

## 02. Defining Your Relationship with Your Cycle



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With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

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## 02. Defining Your Relationship with Your Cycle

If you are in the horrors with menstrual cycle issues, or you want to learn how to harness your hormones, then you are in the right place.

Welcome to the Period Power Podcast. I'm your host Maisie Hill, menstrual health expert, acupuncturist, certified life coach, and author of Period Power. I'm on a mission to help you get your cycle working for you so that you can use it to get what you want out of life. You ready? Let's go.

Today is one of my favorite days of the year because here in the northern hemisphere it's the winter solstice. It's that moment where we're in the depths of darkness. And it's also the moment where light comes in and our days start to lengthen. So, we're turning towards the light, and I think we are really ready, collectively, to turn towards the light.

I just got off a call in the Flow Collective, and it was our final one for the year in the membership. And it was a really beautiful and emotional sharing circle where some of the members of the community were sharing their success-es and their struggles.

So I'm feeling all the feels right now because this call was particularly moving. Because as I was witnessing what they were sharing and really listening to what they had to say I was struck by how they're all showing up with this fierce love and commitment to themselves. And as their coach I can re-ally see how their relationship with their cycles and with their bodies is really impacting that. And that's what we're going to be talking about today.

I've got a little bit more work to do this week, but then I'm going to be winding down for the holidays. And I'm looking forward to this time off with my family because I'll be in the first half of my cycle, hurrah! So, what that means for me is that I'm in the phase of my cycle where I really enjoy the company of my partner and our son. And I have a lightheartedness about me. And I'm up for having a laugh.

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This makes it easy for me to play and meet my son on his level, literally. Because I notice at this point in my cycle how willing I am to get on the floor with him and join his world rather than preferring to be left alone in mine, which is what happens at other points in the cycle.

My son loves really physical play. And I wrestle with him quite a bit. I actually used to be really into the UFC, the Ultimate Fighting Championships, when I was in my late 20's and early 30's. I used to stay up till like five in the morning to watch the fights live because I didn't want anyone to spoil it on social media by letting me know who had won.

But anyway, I think the combo of watching so many fights and because of my experience of doing body work as a massage therapist, and reflexologist, and acupuncturist, somehow that helps me to wrestle. I know, it sounds ridiculous, but I really enjoy wrestling with my son. And he is only four, so I know that me saying I know how to wrestle someone who's half my size is a bit unfair I'd say. But I like thinking about myself as someone who's naturally good at wrestling so I'm going with it. Why not?

And I've decided that I'm going to do some Brazilian Jujitsu once we can do those kinds of things again. I went to a couple of classes in my 20's and loved it. But at the time I was getting tattooed every other week so I was always healing from getting tattooed. And you just can't do those kinds of classes when you have an open wound because of the risk of getting infected or passing on an infection to other people.

Anyway, the first half of my cycle, really from day three onwards, is when I'm up for wrestling with my son. Which is handy at the moment given that he can't go and play with his friends right now. And this is the point in my cycle where I'm also more inclined to enjoy conversation with my other half. Not that his conversations aren't scintillating all the time. It's just that there are points in my cycle where I really love silence and prefer time alone. Which, I think, is actually where the past two Christmases have coincided with my cycle.

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And this is the time of year where I like to reflect and plan. And I've been reflecting on the relationship I have with my cycle. This actually came up when I was coaching a client on making changes to improve their cycle. And as a result of our conversation, I came up with a concept that I want to share with you today because it's a really helpful one.

So, this client of mine was sharing with me some things that they wanted to do in order to resolve some cycle-based symptoms that they were experiencing. And everything they were telling me sounded great on paper but I also got this sense that it was coming from an unhelpful place. And so I re-ally questioned them on where they were coming from when they come up with this plan. What they were thinking and feeling about their cycle, and how they thought that would show up in their actual efforts.

And as we explored what was going on, I asked them how they would currently describe their relationship with their cycle. And this is where the energy of our session really shifted. I'm not going to share what they said, of course, because that's confidential.

But when I asked them about their relationship with their cycle their posture changed, their expression changed, and I could just see that they went to a different place because, basically, they realized that although they come up with a great action plan, which often feels really good to us, right? But they were coming to it from this place of resentment. And I see this happening a lot, which is why I wanted to speak about it today.

So, in this episode we're talking about your relationship with your cycle. But this applies to your relationship with your uterus, your ovaries, and your body in general. So you can use this concept whether you're someone who is currently cycling or if you don't have a cycle at the moment.

And if you're wondering why this matters, consider making changes that might improve your cycle from two different places. One is if you're feeling

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things like frustration, resentment, maybe loathing. And the other is if you're feeling open, or loving, or accepting towards yourself and your cycle.

Now, you could take the same set of actions from these two different places and have a very different experience. They're going to impact on your experience of taking action and make it in the way of actually taking or sustaining the actions that you want to do. And therefore, impact your results. This is why it's so important to stop and actually look at things so that you can approach things from a more useful and loving place.

So, when you think about your cycle, how would you describe your relationship to it? Is it like the awkward colleague nobody seems to like, who always shows up at work drinks and in your head you're just thinking, "Why are you even here?" You might not think things like that but just go along with this for the example.

Now, if you're thinking something like that about your cycle then you're probably so busy wishing it away that you're not open to making changes, versus actually acknowledging their presence and welcoming them. Because if you do that then you'll probably ask them a question like, "How are you doing?" Hear what they have to say and get to know them enough to make things more comfortable.

Or, how about the friend that you rarely see and would love to see more but you're kind of pissed that they don't make an effort to show up more often? I'm thinking about those of you with absent or long cycles. Where maybe you feel relieved when you finally have a period, but spend the rest of the time pissed at their infrequency. When we're busy being pissed at someone, or at the cycle, it impacts us the most not the other person. We're the ones that have to live in that emotion.

Now, compare that to loving them when they do show up, enjoying them when they do. And also respecting that for whatever reason, right now

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they're not around more often. It's far more liberating and more likely to result in taking action that might encourage them to be around more often.

Or, is your cycle like the intense friend with all the drama? I think you know the one I mean, the one who has these soaring highs and crushing lows. And being their friend feels like you're on the roller coaster with them. There's often a judgy, will you just get your shit together, sort it out aspect to this Which is, of course, the thoughts that you have about yourself. Bring on the self-flagellation, the shame, the punishment.

Whereas, you could be thinking something along the lines of, "I see you having this experience of your cycle where at times you feel amazing and at other you're really in the horrors. And I just want you to know that I see how hard that is for you."

Now, doesn't thinking that have a very different feel to it? For me there's a sense of acceptance, it's not trying to force you to a place of balance, which is not a word I'm particularly fond of, I have to say. And certainly, in a case like this is likely to feel like a massive jump, and therefore your brain will just write it off as unreasonable, also not helpful.

But, from a place of acceptance you might care for yourself very differently than if you're being judgmental. I don't mean that you should accept it and put up with it. I mean accept that's what's going on for you in a kind way, a way that serves you.

Maybe your cycle is like the cousin who makes loud and perhaps unwanted entrance at family occasions, a bit like how you might be prone to flooding. Which is the excessive and sudden blood loss you might have during your period. But is cringing and wishing it would go away going to change anything? Probably not. And I'm not here to tell you that you have to love your period, but there are less loaded ways that you can think about it that are more helpful.

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One of my clients who has heavy periods put this so well when she said that she's realizing that her cycle is talking to her rather than at her. Think about how this changes the dynamic of her relationship with her cycle. It's really powerful. When we feel we're being talked at then we're less likely to listen, less likely to acknowledge any insights or wisdom that might be there.

It kind of reminds me of my mum speaking to me as a teenager, and I'll be honest, as a grown adult as well. I didn't want to be told anything so I didn't listen to her. But when we're in communication with the cycle we're open and curious about what it's got to say. So, are the lines of communications open between you and your cycle? How do you show up to this relationship? And who do you want to be in it?

I'm going to give you some options to help you get going with this. Your cycle could be your BFF. When I think about my cycle, I would compare it to the relationship I have with my closest friends. I listen to and respect what they've got to say. They listen to and respect what I've got to say. We use each other's brilliance to help create the things we want in our life. We celebrate each other's successes. We're there for each other on the shit days. And we've got each other's back.

Now, I've overcome several cycle related challenges but I don't glide through my cycle in the way that you might think I do, at least not all the time. There are some things that are a work in progress for me. And realizing this year that I have sensory processing disorder and that I'm autistic has made a massive difference to my experience of the cycle. But I'm still exploring how these intersect with the second half of my cycle. It's improved a lot this year for various reasons, but this work is ongoing for me and so I really rely on the dialogue that I have with my cycle. And I'm able to do this because my cycle is my best mate.

Very different to how it used to be and far more helpful. When I'm in conversation with my cycle, accepting it for what it is, giving it support when

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it needs it, and even when it doesn't, and having fun together, well, that's when I have the best experience with my cycle, even when it's not smooth sailing.

Another way you could do this is to imagine a calm parent with strong boundaries. I'm thinking about the times when I've had to really step up as a parent. Especially when my son was a toddler and we'd find ourselves in situations, usually very public ones, where he'd had a meltdown and the best thing I could really do as his parent was to calmly and firmly remove him from the situation that we were in.

And that might be what you need to do with your cycle. But notice how that can come from a place of love and compassion, okay? It's calm, it's firm, but there's love and compassion. It's saying, "Okay, you're having a hard time right now so I'm going to pick you up and we're going to leave." This is an amazing way to take care of yourself if your cycle-based symptoms are re-ally impacting you.

It's a really important approach, particularly if you're experiencing any shame about not being able to function because of your cycle. And I think you can see how there's a, "We need to change something" vibe to it. It's decisive, it results in necessary action, but it's also really loving.

Okay, so what about those of you who don't have a cycle at the moment or your cycles are long? How could you be in relationship with your cycle in a helpful way? How about they remain a distant friend who you love when you get to see them and you think fondly of the rest of the time? Maybe exchanging texts from time to time, but there's nothing forced or strained in the relationship here.

Perhaps you take care of things to encourage them to come and visit. So, if this was an actual friend maybe you text them and say, "Hey, I've just bought a new sofa bed and it's all yours anytime you fancy visiting." Okay, maybe a sofa bed isn't the best illustration for this because they're rarely



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comfy, but maybe clearing out the spare room so it's ready for visitors is a better example.

But I hope you can see where I'm going with this. If you're thinking of them fondly instead of being pissed at them for not being around then you're more likely to do things that encourage them to show up, i.e., eat enough food to support having a cycle, or take some kind of action that will help to regulate your cycle.

Or maybe your relationship with your cycle could be like a new romantic partner, this will be particularly relevant if you're new to understanding and working with your cycle, but it's also an option if you're ready to fall in love with it again. You know that infatuated stage of a new relationship where you're in constant communication, you're thinking about them all the time, you're responsive to what they say and do, eager to discover more about them. That's how you could feel about your cycle.

I remember this feeling really well when I first started to track my cycle, which was almost 20 years ago. And I was so excited to get information about my cycle on a daily basis that I would wake up literally excited to find out what my body was up to on that particular day.

And this was when I actually had debilitating pain, so it's possible to feel this way about your cycle even if your cycle has its challenges. It doesn't have to be all perfect, and rainbows, and daisies for you to feel this way about it, it's an option.

If what I'm saying here is resonating with you then think about the relationship you currently have with your cycle. First off, is the type of relationship you have with your cycle helpful? Is it serving you? And you'll know this, okay? Trust your body's response when you think about your cycle. Does it feel good or doesn't it? And if it is working for you, I want you to think about why that's the case. How would you define the relationship? And what is it about it that's helpful to you?

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If it's not working for you then what relationship do you want to have with your cycle? You can borrow a relationship style that would be an improvement, like one of the ones I've spoken about today, or an example from your own life.

So, you're going to make a decision about the kind of relationship you want to have, and this next part is key, then you're going to go and have that relationship with your cycle. And if you're wondering how you do that, then look at the thoughts you have about your cycle. Because your relationship with your cycle is created through the thoughts that you have about it, much like the other relationships in your cycle.

For example, if you're thinking, "This is never going to get better." And whatever the other thoughts you have about your cycle are. Then those thoughts are what will create your relationship with it, just like in a romantic relationship. If you're thinking, "Oh my god, they're amazing." Then that will create a very different relationship than if you're thinking, "They're such a slob, why am I even with you?"

And the thought your cycle is never going to get better might feel really true to you, but it's just a thought, you don't have to believe it, okay? All thoughts are optional. You might already be arguing with me in your head that it is true. And believe me, if we were to go back in time then I would be doing the exact same thing because I used to fantasize about having my uterus re-moved, in all seriousness. So, I get it.

But thinking this way isn't going to result in anything improving because you might feel angry, lost, despairing. And I think that even if you did decide to have your uterus removed, which for some people can be a hugely positive decision, there are more helpful ways to arrive at that decision and that action rather than anger.

So, if your cycle has challenges, maybe multiple ones, then this concept still applies. You have nothing to lose because it already sucks. You don't

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have to love your cycle either. It's not like you're going to go from hating it to loving it overnight. But I would love for you to get to a more neutral place because that's going to feel so much better than if you're hating on your body in some way.

Okay, that's it for today folks. I'll catch you next week.

To celebrate the launch of the show I'm going to be giving away three annual subscriptions to my amazing online community, The Flow Collective. Where I coach our members, host webinars, and interview special guests. That means three lucky listeners who subscribe, rate, and review the show on Apple Podcast will win an annual subscription.

It doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I do really hope you love the show. But I want your honest feedback so I can create an awesome show that provides tons of value.

Visit [maisiehill.com/podcastlaunch](https://maisiehill.com/podcastlaunch) to learn more about the contest and how to enter. I'll be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of the Period Power Podcast. If you enjoyed learning how to make your cycle work for you head over to [maisiehill.com](https://maisiehill.com) for more.