thought work. I used to do so many of the things I saw playing out and I'm so glad and grateful and relieved to be mostly on the other side of it. I mean listen, I'm not perfect. I still stumble here and there. Some days more than others. But the key difference is that now I'm kind to myself about it. I apologize to myself and another person if necessary, if I've acted in a way that isn't aligned for me.

And I do my thought work. I write out daily what thoughts are in my head, the feelings they're creating, and then when something comes up, when I've done something that doesn't feel right for me or if I'm troubled by something, I'll pause and I'll write out my thought work. I'll look at the circumstance, the thing, the neutral occurrence that's happening in the world, my thoughts about it, the feelings those thoughts create in my body, the action I took based on those feelings, and the results of those actions.

And by writing this all out and seeing it in black and white, pen to paper, I can get little cognitive distance to look at it through - just through a more thoughtful lens. The things that roll around in our brain can feel like the truth, and sometimes they're just our thoughts.

So through this process, I can now lovingly call myself in when, for example, I experience myself, hear myself, feel myself talking, thinking, acting from a place of codependency. And through this process, I can shift my thoughts and feelings to live with more intention always.

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So I want to talk today about how codependency can masquerade as love, some of its origins, and how to shift this way of thinking. In episodes 29 and 30, I talked about codependency in terms of autonomy and interdependence. And I'm going to be speaking about this subject from a slightly different angle here today.

The question that drove me to create this episode for you, my darling, was a question I get often, often through Instagram or to [podcast@victoriaalbina.com](mailto:podcast@victoriaalbina.com). And the question is, "How do I know if I'm being codependent?" And I wanted to expound on this topic because so many of my patients, both back when I had my private practice doing functional medicine, and when I was a primary care provider, and so many of my life coaching clients don't realize that they're behaving in codependent ways, often because these thought patterns can be so engrained in us.

So insidious, sneaky, subtle, challenging to see on our own without the help of a trained and experienced coach like me. So to define terms, the concept of codependency originated in literature in the 1970s. The term, which describes relationships in which the participants overly depend on one another, be it emotionally, physically, spiritually, financially too, at the cost of their relationship with themselves.

So you're depending on someone else, how they feel, what they think about you, you're depending on them and you're taking your cues about how you feel about you from them. And this whole concept came about in the field of substance abuse counseling. What can make it particularly challenging to see in ourselves and this is the topic for next week's show, is that you don't have to have been raised in a household or a family where there was substance use or misuse to have learned codependent ways of being in the world.

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If one of your parents, caretakers, maybe a grandparent or an aunty who raised you was raised with alcohol or drug use or misuse with a codependent parent or grandparent or caretaker, or by and with someone with mental health concerns, like depression, anxiety, narcissism, borderline personality disorder, bipolar - and yes, let me just pause. I won't digress too much, don't worry.

I find the whole diagnostic criteria for mental health to be problematic. Like, barely starts it, but I just don't want to say these diagnostic words and not call out that like, that is complicated. But anyway, so if the person who raised you was raised by a person who learned codependency at home, know that this kind of thinking, acting, being, it's a lens.

It's like a lens you use to see the world. And it can seep into the fabric of a family, leading to generations of codependent thinkers until someone, perhaps you, my love, stops to see those habits, to name them, and to begin the work of shifting and changing them.

So let's dive into talk about some surprising ways that codependent thinking can show up in our lives. I think I said so with a lot of enthusiasm, but I feel a lot of enthusiasm. Codependency was making me so miserable. My codependent thoughts. I'm so excited to share this with you.

So one of the most common ways I see codependency show up for my clients is that they've learned to attempt to control others as a way of attempting to manage their own anxiety. So that was a lot of words. So you feel anxious about a situation and you're like, "Well, if only she stops doing that thing that's annoying me, and if I can control her, then I will feel better," which is just never true.

And like, wow, this can be so subtle. What makes it so manipulative and subtle is it can look like helpful suggestion making, like telling people what they should do, giving advice without consent, which I talked about the

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importance of emotional consent in relationships in episode 27 and 28. Maybe listen to those next.

And this also shows up as manipulative behavior with a goal of attempting to get someone to do or feel something without you actually directly asking for it. I will own this that I think mostly in my 20s, probably earlier, one of the codependent habits I picked up from my family of origin was guilt. So if I didn't like the way something had turned out, I would try to like - I'm feeling embarrassed might come up, I'm feeling a little like, heat of shame in my chest, which that's okay. I don't have to believe it. It's just a feeling.

But I used to try to make others feel guilty for decisions that I had made, either based on their advice or their experience or not at all. If something hadn't worked out the way I wanted, my brain would so quickly find someone to blame. And that, all of this is emotional childhood, which is episode 23, in full effect.

And this is exactly what codependent thinking is. One key component is being in emotional childhood and blaming others for what you feel, as though anyone other than you could create those feelings for you. And I want to share an experience I recently had as a way to elucidate all of this.

My brain loves stories as an Argentine. I'm from a storytelling people. If you ask an Argentine on the street like, how do you get to the corner, they're going to tell you this whole, "Well, in 1627, and then when Perón came to power," you're going to get this whole story when you're like, no wait, literally, do I turn left or right?

So I love a story, so I'm going to use a story, in this case, as a way to just show you an experience that I had and the ways that there's codependency showing up there. So I was staying at a friend's house, and in the morning, my friend Alex came into the kitchen and went to hug and kiss her husband Theo, who at the time, was wearing a baby, had a dog at his feet, barking

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and begging for breakfast, had two eggs frying on the stove, and was sorting out a meal for all the rest of us.

Theo was distracted and busy and Alex, she later shared, had woken up with a tender heart after some troubling dreams, and wanted affection and attention from him. And when she didn't get it the way she wanted it in her timeline, she got upset. Because in her mind, and I don't really mean her conscious mind, this is a grown woman who I think if asked, would never say like, "Yes, I was thinking this," but it was in there, in that subconscious part of her brain.

So she got upset because in her mind she was being pushed aside, ignored. And her inner child was screaming that she was being abandoned, which let's be real, that's a very dangerous thing for a child. What she didn't realize at the time, what was driving the rest of her reaction was that she felt anxiety in that moment.

Like an existential anxiety, which is common to the codependent experience. Because voicing her needs felt like a dangerous thing in her childhood, and that doing it then made her so anxious. And it still does to this day and will likely continue to make her anxious until she turns her attention to seeing and healing that part of her, her story, and her core wounding from childhood.

So instead of directly asking Theo for what she wanted, which was his full attention right in that moment, instead of sussing up the situation and his capacity in that moment as a way to ground herself in reality and what was possible, given what he was doing in the kitchen, Alex's brain went right to her fear that should she ask for what she wants and needs, he would say no, which her brain would interpret, simply because it's its habit, it always has, as a reason to feel bad about herself, about her capacity to ask for what she needs and about how others will react to that.

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Her brain would tell a story about her lovability. All of this coming from her childhood experiences, in a home with no alcohol or drug use or dependency, but a lot of codependency, a lot of indirect communication, and a lot of pressure to succeed, to excel, to get all As, to do great in gymnastics and other sports.

Thoughts like, “Why bother asking for what I need? I’m not going to get it anyway,” are common in codependency and were all up in Alex’s head in that moment. Without the tools to manage the anxiety feelings in her body, Alex got angry with Theo, in a pouting way. Complaining by saying, “Geez Theo, I just wanted a hug, like a real hug and a real kiss. It’s not like I’m asking for that much.”

And this is how codependency manipulation can masquerade as love. With statements that effectively say, “Geez, I just wanted to love you the way I wanted to love you and you are rejecting my love,” which was so not true in this case. Dude was literally just busy.

And the very statement, “I’m not asking for that much,” is to negate the other person’s experience and their right to consent to what they want to do when they want to do it. When Alex’s brain ran through this pathway of complaining, it then, not getting what it wanted and needed to feel calmer, went to globalizing, to make the issue bigger by saying, “It’s so challenging to get your attention, Theo, you’re always so busy giving the kids and the dogs love and care. You should know that I want a big hug in the morning.”

Again, a masquerade. A sort of fake bid for love, done with this complaining energy, versus stepping into emotional adulthood and directly asking for what she wanted, or recognizing the situation was such that Theo was potentially not available and self-soothing, taking care of herself for herself until he was.

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And Theo, that dude, baby strapped to him, managing like, 50,000 things at once in that moment, he was so not having him. I know him as one of the most affectionate and loving people ever, but he has little space for complaining from children and much less from adults, and whining, it's never going to get you what you want with him. And so he didn't respond the way Alex wanted and her interpretation of his response, which was gentle and loving.

Still, her interpretation - and sorry, gentle and loving is my interpretation of it. I just want to be clear. He didn't turn and yell at her. He was like, "Hey, I'll be with you with in a moment." But her intention there was to get a response out of him, to get an immediate reaction from him.

And when he didn't respond the way she wanted, that left her feeling even more anxious and more upset, based on her thoughts and interpretations of the quick half-hug and the peck on the lips that she'd gotten from him that morning, together with him not responding to her complaining energy. She also did one of the most classic codependent moves, one that generally leads to a lot of yuck, which is expecting the other person to be able to read your mind, to give you what you want and need without you having to ask for it or speak to it.

Here, not saying, "Babe, I need some affection, some care, and I'd love to have your full attention and to get a big hug and a kiss this morning when you're available," but rather, not asking for what you want and going in for the kiss and the hug in the midst of all this everything, and not getting what you wanted because you didn't ask for it.

Which, as you can imagine, in Alex's mind, meant her needs didn't get met and so, more anxiety is created within her as her brain starts to tell stories about the other person, about herself, the situation, and globalizes, makes it bigger and bigger and bigger, to make this one small thing feel all encompassing.

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So brains like a recap. Thing we know from neuroscience. And my sister, the fourth-grade teacher always tells me, stop and recap. So the codependent thought habits we've identified so far through the story of Alex and Theo are one, codependent habit of not speaking your thoughts or needs directly, but rather, expecting other people to read your mind so you don't have to take the risk of speaking up and potentially being shot down, which from an adult place and not activated place, we can say, well, that's not a real risk. The worst thing that happens is you feel shot down.

But in that moment, it feels like a very real risk. This habit of not speaking up can lead to say yes when you mean no, overly caretaking others because you are not seeing or naming or expressing your own desires or needs, and therefore can lead to a chronic lack of self-care.

Two, complaining, whining, guilt, shaming, instead of speaking and asking directly, which often leads to anxiety because let's be real, few people give their full attention and support to an adult who is complaining, whining, and trying to guilt or shame them. And so the complainer is often ignored, which just reifies or makes feel real their original worry that they won't be listened to.

Three, projecting your anxiety onto someone else. And then allowing your brain to tell the story that your anxiety is about them and their decisions, versus being a feeling that you generate in your body, with your own habitual thoughts.

Okay, so another common codependent move in a situation of anxiety or not getting what you're demanding or not saying you want but secretly want, is to get angry. Our fourth codependent sign. This can often look like raising your voice or shaming, blaming, guilt, criticizing, whatever is easiest to latch onto. And often involves the manipulation of roping someone else in as a way to not appear so selfish.

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Here, it could look like Alex saying, “Well Theo, if you had started cooking earlier, then you’d be available and then our guests wouldn’t be waiting for breakfast.” In a situation where like, everyone waiting for breakfast was perfectly happy. It was Alex who was upset, but she tried to rope us in as her ally in that situation to triangulate and point out that Theo was wrong and look, someone else is suffering.

Another classic maneuver would be something like, “Theo, why is the baby awake? She should be asleep right now.” Again, roping the baby in as her accomplice. Or, “Why is the dog in the house? He has muddy feet. He should be outside. Now I’m going to have to clean it up,” which is like, seven layers of codependence rolled into one statement.

And what’s really fascinating about this one is that your adult brain realizes that it’s so not going to get you what you want to be mean, to get angry, especially when what you really want is love or care or kindness or help or affection. But what it does do and why it’s a classic and in its way, genius favorite move of codependent brains is that it acts as a buffer, which we talked all about in episode 14, which is a thing that you use to distract yourself, for even just a moment, for the more challenging feeling that you don’t want to feel, giving you a feel-good hit of dopamine and endocannabinoids.

Here, anger may feel easier or more comfortable than anxiety, concern, worry, feeling abandoned, especially if you grew up with subtle or even overt anger in your household, it might be your brain’s sort of go-to state. And because of the chemical shift that happens when you engage in the distraction of a buffer, your body just wants to do it over and over again.

Problem is like, any buffer, anger only raises your energy for just a moment. Only gets you attention for a quick second, and also often leaves you feeling depleted, drained, more distant from the ones you love,

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particularly when you're projecting the anxiety, fear, blame, or shame that you feel in your heart onto someone you know isn't causing your feelings.

Then that can lead to more anxiety, fear, blame, shame on the backend. When anxious, the codependent habit may turn to anger, which then leads to more anxiety in the wake of your outburst or unkindness. Another common strategy is to abandon ship when you're feeling abandoned. To ignore the person who isn't giving you what you want, even when you didn't ask for it.

This can look like saying, "That's fine, I didn't want to hug and kiss you anyway," or with a deflated energy to say, "Fine, I won't even ask for love from you. Forget it, it's off the table." Or you may not voice it, but you may simply stop doing it. To stop asking for what you need, almost as a way to punish the other person and to try to make them feel as abandoned as you do.

Again, unlikely conscious mind, but this is the work to get in touch with these parts of our brain so that we can see when we're carrying out these habits that don't serve us. Because this habit too is not likely to lead to you getting the love and care and support you want and need. Though it's funny, right? It does work sometimes for just a millisecond.

That is, if you pout and look dejected around the right people, likely codependent people themselves, they may ask you what's wrong, which might at least show your inner child that someone cares a little bit. But in the long run, getting care because you're withdrawing and pouting isn't getting care as an adult. It's getting the kind of care one might give a child, given that this kind of stance is emotional childhood personified.

This kind of thinking and behavior, withdrawing from love or the chance of emotionally challenging or vulnerable situations, from that place of anxiety, fear, or worry, is also deeply anxiety-provoking and producing, my love.

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One more habit I want to make sure to name is taking things personally and making things about you that are simply not about you, which I think can come from several different places. But I think one of the most common ones is likely this fear that you don't matter, and so it's like your brain wants to jump to making everything about you.

It can also come from this perfectionist place or this fear of failure place where if you're taking every single comment that comes your way and making it deeply about you, then you can criticize yourself, you can get mad at yourself, and you can name all these things that are wrong or bad or not great about you before anyone else can, which to a brain wired for codependency, that can in its way feel safer than sort of not taking things personally and leaving yourself open to criticism or other people having opinions.

That one's a fascinating one. Okay, so the traits and habits we've identified so far since those first three. Four, getting angry. Again, another pushing away tactic used when there is anxiety, fear, or worry, using anger as an emotional buffer against the real feeling.

Five, abandoning ship when challenged. The old I don't need your love anyway, which deep inside in your most tender places may read as I am so scared you won't give me the love I want, so I won't risk the pain of getting denied or rejected, and effectively leads you to not getting your needs met, to denying and rejecting yourself and feeling bad about yourself in the process.

And six, taking things personally, which we just talked about. And a final way that I see codependency showing up for my clients and the people I love is as this sort of, almost like a social anxiety. And I think the root of it is fear of other people's reactions to us.

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Fear of other people's judgments, what they might think, and therefore again, in that deep reaches of our psyche, labeling yourself as unlovable or not worthy of love, but rather worthy of criticism, of blaming or judging yourself for not being perfect, as though that was a real thing, for not doing everything right in someone else's eyes, and generally speaking, not having a positive self-regard, which we dove into in episode 50.

Positive self-regard is when you decide to truly and deeply love yourself as yourself, regardless of your own missteps or goofs, knowing that to be human is to be fallible, perfectly imperfect, and to make mistakes. Instead, when you don't have a positive self-regard, you judge yourself harshly, assume others are judging you, and that means something and you care a lot about other people's opinions or thoughts about you, which if you pause and think about it, you actually never know what anyone else is thinking about you really.

And this habit, this habit of judging yourself because you think someone else might be, it's just so classically codependent as a way of thinking. And is often the deep root of codependency as a thought habit, and it's often based in not feeling lovable. Not feeling and knowing that you are secure in your self-love and self-regard, regardless of what's happening in your life, in your world, relationships, regardless of the circumstances and situations of your life.

This habit of blaming, shaming, judging yourself also produces more anxiety and worsens the tendency towards codependent thinking overall. Alright my angels, this has been some heaviness. Let us pause for a nerd alert. Here we go.

So I'm sure that you've noticed that for each of these thought habits, I've called out how it can lead you to feel more anxious in the world, more unsettled. And I want to talk about what's happening in your body. It is both an automatic and a habitual thing.

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Your sense of self and safety and wellbeing are challenged. When someone doesn't read your mind and thus doesn't give you what you didn't ask for, so you feel anxious, which leads your loving body, which loves you so much, to respond with a rush of adrenaline, followed by a slower climb of cortisol.

So the triggering of the sympathetic branch of the autonomic and remember, autonomic, automatic nervous system, and so I'm just going to go one-on-one for a second, in case anyone's new to this nerdiness. Okay, so the autonomic or automatic nervous system is the one that controls heart rate, breathing, respiration, so you don't have to think about your heart rate and think about moving my lungs, moving my blood.

I would just die very fast. It's a lot to think about. And so our bodies and their infinite wisdom do not require us to think about these things. So the autonomic nervous system controls all of that. Your hearing, your seeing, it controls muscle movements, movement of blood, all the automatic things.

And there are two branches to it. Sympathetic, fight or flight, and parasympathetic, which then has branches, which are the ventral vagal, which is safe and secure, socially connected, dorsal vagal, which is your back's up against the wall. That's the freeze response.

Hold tight, it's all going to make sense in just a second and you don't need to memorize these things. The transcripts are on my website and I'm going to be doing YouTube videos and just talking so much more about polyvagal theory because I'm obsessed because I come from gut health. That's what I worked in for like, 20 years and so much of IBS and other gut health issues has so much to do with polyvagal theory. Science.

Okay, I really have to reel my brain in because I start talking about science and I just want to nerd so hard. Okay, so when you get this adrenaline rush, this cortisol rush, this is the triggering of the sympathetic branch,

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preparing you to fight or flight. Preparing you to get angry, to storm off, to hurl accusations, to attempt to project your pain onto someone else as though that would take it out of your body for good, which of course it never can.

And when that panic system is exhausted you may find yourself falling into dorsal vagal shutdown, the state of depressed energy, which I talked about in episode 43. That state of freeze or playing possum, which emotionally can feel like dissociation, numbness, dizziness, being off balance, hopelessness, shame, sense of being out of your body, disconnected to the world, or a sense of feeling trapped or stuck.

Common thoughts in this state are, “Things will never change, I’m so stuck, I’ll never be able to speak up for myself, she’ll never listen to me,” which leads us to feel more stuck and less able to speak up for ourselves. In both of these states, you are outside your agency, outside your power, and you have turned it over to another human to decide how you are going to feel, which also happens in the final neurological state I want to talk about, which I haven’t talked about this one here before and I’m really excited because I love nerding out with you.

And that’s the fawn or appease reaction. The fourth reaction. And for some reason, it’s just not talked about that much and I don’t know why. So fourth, meaning fight, flight, freeze, appease. It’s also called fawning, which I kind of like that it’s all Fs for the alliteration but I kind of like the rhyme. I feel like you can’t lose. Either way you’re winning.

So fawning or appeasing can lead to not having or holding firm to your boundaries, and can often look a lot like manipulating when it’s done by adults. I mean, I guess it can look like manipulating too when it’s kids, but there’s a part of me that’s like, that is very strategic, particularly for children, when there’s a power differential.

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And you know, it is actually very strategic and smart in its way for humans of all ages when there's abuse or neglect or substance use involved. So fawning or appeasing, it's a protective stance in which you try to make the other person happy so you can feel safe.

But what your brain and body are forgetting or putting aside in those moments is you and that your number one job is to attend to you and your wants and needs first, because no one else is going to do it, and not to push them aside, to try to make someone else happy, which you never can really do anyway, because feeling happy and joyful is always an inside job.

When we are fawning or appeasing, things can get rather complicated because you can get reliant on that person telling you you're being so great, you're doing so great, thank you for doing all of these things for me, and it can sort of create this loop where that person gets dependent on you. I mean, kind of what codependency is all about, right?

My love, my sweet one, I don't want that for you. Not at all. I want to guide you to live a life without these sneaky codependent thought habits, these subtle and not so subtle attempts to manipulate or control or change others. And again, trust and believe that I get it. I get where it comes from and how challenging it can be to rewrite, to regulate, and I have faith in you.

I know you can do it, my sweet one, and I know it in my body, lo siento because I did it for myself. I broke free of codependent thinking and I know you can too. What I most want you to know is that feeling your feelings, while attending to your nervous system is the most important step to rewriting these patterns.

What you get to do to find your liberation is to - and deep breath here my babies, you're not going to like it - my darling, you get to feel your anxiety. You get to really feel it and please, trust and believe, I've had a panic

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attack on the six train. I know feeling your anxiety is a big ask but my love, attempting to use any of these other methods to push it away, to try to buffer against it. It just doesn't work.

By feeling your anxiety and learning what it feels like in your body, where you feel it, what it does in your body and mind is key to not acting out in these ways that keep you stuck and suffering. When you can acknowledge and feel that anxiety, when you can name it and get real with it, you can deal with it.

I like that rhyme. I don't know that I've ever said that out loud. Get real with it to deal with it. We should make t-shirts. Who wants that on a t-shirt? Is anyone else's brain doing The Princess Bride? Stop that rhyming now, I mean it. Anybody want a peanut? Oh my gosh, I don't thing y'all understand what a nerd I am.

Anyway, okay, rein it in, Victoria. Right, I can't stop laughing. When you get real with it, you can deal with it. Why is that so funny to me? I just love a rhyme. I'm going to make it worse, you ready? When you get real with it, you can deal with it, and then you can heal it. It's like, dad jokes. It's like the worst dad jokes.

Alright, I'm going to take a big deep breath in and out. Let me refocus. So my love, you can't heal what you can't see, and as long as you keep acting in these codependent ways, it's so challenging to regulate your nervous system and you'll keep going into fight, flight, freeze, appease, and you'll be less able to address the underlying concerns.

Like my sweet friend Alex, who woke up feeling tender. All she wanted was affection. And the way she didn't really ask for it, well, that whole situation and her thoughts about it left her feeling abandoned and rejected, when she didn't get what she didn't ask for in a particular way. Now, with a greater sense of self-worth, self-love and positive self-regard, you are so

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well-resourced to give yourself love and care when you're getting it externally.

And that old pull to tell stories about your unlovability, about other people failing you, that you can't ask for what you need and want, those stories start to fade into the past. They become a set of unintentional thought habits you used to have and can be replaced with the intentional thoughts you want to have and believe and think now, as your more and evermore evolved adult self.

It is only from the place of unconditional love for yourself, the place of getting clean and clear about what you're thinking and feeling, that you can learn to trust yourself, to make the most loving decisions on your own behalf, as your most loving adult. And with that as always, a reminder.

My sweet one, you are a human, humaning along in this world, doing your darn best. So you've had codependent thoughts and habits. Okay. Me too. That happened. I was taught to do it, I kept doing it. It was modeled for me. Maybe it was modeled for you.

And while I'm clearly not out here being like oh well, I kind of am. Where I'm going with this is to remind you to be gentle, loving, and kind with yourself as you discover these thought habits in your life. Being mean to you with statements like, "I can't believe I had those codependent thoughts for so long, how could I not see it," and et cetera, et cetera, those won't get you anywhere but back in that place of low self-regard and low self-love that fed the codependent thoughts in the first place.

So okay, you have a history of codependent thinking. That's what was. Bring in the love, be your own best friend, your own most moving parent, and know that all is well here. You're growing and changing and becoming and that's beautiful. Honor the process, my darling one.

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Okay my beauties, that is it from me today. We'll be talking more next week about codependency again, with a slightly different angle. I love hearing from you. Leave me a review on iTunes. Perhaps you'll hear it on the air and maybe it'll make me cry, which will be really nice because I love the release of crying because I feel so touched and tender.

Be in touch, follow me on the Instagrams, hop on over to my website and get on my email list. Let's be connected. I love it. Collective healing is the way and when we're connected, well, we feel connected. Alright my beauties, thank you for your time, thank you for listening, thank you just for riding it out with my dad jokes and my silly rhymes because I am a silly goose. That is the truth of my life and I've come to love myself for it because why not.

Remember my love, you are safe, you are held, you are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well. I'll talk to you soon. Ciao.

Thank you for listening to this week's episode of *Feminist Wellness*. If you like what you've heard, head to [VictoriaAlbina.com](http://VictoriaAlbina.com) to learn more