

# Ep #256: Somatics, Sex, and Embodiment with Honeydew Me



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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## Ep #256: Somatics, Sex, and Embodiment with Honeydew Me

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. Ah, holiday season's in the rearview mirror, huh? I hope you are taking tender care of yourself, if that's something you need after the holidays; if you're with your family of origin, or your in laws, or friends, or alone, or whatever it was.

If it was joyous, I hope you're reveling in that joy. That you're carrying that serotonin and dopamine and oxytocin, and you're just wrapping yourself in a little blanket of it all. It's not New Year's for all of us, right? Just those on the Gregorian calendar. But anyway, I hope you're wrapping yourself up in it.

This is the show for folks living with codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thought habits; emotional outsourcers. Many of us, we grew up with emotionally immature parents, emotionally unavailable parents, and the holidays can be a challenging time.

A time when our boundaries... Whoo, we get to flex those boundaries. We get to make like Teflon, make like little ducks, and let things wash right over our backs. Where we get to really just ask a lot of questions about how we want to be living, how we want to be in connection, and what it looks like to be in connection with our families of origin. Again, for some of us, that's super joyful and super great.

One of my closest and most beloved friends has five kids, and they all got tattoos. How amazing is that? So many of my clients don't talk to their family of origin. It's extreme to extreme, right? They got matching family tattoos or home alone with the cat. I'm not out here like, "One is better." I'm just saying there's a range of human experience.

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Wherever you find yourself, you are perfect. You are loved. You are lovable. You're a mammal, mammaling along. I just want to give you a little extra love and care, and let you know that I see you. I see you doing the very best you can with the skills you have in this moment.

You're out here learning new skills, growing; you're listening to this podcast, for goodness' sake. So, pause, give yourself a little credit. Give yourself a little love. A little extra care. Again, if the holidays were a beautiful, glorious, amazing time, wrap yourself up in it. Yeah.

We went to Toronto, to spend time with my incredible friend [inaudible] and her wife, Sarah, and their beautiful children. Si estan escuchando gracias mil, lo pasamos bomba! We had a beautiful, incredible time. I'm wrapping myself up in that cloak of chosen family.

So, my loves, before I go off on too long of a ramble, this has nothing to do with episode. Ay, Dios Santo, well, what are you going to do? Wanted the ADHD host? You got it, right? I'm going off on my little tangents.

This week, I'm sharing something really fun. I have been a regular contributor to the *Honeydew Me Podcast*, which is Emma and Cass's show all about sex and love and relationships. I have had the extreme honor of being on the show talking about emotional outsourcing, somatics and our bodies, and sex and sexuality. That's what this show is about.

So, if you have little ears, and you don't want little ears hearing about s-e-x, this is a great podcast to skip, or listen to with your little headphones on. But maybe not out loud in the car, for you, if those little ears ask questions you're not in the mood to answer.

So, here we go. I'm going to share this episode today with you all because it was really fun, and because Emma and Cass are incredible. And because I talk a lot about somatics, s-e-x and somatics. It's a really great

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primer and a way in to thinking about somatics and the body, and how we relate to our bodies. I really hope that you enjoy it.

Cass: Particularly, we would like to talk about somatics and sex, but we think we need a little, little, itty-bitty refresher on somatics, the nervous system, all of that goody, goody stuff, and why it matters so much. Can you give us your spiel?

Victoria: There's little I would like more. So, we had summer break, right? We're just back. We are back from your summer break, and I've been preparing this joke for like weeks. So, I do actually need you to ask me what was one of my favorite things I did this summer? What have I been up to? Something to prep for the following.

Cass: Emma, lay it down.

Emma: Oh, my God, Victoria, it is so good to see you again.

Victoria: It's nice to see you, too

Emma: We've had a summer in between us. What was your favorite thing that you did over summer?

Victoria: Yeah, we traveled. We did a whole Europe thing that was amazing. I've been working on my book. But mostly, I've been tramping.

Cass: I've been tramps in the summer.

Victoria: I've been tramping. I got a trampoline, and every day I'm just tramping. I'm just tramping, every morning a little 10 minutes, like a retiree somewhere outside St. Pete's, Florida. Just wearing my little Jane Fonda leotard. I do it, legit, in my PJs. But no brassiere, because we're doing the whole lymphatic flow thing. We're flowing.

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Emma: That sounds a little painful, though.

Victoria: Yeah, it hurt at first. But that was the whole thing... I wore, for real, a sports bra, and then a bralette, and then worked up to just rock-and-rollin'.

Cass: Just tassels.

Victoria: Please, c'mon, c'mon! I'm not going to just free tit it. Tassels are mandatory around here. You're the one with the sequins, obviously. I am a somatic practitioner. I mean, I trained for years. I'm not going to abandon my post, at this point. You can count on me. Trampsing, I've just been trampsing.

Emma: I love it.

Victoria: I highly recommend it. I mean, it does tie into somatics and sex, embodiment, and lymphatic flow. Which, c'mon, let's get it flowing.

Emma: How big is your tramp?

Victoria: Girl, 48".

Cass: Forty-eight-inch tramp.

Victoria: That's right, girl. I'm 63  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". So, it's a really good time.

Emma: Decent tramp.

Victoria: It's a nice tramp. It fits on the back porch. It's crisp out, so I'm in my little woollies tramping it up. Just trampin'. Alive! It really does feel so good.

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Cass: It's good for the nervous system.

Victoria: Yeah.

Emma: Beautiful, it just gets ya all awake.

Victoria: Yeah, it's a good time.

Emma: Thank you for letting us set you up for that, because this was so important to touch on.

Victoria: You're welcome.

Cass: We'll call this episode "Sluts and Tramps."

Victoria: "Somatics Sluts" and... What's the "T" for tramp?

Emma: Titillating tramps.

Victoria: Titillating tramps! That's so good. Done! Thank you, it's been a pleasure. I will see you next month.

Emma: We're so excited.

Cass: Four minutes.

Victoria: Good times. So, great. But in the meanwhile, shall I talk about somatics, and what the hell it is?

Cass: Yes.

Emma: We have a few more minutes.

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Victoria: Okay, great.

Emma: We might go, but you can just go ahead and keep talking.

Victoria: Oh, wow. Okay. So, I'm the one with the issue here. Okay. Identify patient, got it. Identified nerd. So, soma- comes from the Greek, and means body. So, somatics... I put on my nerd voice for you. Somatics is the study of the body in its wholeness. It's the return to the body in the wholeness.

It's a way of reclaiming all the disparate pieces of ourself, of our connection with ourselves and our bodies, that we've been detached from over years and years of living as false selves, living in inauthenticity, living in codependency, perfectionism, people pleasing, trying to keep others happy with us, trying to be the good girl, the good boy, or the little man of the house. Whatever role we were put in as children for our survival.

The roles we were put in by the society and cultures we live in. Those have all detached us from our soma; from our body, from our felt connection with self. It detaches us from the wisdom of the body. We'll just, really quick, throw Descartes all the way under the bus; he can take the church, back in the day, with him.

That whole separation of body and mind, the "I think, therefore I am," the reigning supreme of the mind, has not only infiltrated Western culture, but it has become it. It is this productivity driven, think about it, think it through. No one's saying, "Baby, feel it through." I mean, other than us who are saying that. I'm saying that all day long, right?

But that's what somatics is, it's a return to the body in its wholeness, before we learned to be someone or something else for our own survival, and thriving in systems that demand that we not show up as us. Cool?

Cass: Cool.

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Victoria: So, that's the theory. What the hell does it mean on the day to day? It means knowing what your body is telling you; being able to hear your body, connect with your body, talk with your body, be in communication with your own body. Whereby, you don't believe that the only way through a problem, an inconvenience, a decision, is to brain it.

To think and think and think and think and overthink, and ruminate, and drive yourself absolutely bananas. Instead, you can turn to the wisdom of the body, to our intuition, our discernment, to our connection with a world beyond ourselves.

Our bodies are in connection with interdependence. With the fact that there there's no air for me to breathe without my friendly trees, right? I too, am part of the carbon cycle, the nitrogen cycle; all these cycles that on the biological end lead to my continued existence, and yours and yours and yours and yours, right?

Then interpersonally, it is interdependence that allows me to live into my own autonomy, and to honor the autonomy of the people I love and care for. Strangers at the supermarket, too. I'm not trying to pick the groceries off the shelf and put them in their basket anymore. We can meet each other with mutuality and reciprocity. That's what interdependence is.

So, when we are somatically present, when we are at home in our bodies, when we are showing up really alive in our bodies, we feel the whole range of human emotions and feelings. We feel the sensation that corresponds with those emotions and feelings in our bodies.

So, sad is no longer a story in my head, it is an actual felt experience in my body. So, too, is joy. So, too, is disappointment. So, too, is elation. And everything in between is something I feel in my body. We good, so far? Okay, great.



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Emma: Rockin'.

Victoria: I am very well aware of my own tendency to go way too philosophical, and sometimes not get too practical. And sometimes I'll get way too practical, because I'm a nurse at the end of the day. I'm like, "Well, wiggle your left first finger for 27 minutes." People are like, "Girl, please. It's a bit much." You know what I'm saying? Oof, find the middle there, Leo.

Emma: What are you going to do?

Victoria: What do you do, right? Every day, I'm in the struggle. A struggle it is.

Cass: We love the work you're doing.

Victoria: Thank you. My friend, JB, has this tattoo on her belly that says, "Praise the lard" and has a strip of bacon on it dripping grease. And anytime someone says the word "Lord," I've got to tell you... Praise the lard.

Cass: That's angelic.

Victoria: Amazing, right?

Emma: What's up, JB?

Victoria: Maybe JB is listening to this somewhere.

Emma: Also, I really appreciate that they got it tattooed on their stomach. I think that, first of all, tattoo placement; excellent. Phrasing and bacon on your stomach; beyond.

Victoria: Can't beat that.

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Cass: Is it an arc over the belly button?

Victoria: Under, which is even better, I think. It's like a belly apron, almost fupa situation.

Cass: I love it.

Emma: Excellent. Can't beat that, you just really can't. So, praise doing the lard's work.

Victoria: Doing the lard's work, day in and day out. It's tiring work, but someone's got to do it.

Cass: Someone has to.

Victoria: Honestly, though, glad it's not me.

Emma: Honestly, I'm glad you don't carry that burden. Wow.

Victoria: I feel seen, loved, and held right now. I feel like I really missed you. Well, over the summer break while you were busy and I was tramping. I'm glad that we are reunited, and it feels so good.

Cass: I know, it feels so good.

Emma: We missed you, too.

Victoria: I missed you, too. Great. Good. Where were we? Somatics, yeah. There are so many reasons we get somatically disconnected that makes so much sense. And needn't carry blame, shame, guilt, self-recrimination, when we grew up in households where our authenticity isn't honored.

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As is the case in codependency, perfectionism, and people pleasing. The constellation of lived experiences I call “emotional outsourcing.” Yes, I did trademark that, because it's really good.

Cass: It is really good.

Victoria: It's really good. It's going to be in the name of my book, which is coming out next year or the year after. [over talk]

Emma: We're still excited.

Victoria: Time to be sloshing, so it's not real. Eventually there will be a book, *Emotional Outsourcing*. Listen, emotional outsourcing demands that we not be ourselves, right? When we are dysregulated in our nervous systems, meaning we have left ventral vagal which is the safe and social part of the nervous system.

Where we are chill, where we are calm, cool, and collected. Where our brains do their best thinking, our thyroid does its best thyroiding, and metabolism, heart and lungs do their thing. Our digestion, our spleen, our pancreas, our reproductive function.

Everything is optimal biologically when we are in ventral vagal. In ventral vagal we feel safe, we feel secure, we feel social, we feel connected, we can ideate, we can be present, we can be here, we can daydream in a present way, we can think of the possibility of the future, and we can talk about the past. Right? We can be here, with the sort of calm, groundedness of feeling physiologically, emotionally, energetically safe.

Everyone will have their own parameters, their own limits, their own stories about what “safe” is for them as a mammal. I was about to say there are some universals, but there actually aren't. Things with no legs or things with

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too many legs, marauders, lions; like, there's somebody who's not scared of it all.

Anyway, ventral vagal is that safe and social. I'm just giving the 101, that seems smart because it's been a hot minute.

Emma: Okay, yeah, absolutely.

Victoria: That is our human steady state. It's where our nervous systems want to be. It is also where we do our best sex from. Because it is when we feel safe. Right? We can talk for a second... Well, let's put a collective pin in kink, and feeling safe being unsafe as a way to be, to edge around ventral vagal in a safe way. Because I think that's really important. But let's 101... and then let's go... That's like seminar level; nervous system and sex.

Emma: We've got to master this part first.

Victoria: All puns, always intended. Yes, master or mistress. I mean, either way.

Emma: I'm going to mistress this one first.

Cass: I like that.

Emma: Let's mistress this one first, and then we'll move on.

Victoria: Yeah, trademark that, girl. C'mon on, you're not busy. What are you doing?

Victoria: Ventral vagal is chill. That's how I feel right now. I see your faces, and I'm just like, "Aww, kittens. Hi, I love yous. Oh my, look how cute yous

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are. This is so fun. We're back, the band's back together. It's really fun." So, my nervous system feels really chill.

I very consciously feel like I have access to my most smartest smart, smarts, when I'm talking to the two of yous, because I'm so comfortable. So, that's good. Because it'd be a bummer if I came on and was like, "Um, I feel pretty dumb."

Emma: I totally know that feeling, too. Of course, my dog finds the one fucking squeaky toy while I'm talking.

Victoria: Listen, a friend was listening to my show the other day, and was like, "Hey, is your dog in the room while you record?" I was like, "Sometimes, why?" She's like, "You know that collar thing where they shake and their whole collar goes clunk-clunk-clunk?" What are you going to do?

Emma: Literally, he's been asleep this whole time. But now, he's found my slippers and a horn. Anyway...

Cass: A tuba. He has a whole band with him, now.

Emma: Brass band. But speaking with certain people, and I'll let you finish your thought; that sounded so rude. It's like you just feel dumb, or you feel like you cannot access the rest of your brain, because your whole body has heightened to this state of, 'I don't know how to interact with you.' Exactly what you're saying. I know that feeling.

Victoria: So, that altered state is a great example of sympathetic activation, also known as fight or flight. As humans, we know that we are very small animals. And we know that we are safest when we are together. So, it is the perennial homeostatic, human imperative to try to stay in ventral vagal. To try to stay in social engagement, in connection.

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Even if you're getting mugged, what are nine out of 10 people going to say? "Hey, dude, we're cool, right? Hey, take my phone, take my wallet. You want this ring? Take it, man. But leave me alone. You don't need to hurt me. We're chill, right? We're cool. We're cool. I didn't see your face. Just get out of here, right? We're cool, right?"

We want to stay socially engaged because we know it's the way to the greatest safety. But when that doesn't work, when our nervous system says, "Yo! Yo! This is not safe. This is not okay. This is not... Nuh-uh, this smells like a moment in the past when we were not safe."

Your nervous system will put you on guard. It will put you into reactivity. It will dumb your brain down, slow your thyroid, speed up heart and lungs, slow and then eventually stop digestion, reproductive function, your adrenals will go bonkers, and you'll go into fight or flight.

As small animals... and if you're a 6'3" person out there, you are small compared to a rhino; that's what I'm comparing you to. So, take a breath. I know I'm 5'3 ¾", but I'm just saying, you are also small. Take a breath, my angel. I love you. And you're like, "Oh, I'm so tall;" rhinos, hippopotami, okay?

Emma: God, have you seen those things run? Terrifying.

Victoria: They're bananas.

Emma: Yeah. Also, I think you're where I get "bananas," because I say "bananas" all the time.

Victoria: It's so great. It's such a catchy... I don't want to be ableist and say crazy, right? That's not kind and loving, especially as a mental health professional.

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Emma: So, we say “bananas.”

Cass: Emma also says, “Bananas, potatoes.”

Emma: Bananas, potatoes.

Victoria: I eat those all the time.

Emma: There we go. Kindred souls here.

Victoria: I also love that all of our names end in “A”

Emma: Me, too.

Victoria: My wife has only ever dated women whose name ends in “A”.  
Ever, since her first girlfriend at like 15.

Cass: Well, at least you didn't break the pattern.

Victoria: Girl. I mean, Maria Victoria Albina, that's a lot “A”. I stole the  
pattern. The pattern is broken. The pattern is done, it is unavailable.  
There's no more A's. There shall never be a lesbian with an “A”, anywhere  
in her name, ever again. It's over, nice try.

Cass: It's over.

Victoria: So, that's cool. Hey, so rhinos? Should I get back into it? Dear  
listener, if this is your first time hearing me on the show, I'd like you to know  
that my ADHD brain will go on a million wild diversions. But I will always,  
always come back. I'm really grateful for that part of my brain, that literally  
like stops the tape and is like, “Rhinos, go wild!” And back to rhinos. It's fun.

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Emma: It's a superpower.

Victoria: It's a superpower, brrrains. Okay, brrrain. So, rhinos. Fight or flight. We know as humans we are small, and so we don't try to fight. That is not the human imperative, biologically speaking. What we know from Polyvagal Theory, the work of Dr. Stephen Porges, PhD; made into English by Deb Dana.

Don't try to read Porges unless you're a super nerd. I studied epidemiology, I am a super nerd. I read Porges, and I'm like, 'Really? Why?' Deb Dana is a social worker and a woman, and she makes it into English. I love you forever, Deb Dana. You're a dreamboat.

We know from Porges that there is a hierarchy to how the human brain and the human nervous system functions. This is standard across the animals. I know you think you are special, and you are, in your own special way. But your nervous system, your autonomic nervous system, is magically, not.

That's really cool, because we can understand what we are going to do next. And man, is that a gift? So, you're going to try to flight, as are we. That means either physically escaping, talking your way out of it... That's that, "Hey, man, you don't need to hurt me." We're attempting flight while doing social engagement.

If that doesn't work, we book it out of there. We bust a move. We physically run. I don't know why this just came into my mind, but I remember, so many moons ago, being really depressed. A friend was like "You've got to go exercise." I was like, "Okay, okay, that'll fix me," and going to group classes.

The attention on me was more than my depressed nervous system could handle, and it would zoom me up into sympathetic and I would panic. I would literally run out of yoga classes. That must have been dysregulating for everyone. Sorry, to the good people of [cross talk] gym 20 years ago.



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Emma: Tripping over bodies.

Victoria: I know right? I can't handle the attention. It's scary for my nervous system. It was, it freaked me out. Yeah. Anyway, so we fight, we flight, that's sympathetic. We're full of adrenaline, norepinephrine, eventually cortisol. It's not good for your body.

It's not a great place to have sex from because you're not present in your body; you're present everywhere else. You're scanning the horizon for more lions. Your blood is racing not to your clitoris, not to your genitals, your blood is racing to your paws and your feets and your hearts and your lungs, because you need to book it out of there.

Biologically, should you not be able to escape whatever you're escaping... even if it's a challenging conversation, or your mom texting you, or your partner saying, "I can't support you around that..." Whatever it is that activated your nervous system into sympathetic, if you don't get resolution, if you don't get connection, if you don't get support, if you don't get attunement, which is what we need when we're freaked the fuck out, your nervous system will collapse into what's called dorsal shutdown.

The extreme of dorsal shutdown is being catatonic. So, we're talking about a spectrum here, like a 0-10. Where 10 is like you're in Bellevue. Most of us do not go to there, right? We go to a 2, 3, 4, 5. Where we're like, we're far away. You know when you're talking to someone, and they get upset and you're like, "Hey, where are you? The lights are on but you're not home. You're not present. You're not in the room with me."

And so, that sort of internal isolation; we're isolating ourselves while staying in the room; which is a survival skill we learned at some point, right? We've biologically, psychologically, energetically checked out. We're just not present because it is safer not to be.

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If we return to the savanna of evolution and we are a gazelle who's been bit by a lion, do you want to be physically, and emotionally, energetically present while being lion snacked? Ouch. I vote no.

Cass: No thank you.

Victoria: And so, our bodies flood with endogenous endorphins in fight or flight, and then endogenous cannabinoids in freeze. That is so we don't feel pain. Right? And so, what do we know about anything that reduces pain? It reduces empathy. We can look at the Tylenol studies; Tylenol reduces empathy.

And so, we know that when we feel less pain, we have less empathy. And so, when we are in the freeze state, we are frozen to ourselves, to our emotions, and we're frozen to the world and all the people in it. We are disconnected. We are dissociated. We are not home, for our own protection.

Now, does that sounds like a fun place for a sexual escapade?

Emma: No

Cass: No, thank you.

Victoria: No. On a scale from 0-0.0, where would you put it?

Cass: Negative zero.

Victoria: Okay, wow, negative zero. Yeah. To the zeroeth power, definitely. Yeah. It's not great. Unfortunately, I think most of us have been there. But it's not a great place to be having any kind of intimate relations. Even a snuggle doesn't feel good, because you're not there. You're not on the couch. Your physical animal is, but you as a presence are not.

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So, we all move between the spectrum. Remember, there's a spectrum. So, 0-10? Okay, I feel like a 1 of sympathetic activation right now. Because I'm excited. I'm chill. I'm ventral vagal. I'm safe and social. But I'm also really stoked. I adore you. It's fun to talk about this. I've got a little ba-da-bing, a little zoom-zoom. Right?

It's always on this spectrum, and so the closer we are to ventral vagal, with a little flavor of excited and a little flavor of dorsal; meaning we're chill. There's no shavasana at the end of yoga without dorsal. So, we need that balance, and to intentionally move between states, in order to have our most present, intentional experience of being alive and being a human.

And as our most intentional, live way of having sex. It's when we are able to move between those states with fluidity and in consciousness and choice, wholeness. And so, what somatics does in reconnecting us with our bodies, with our nervous system, with our wants, our needs, our desires, is it returns us to choicefulness.

As opposed to letting our nervous system run the show.

Cass: It sounds like a much better place to have sex from.

Victoria: I mean, yeah.

Emma: Thank you for breaking that down, again.

Victoria: Quite a rant, I hope you enjoyed it.

Emma: I'm going to pat myself on the back a little bit, because we've been chatting with you about somatics for a year and a half now, and I want to say I get it more, now. This chat, this breakdown, I could resonate with and feel it more. And whether it's because we chat more, I read and watch your

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work more, or I'm trying to practice somatics for myself more lately, maybe. I don't know.

But it does feel good to be like, "Oh, I get that part. Oh, I remember when I've done that. When I've had partners were we've experienced this shut down together." And so, I want to congratulate myself.

Victoria: Well done, Emma.

Emma: Thank you. Thank you.

Victoria: Well done, you.

Emma: When we are in shutdown, or not focusing on what's happening in our body, how do we come back to felt sensation in our body? How do we get there again?

Victoria: There are ways to do it in the moment. But it really is... You don't learn how to do flips off the high dive when you've jumped off the board. You know what I mean? People really love to ask, "What do I do in the moment of panic?" And I'm like, "You start six months before the moment of panic."

Of course, I'll give you quick tips and things to do, like 9-1-1 emergency things. But I feel like, and I'm not talking about you, I'm talking about the world, that's the part of the problem. Is that we're starting the commodification of somatics. Which is like, "I saw somatics course," raise your hand if you're also part of the problem.

I mean, also, your girl's got to put food on the table. C'mon on. Oh, my God, the amount of money and time I've spent training on this stuff; separate conversation. But anyway, listen, we have gotten into this place where it's like somatics becomes the next band-aid. Every time I open my

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Instagram, it's like, here are 57 things that you can do for your activated nervous system.

I'm like, "Cool, but it's not about tricks, right?" It's not hacks and tricks. It's a shift in our lifestyle. It's a shift in the way we think about and relate to ourselves, our bodies, the world. So, I talk about how, in Anchored, my sixmonth program, and in the Somatic Studio, my three-month program, what we're doing is we're practicing somatics towards the goal of somatics being our praxis. Our praxis, our way of living. The practice that is our life.

Not like, "Okay, I need to go do my somatics now." Which we need to do that. We need to put it on the calendar and do our somatics now every day, until we don't. You see what I'm saying? That really is the work. It's tuning it.

Cass: We've talked about sex in general, how we tend to do that, when we want to try something new, or bring something new into bedroom. We're like, "Let's just do it," jump off the high dive, and learn to flip from there, and it is activating. Not pleasurable and orgasm inducing, which is what we're looking for.

So, again, it makes sense that that's not the place you're going to learn how to really do this, and how to make it a part of the way you live your life.

Victoria: Yeah, for sure. You all have talked about this a thousand times, where does foreplay start? It starts like, "Baby, I packed your lunch today."

Cass: Outside the bedroom.

Victoria: Right. Way, way, way before. It starts with, "I made you a cup of tea." That's sexy. And foreplay starts with, "I regulated my nervous system." Because few things are as sexy as having a partner who does not look to

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me with that codependent look in their eyes. Saying, “I don't know how to care for myself, and I demand that you do it for me.”

Emma: Right. Not really a turn on.

Victoria: Studies show...

Cass: [cross talk]

Victoria: Yes, 0%.

Emma: Being your mummy isn't really a turn on.

Victoria: It is not a turn on, for me. Not a consensual set up, for me. Listen, I'm all into us supporting our ourselves and our partners and showing up with love and care, and of course, supporting someone who's in a challenging moment.

But there is a difference between what we were just talking about, consensually showing up as an autonomous person to support an autonomous person, with mutuality and reciprocity within an interdependent relationship. And, “Mommy, help my feelings.” Save me from myself, is not a sexy look, I guess I'm saying. No.

Emma: That's pretty clear.

Victoria: That will take me into dorsal really quick. I'm like, “No, no, not emotionally available for that.”

So, how do you reconnect somatically in life, so that you can have way better sex? It starts with self awareness. Which can be quite tricky. Let's pause, I feel like people gloss over that. You know what I mean? What

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comes up for the two of yous when we talk about self-awareness, somatic, bodily self-awareness?

Emma: I feel like I was trying to do something similar last night, and it just becomes too much. It's like, if I become aware of that, I have to become aware of everything and I'm trying to go to bed. It's almost like, if I turn on the faucet, I can't turn it off.

Cass: Interesting.

Emma: But also, there's a whole other side that I was explaining. Where it's amazing to start feeling into your body and doing that. But sometimes it can feel like a lot.

Victoria: I wonder if, what might be missing in that, lying in bed trying to feel the feels, worried scenario? I'm wondering if what's missing might be self-trust. Does that resonate?

Emma: It does.

Victoria: Does that hit you right in the groin?

Emma: Yeah, it does.

Victoria: Right in the groin, excellent. Somewhere around the taint, I'm assuming. [cross talk].

Emma: Right in the taint. Absolutely, because I outsource all of my validation for my feelings, not all, but that's where I feel safest. I think you even mentioned this in a past episode, where if we can make it someone else's decision, then if it crumbles, it's no longer our fault. I've tried to stop as much. Because I would reach for Cass, I'd reach for my sister, and

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having all of them tell me how I'm feeling is either right or wrong, or what I should do next. So, yeah, self-trust hits in the taint.

Victoria: Okay, so, what if... Sorry, consent to coach?

Emma: Consent to coach. Yes, please.

Victoria: Thank you. Who is a feminist around here, and who's just jerk coaching people with no consent? Jeez Louise. One of the things I see people doing to themselves, that really just makes me pause and say, "Oh, honey baby, no, no. Take a breath." We try to force ourselves out of our comfort zone by taking away our crutches.

So, let's say like you have this sweet, little, beautiful broken leg around self-validation. Until it is healed, why would you take away your crutches? That seems really mean to me. What if you kept the crutches; Cass, your sister, getting the external validation; and instead of taking away the supports that keep you sane and stable; I mean, -ish, right? What if we added?

What if you allowed yourself to call your girls, get the external validation, and before calling, name what you do doing. "I am consciously and intentionally reaching out for external validation, because right now that's what brings me, self;" put your little hand on your little heart if you want to... "That is what makes me feel safe. I am choosing to keep me safe."

Here we go, here's the new neural program, "Because I am capable of making choices that keep me safe." See how we're subtly building self-love and self-care and self-trust, without taking no kind of nothing away from you? Only adding in more love, more goodness, more of what you actually want at the end. Right?

So, you go in with consciousness, with choicefulness, with intentionality. You do the old thing, and in the process, you keep that little hand on your



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heart, on your belly, on your taint, wherever keeps you grounded. And as you listen, you're choosing to listen differently. Almost like you're hearing two tracks, like it's stereo in your head instead of mono.

The old track was, "This external person knows all." Yeah, I've done it. We've all done it. C'mon on now. Instead, "Here's Cass's opinion. Here's my sister's opinion. I'm feeling into my body to see, does this truly resonate? Does this truly land, when Cass says, 'Oh, yeah, absolutely, seven. Definitely the answer is seven.' Does my belly feel tight? Does my throat constrict? Is there a loosening in my shoulders? Do I feel flutters that feel nice or flutters that feel very bad? What is the felt sensation within my body, in response to this external validation that I know is a safe place for me."

We're building that neural bridge between the prefrontal cortex; making the executive decision, calling the person, hearing the words. And the subcortical space, the medial frontal cortex, which is our watcher, our awareness, our present moment here-ness, is experiencing you, watching you with love and care. Not beating you up for getting validation, but rather honoring you and celebrating you. Using that crutch as a beautiful tool for more, more presence, more intentionality. What do you think?

Emma: I love that. I guess I never thought that there was a way through my external validation while still holding on to it. So, that feels like a wonderful, comfy, safe way to keep my crutches, like you're saying, but build intentionality around the choices I'm making and how it's feeling. So, that was beautiful. I sound like I'm crying; I just have phlegm. I love that. I love that so much.

Victoria: I'm so glad.

Emma: Thank you.

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Victoria: My absolute pleasure. I know that we can do that regardless of the context, right? So, if we want to feel one half of 1% more present during sex, can we get present in our heels, the heels of our feet, as they touch the sheets? And nowhere else. No, no, no; keep your safety, keep your disconnection if that's what keeps you from freaking out. Great. What does it feel like to be your heels? Is the cotton smooth? Is it soft? Is the wool blanket nice. Be present there, and allow that to be enough.

Then, when you're not in a sexual situation what does it feel like to be your whole foot? One of the things I say a lot, and you've both heard this from working with me, "Find your feet." When we know where our feet are, we know where the ground is.

What happens in stress, distress, and trauma, when we leave ventral vagal, we go into sympathetic, we go into dorsal; we don't know where the ground is. We don't know who, what, where, when, why, we are. And so, finding your feet can bring you back home into self, into connection with the earth, with Pachamama. It can bring you back to this present moment awareness.

In present moment awareness we are in ventral vagal, we have intentionality, we have access to choicefulness, and we can create the lives we want from presence, instead of somebody else's old story about what we should be, how we should be experiencing it, what we should be moaning like, what it should feel like. All the old "should" can just fuck off from present moment awareness.

Emma: Fuck off from my present moment.

Victoria: Thank you.

Cass: Fuck off.

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Victoria: It's really funny, my wife is a Tibetan Buddhist, like a for reals, vows taken, Tibetan Buddhist. We say the same shit, but she says it all Tibetan Buddhist-y, and I'm like, "Yeah, from the present moment you can fuck off!"

Cass: Fuck off!

Emma: Fuck off, from the present moment.

Cass: That's why you're such a good fit for us.

Victoria: [cross talk]

Emma: I guess for your wife that's fine. [cross talk]

Cass: Also, for us.

Victoria: Also, but more importantly, for my most important marriage, which was my marriage to the *Honeydew Me Podcast*.

Cass: Exactly.

Emma: Glad you see it the same.

Victoria: Listen, I do.

Cass: Going off of this self-awareness, something that really clicked for me, through the work I've been able to do with you, is this concept of feeling your feelings. So, for me...

Victoria: Isn't that wild?

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Cass: It's wild, because I've heard it before, and the way that I decided what that meant was, I should think harder about how I'm feeling. And so, I would think of how I was feeling, like, "Oh, I'm sad." Then I'd be like, "Okay, I get it, I'm sad. I'm thinking about it. I'm feeling it. I'm feeling sad." And I did not understand that perhaps there is another way to interpret feeling, other than just saying how I'm feeling over and over again in my head. I would love if you could talk about what that means to you.

Victoria: Sure. So, the difference between thinking your feels and feeling your feels. Is that where we're going, Casserusky?

Cass: Maybe.

Victoria: Okay-Dokey, cool. Cool. Cool. Cool. Cool. Yeah, so listen. So, I mean, Descartes again, right? I think, therefore I am. We have learned, broad strokes here people. Mama's generalizing, put your pitchforks down. We have learned to think our feels instead of feeling our feels, for so many reasons.

One, it is a cultural imperative and norm. Two, most of us did not learn in childhood, because our parents didn't learn in their childhood, and their parents didn't in theirs... We didn't get this modelled for us. We weren't taught that feelings are things that live in the body, that they are subcortical, that they are of the animal.

And so, we have been taught the primacy of the mind, to rely on our thinking as the thing that will get us through. Here, of course, you ready? You were waiting for it. When will she say, "The patriarchy, white settler colonialism, and late-stage capitalism/feudalism?" Thank you, mandatory at least once per episode.

Those systems of oppression can only thrive when we are disconnected from our bodies. Because when we are feeling our feelings in our body, we

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will revolt. We will throw off these systems. We will say, “No more. Basta,” to being on this hamster wheel of productivity, productivity, and doing and doing and doing and doing, and not being. Which is what I believe we're here to do on this planet, is to be. That's a whole other course on indigeneity and decolonizing our minds.

But you asked me to talk about the difference between thinking our feelings and feeling our feelings. The difference lies in felt sensation. So, felt sensation... I had to go a long way around to that one, didn't I, this morning? Hello, good morning.

Emma: Hello, good morning.

Victoria: Everybody's waking up now. Good morning. Hello. So, felt sensation. When we're thinking our feelings, were telling stories, we're in meaning making, we're in the mind. It is part of the essential human task to live our lives in our authenticity from our big, open hearts. So, to live life from our heart, which means from felt sensation. To let felt sensation guide and direct us.

So, the thought, “I am sad” is important. It's important to identify thoughts. There are studies using functional MRIs, where labeling our feelings or emotions, affect labeling, actually helps to reduce fight or flight in the body. That's pretty cool. That's some good science.

But what helps our nervous systems to actually process our feelings is to connect in with the way they feel. For example, okay, when I think about you two and coming on the show this morning. We walked the dog in the morning, and talked about our little schedule; “What's up, for you? What are you doing?”

I was like, “Oh, remember that *Honeydew Me Podcast* that I've been doing?” Billey was like, “Yeah.” I was like, “Oh, I'm doing that again this

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morning.” And she was like, “Oh, man, that makes you so happy.” I was like, “Yeah.” She's like, “Where do you feel that?” It's so powerful to have a partner who says, “Where do you feel that?” I said, “I feel it in my chest. It's like a little sunshine, like sunrays coming out of my chest. And when I stay with it, I feel it behind my eyes. It's like little blue, little bubblics of joy behind my eyes. And then, my smile starts to hurt.” Because I smile so big and goofy when I think about the two of yous, and these fun conversations we have. Today, I've just been talking a lot. I can hush so we can have more of a conversation. Mama was on a bit of a roll.

Emma: I love it.

Victoria: So, that's the felt sensation of happiness. Whereas, “I'm happy” is a bit one note, right? Because it's just a thought, and the energy of sensation is detached from it.

Emma: That's a good descriptor.

Victoria: Yeah, it was a lot of words, so... Love talking about this.

Emma: I like sitting with your emotion too. Like, waiting for it to have a feeling. That takes patience. I know sometimes we don't have it, or we're busy, or we have an emotion that comes up at work and you don't have time to just sit with ‘Where does annoyed feel?’ But if you do, I feel like that... I don't know, it's almost otherworldly. You start feeling into different parts that you're existing in, and that feels magical.

Victoria: It is magical. We are magical. Right? It's wild. All these molecules of emotion just floating around within us, and between us. My nervous system changes yours. What?!

Cass: Bananas, potatoes.

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Victoria: Bananas, potatoes. It's full-on bananas, potatoes. Yeah, it's amazing. We're constantly influencing, changing, regulating, dysregulating one another. Because we are one. I mean, we can get to the non-duality part of this conversation sooner than later. Right? We are one. I am you, and you are me, and we are all together. I'll stop with the Beatles, right there.

But the more we can be present in our human bodies in ways that feel sane and safe... Because a caveat, and give extra love too, if your body has been the site of trauma then it might not feel safe to get all up in there and be present with your feelings. I will say, duh. You all have worked with me enough to say, "Of course."

I always give that caveat when I'm doing any somatic anything. So, if you're listening and you're like, "Oh, I don't want to be in my body," girl, I feel you. That's fine, to see and to say that out loud. It's not said enough. It's not. It's not.

Cass: Every time you say "kitten," my heart grows three sizes.

Victoria: I love that. What does that feel like? Tell me more about what that feels like in your body.

Cass: Okay. Well, to me, it feels pink. Which I love. It feels very glowy and warm in my chest.

Victoria: Does it have a weight?

Cass: Yes, but like a pillow weight. You know what I mean? So, it's there. I can feel it, it's not just air. But it's like I'm holding a big, soft pillow. Emma, the pillows we both have on our bed.

Emma: I was literally just thinking this.

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Victoria: I love that you have twinsy pillows.

Emma: We do.

Victoria: I love that. That's such a lovely feeling. And so, when you can echolocate happiness like that you create so much more access to the complexity and depth of that feeling.

Cass: Yeah, and it makes sense that... I hope everybody else is following this... But everything that you're saying, as much as I can apply it to random things throughout my day, it's so clear how it applies in the bedroom as well. Because, Emma and I have said it a million and a half times, we have trouble getting out of our heads when we're trying to bang.

That makes it really hard to feel all of the things we want to feel. When we talk about a lot of these things, I come at it from, 'Oh, well, I'm activated or triggered or I'm feeling sad or upset.' But also, when I'm feeling all of these good things in my body, I would like to be able to access that and not just think, "Oh, I bet that feels good. That should feel good."

I want to know it feels good. I want to feel all the goodness and pleasure. But that's hard to do if I'm in my head. It's not just about the "bad" things.

Victoria: Totally. And, let's give your brain a little love here. It's doing what it's literally made to do, and it believes that it's saving your life.

Cass: I know. You're right.

Victoria: "Sorry I love you so much. Whatever." That's that kitten stepping that we're always talking about, of pick one thing in your day... I'm all about additive, right? Obviously, add more good, add more vegetables, add more pleasure, add it in. Maybe you buy yourself some lotion that smells friggin' amazing.



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Cass: Emma just did that.

Victoria: Did you? Oh, Emma. You spend one minute a day putting it on. But not slapping it on like Vaseline because it's cold out. Like, sensually connecting with the sensorium, with your senses. Put that lotion on, and see how putting it on your nail feels different than the top of your finger, feels different from your palm, feels different from your wrist.

Feel how it feels to rub your hands with deep pressure, with light. Put it between your fingers. Really experience it through the senses for one minute; everybody's got one minute. However long you typically doom scroll for, convert one of those minutes to connecting sensorially with your body.

That's how we get present in the bedroom. That's how we stay present during sex. That's how we are not in our heads but actually in our bodies, is by letting ourselves be in our bodies in a non-sexual moment during our day. Then, after a month, you start putting that lotion on your feet.

And then you go for a walk, you pause, and you connect with each of your senses once during your walk. What is one thing I smell taste, touch, see? What is one texture I can experience? The three of us have very different textures. There's a sweatshirt, a sweater, and I have this little, silky scarf.

We can all take a moment. Let's all take a moment and feel our clothing. Just feel the texture under your fingers. See how it feels on your fingertips, versus your palm, back of your hand. Just see what it's like to be present with the textures. And if your brain jumps in to do meaning making, thank it, "Aww, thanks brain. Look at you trying to take care of me. It's scary when I when I leave you and go into the body, I get that. That's okay, brain. I get that it's scary for you. It's okay. It's okay. I'm not mad at you. I am going to ask you to step aside for just one hot second. But I'm not mad." And come back to felt sensation. Slow and steady, baby, slow and steady.

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Emma: Slow and steady kitten steps. Our favorite kind of step.

Victoria: It's the only kind worth taking.

Emma: Absolutely. I feel regulated...

Victoria: I'm so glad.

Emma: Wonderful, calm, and amazing after speaking with you. As always. We've missed you so much.

Victoria: I missed you, too.

Emma: Because our listeners miss you constantly as well, where can they keep connecting with you after this episode?

Victoria: That was such a good segue.

Emma: Thank you.

Victoria: It was really elegantly done. I could have just left it, but instead I'd like to draw attention to it.

Cass: That's what we do, too.

Victoria: I know, why not? You're like, "Hey, I made a good joke!"

Cass: I made a good joke.

Victoria: Because studies show nothing makes a joke better than explaining it.

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Emma: Sure, absolutely. I read that science.

Victoria: Sure. So, where are we? Hey, me. My name is Victoria Albina. You can find me [VictoriaAlbina.com/honeydewme](http://VictoriaAlbina.com/honeydewme), where you can download a suite of meditations, inner child exercises, nervous system exercises, and all kinds of free treats just for listening to this, one of the two best podcasts on the planet.

What is the other best podcast on the planet, you might ask? It's mine. It's called *Feminist Wellness*. It's free every Thursday, wherever you get your podcasts. My six-month program is called Anchored. My three-month is called the Somatic Studio. We dive into all of this and more. You can follow me on the 'Gram; I give good Gram; [@victoriaalbinawellness](https://www.instagram.com/victoriaalbinawellness). I can't wait to connect.

Cass: I will say Emma and I are terrible podcasters, and that we never listen to podcasts. Your podcast is the one that I make an exception for. I listen all the time, and you're compar—. I love when you just call me something random, like a baby panda. That's what really makes me feel the safest.

Victoria: I'm so glad!

Thanks again for listening in, my love. I really hope you enjoyed that conversation just as much as I did. I love the Honeydew Me gals. I love somatics. I just love all of this. So, thanks again for tuning in. If you're enjoying the show, please take a moment to give it a five-star rating and a written review. Ten words: Really great show. That's even three words. It would really help others to find it in search.

Let's do what we do. A gentle hand on your heart, should you feel so moved. And remember, you are safe. You are held. You are loved. And,

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when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my beauty. I'll talk to you soon.

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