

## 03. Living with Intention



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With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

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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.

Hi folks. It is December 28th, almost the end of the year and I've had the last week off just hanging out with my partner and our son, which probably sounds more idyllic than it's actually been. I mean, don't get me wrong, it's great to have had this time together and we've had some lovely times going for walks and watching movies together. But please don't create a picture-perfect version of my life in your head and use that against whatever your reality is because we're so prone to doing that, right? The whole compare and despair thing.

And so many of you tell me over Instagram that it's such a relief for you to hear that I have challenges in my life. And I totally get that, because let's be real, what we see on our feed is totally curated. Which is why I always like to keep it real with you by being transparent. My family is amazing, I love them to bits, but life is always 50/50. Half the time it's great, half the time it's not. And that's just how life goes, including mine.

One of the things I have really loved these past few weeks is that my partner and I have been watching *The West Wing*. We've actually been re-watching it and I really love *The West Wing*. The characters and the actors who play them are so on point. And the humor is really quick, and I find it really interesting and highly engaging. Although I've watched most of the episodes several times, I haven't watched all of the final season yet. So, I have that to look forward to.

And of course, New Year's is around the corner. I have to admit I've never really been into New Year's celebrations. My experience of going out on

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New Year's Eve is queuing for a long time to get into a venue. Queuing up a long time at the bar. Spending a lot of money. Having an average time, right? There's so much hype about it and it never lives up to that in my experience. And then struggling to get home. Not because of inebriation, well, sometimes because of inebriation, but often because it's just hard to get transport to get home on New Year's Eve.

But when I think about it, I think I stopped bothering with New Year's Eve when I started working as a birth doula. Because I'd often be on call over Christmas and New Year's, which meant that staying up late was a no-no. And definitely being somewhere without a reliable and quick way of getting to a client in labor in the middle of the night was an even bigger no-no.

So it's been a while since I've went out and partied. I'd maybe do it this year just because it's been the year it's been. But my favorite New Year's Eve memory is the day that my partner and I got together, and I also proposed to him on New Year's Day two years ago. We haven't gotten around to getting married yet though. Maybe because I keep writing books. But we will get there.

Now, although I'm usually asleep by 10:30 on New Year's Eve... You know I stopped drinking alcohol two years ago as well. So staying in and staying up late really just isn't appealing to me because one, I'd be sober. Two, tired at that point. And I also have a boisterous four-year-old who wakes up very early and sometimes in the night.

But I do love New Year's because of the whole starting off fresh. And I think collectively we're ready to leave this year behind us. So, on New Year's Day I love going for a walk with my family. Where we live is a five-minute walk to the beach. I can actually see the sea from my office, a tiny part of it at least. And there's this amazing tidal pool that lots of our friends all jump in on New Year's Day.

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And many of them actually do it all year round. My good friend Natalie goes in without a wetsuit. And bear in mind that today it's degrees Celsius, which is I'd say like 36 Fahrenheit. I lived in New York for a while so I used to have to do this calculation a lot. And it's one of those ones that's easier with lower temperatures but you... Anyway, you don't need to know the math, it's not my strong point.

So, let's move swiftly onto talking about New Year's resolutions and how they relate to your cycle. I'm not really a fan of New Year's resolutions. So, this isn't a podcast where I'm going to be encouraging you to make them. There are several reasons why I think this way about them, which I'm going to share with you.

But there's also a practice that I use instead of making resolutions, which I'm also going to share with you. And this is a practice that I like to do at the start of every calendar year, but it's also a practice that I like to do at the start of every cycle.

So, today we're talking about something that you can be doing today and over the next week in consideration of the year ahead. I don't recommend letting it drag on any longer than that. But it's also something that I want to invite you to do at the start of every cycle.

Okay, let's start with why I'm not into resolutions. Resolutions are often set from a place of not good enoughness. Like if we can "just" run three times a week or quit sugar, or whatever your particular resolution might be, then we'll be better somehow. And here we absolutely have to question what better is. Because usually we don't stop to qualify what we mean by better and can be misguided in believing that life will be daisies and rainbows if we can just do the thing that we've decided we should do in order to be better.

Again, I'm not saying that you would be better but that's often how we think about it. And I also really recommend questioning the whole being "better"

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side of things. Because if you're thinking that by doing X or Y that you will be better, then by inference you're saying that you're not perfect exactly as you are. And you are perfect exactly as you are.

Okay, I'm going to return to this theme in a moment. But I also want to point out whilst we're here that if you're in the northern hemisphere like me, then we are in the lean months, the dark months. And in the same way I don't think the start of your period is the time to go wild with an intense plan of action, I don't think the start of the year is either. However, all you folks in the southern hemisphere, it's your summer. So feel free to go wild should you feel up to it at the moment, but you may not. And it's fine if you're not.

But I do think that the start of the year and the start of the cycle is a perfect time to start an intention. The start of the cycle is a great time to reflect on what's been and what's coming up. And to come up with an intention. This might sound a bit vague and woo-woo. I promise you it's not. This is about deciding something for yourself and your life on purpose, so stick with me.

This is a really powerful practice and it's really easy. It doesn't take long and it's something you can do for the new year and, as I said, you can do at the start of every cycle. Here's how you want to do it. Just think about how you want to feel. That's literally it. I told you it was simple.

Feelings are important because they're what drive our behavior. An example of this is if you feel accomplished as you head into a work interview then you're going to show up very differently than if you're feeling unsure or doubtful. So, what I want you to do, if you want to, is to come up with one word that you would like to feel more of in 2021 or in the menstrual cycle you're currently in.

And when I say feeling I just mean one word that describes an emotion. Such as connected, inspired, secure, playful, strong, fun, fearless, resilient, courageous. Anything along those lines.

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Essentially, you're picking an emotion that you want to experience more of. And there's probably several that you want more of. If so, congratulations you're human. But you get far better results by constraining to one. The good news is that you're going to have other cycles and other years where you can focus on other feelings. So there's really no need to try and cram it all in.

So, now you have your feeling. And there will be a link with a PDF with a list of feelings in the show notes in case you're having trouble coming up with one and you want some inspiration. But once you have your feeling, you're going to think about all the ways in which you can experience more of this feeling. How you can bring this feeling into your life in a more intentional way.

I'm going to pick the example of feeling connected, which is something that I wanted to experience more of earlier on in 2020. And given that humans are social mammals and we tend to hang out in groups, and that 2020 has been a year where we haven't been able to have the kinds of interaction that we're used to I'm going to hazard a guess that many of you would like to feel more connected. So, what does feeling connected look like practically?

Well, when I'm working, I'll feel connected to you. Chances are we've never met but I spend a lot of time thinking about you and the problems I imagine you have, and then problem solving for them. So, I work best when I'm feeling connected to you. And I do that through the thoughts I'm thinking. If I want to feel connected then I need to think thoughts that create a feeling of connection. Because how we think generates how we feel.

Now, your brain might be a bit boggled by that concept so I'm going to give you an example of this because you can feel connected without actually seeing someone. Even though, especially right now, you might prefer to see someone face-to-face and not through a screen.

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Okay, so many of you who've been following me for a while on Instagram will know that my mum died last year. But even though she's dead I feel hugely connected to her. And I don't mean in a connecting with the other side kind of way. So, how is that possible?

Well, connection is something that we create inside ourselves and doesn't depend on others. I can feel connected to my mum just by thinking about her, and deciding to feel connected to her. Wild, isn't it? In actual fact I think I feel more connected to her because I have these great conversations with her in my head where she answers in the way I want her to because now I'm in control of her responses to me, which just cracks me up and I think would crack her up too.

The same might be true for some of you. You might feel connected to me because you've read my book or you're listening to my podcast but we've never met, well, probably most of you. You're feeling connected to me because you're thinking thoughts about me that create a feeling of connection. Our thoughts create our feelings. And I'm sure some of you are thinking other thoughts about me and they'll be creating other feelings.

But maybe there's someone else that you've never met but you feel connected to because of something that they've shared publicly or because you like their sense of humor. Like, I like Allison Janney's character C.J. Cregg in *The West Wing*. I think if she and I were to hang out we would have an absolute blast together. And because of how I'm thinking about her character I experience a feeling of connection to her but she has no idea who I am and she's also a fictional character.

Now, If I'm feeling connected to you and to my work when I'm working, here's what I won't be doing. I won't be scrolling on my phone and I won't be procrastinating. And this is the cycle of how our thoughts create our feelings, which in turn impact on the things that we do and don't do.

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Back when I was focused on feeling connected, this impacted my body too. I was more connected to my need for food, drink, rest, and movement. When you're connected to your body, then you'll be in tune with your physical needs and more likely to honor them. And this goes for your cycle too, which is why this is such a powerful practice.

And then in my romantic relationship if I'm feeling connected, I'm more likely to be having ongoing communication with my boyfriend. There's more space for emotional and physical intimacy. And when it comes to parenting, if I'm feeling connected, I'll be actually present with my son and not just with him physically whilst I think about my work or whatever else is on my mind.

So you can see how deciding to feel a certain way can really impact things. You can use your word as a way to prioritize your diary. It can act as a really effective filter for making decisions in your life. When I wanted to feel more connected, I was more boundaried with my time, took care to leave my work at work, arranged dates with my partner, and was basically proactive in creating ways to connect with people and projects in my life. I also said no to a lot of things that would result in less connection. So, this is what I mean when I say that it can act as an effective filter.

And I love this way of working with the cycle because it really focuses your attention on feeling the way that you want to feel more of the time and working with your cycle in a way that allows you to create things on purpose and use your cycle to get what you want out of life.

So I told you it was simple, it's really powerful, And I've been working with this concept really intentionally for the last 18 months or so and it's changed so much in my life which is why I've been really excited to share it with you all today.

But I do have a caveat for you. When you're coming up with your word you don't want to come up with this from a place of internal criticism, which is



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what we often do. For example, let's say that I want to feel organized, which is likely to be music to many people's ears, my partner, my assistant, my publishers, my agent, if any of you are listening, I know that this is something that you long for. And I also aspire to be organized too. But here's why picking organized as a word could be not so great for me.

Let's say I want to feel organized but I come to that because I'm feeling shame. Maybe I've done a bit too much and I'm feeling dysregulated. There's a thing called autistic shutdown and autistic burnout that I've experienced quite a lot of this year. But you don't have to be autistic to know what it's like to have done too much. So, maybe I'm feeling burnt out and the best way to care for myself is to go off radar for a few days. To switch off and not talk as much as I can get away with. Then I start to feel better and ready to kind of get back into work.

And so I start tiptoeing my way back into work but I notice that there's a couple of emails in my inbox from people chasing me for things. Very nice and entirely reasonable emails by the way. Now, if I'm not keeping an eye on my thoughts, I could think things along the lines of I'm not organized enough. I should be more on top of things. Other people are more organized than me. Other people don't have this problem.

Notice how quickly this basically becomes that I have a problem, or if we go a step further, that I am a problem. Thoughts like this can create a range of feelings and the big one for me is shame. Now, this is not the place to come up with the intention of being organized because it's originating in shame.

Another way to think of this is that it's coming from lack. That I'm not good enough and that if only I could behave differently then I would be good enough. This line of thinking, particularly the idea that someone could be good or bad is not helpful. It would be very different if I'd done some thought work, which basically means having awareness of my thoughts. Exploring them and deciding if they're helpful or not. Like, "Do I want to

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keep thinking this way or think about things in a different more helpful way?”

The image I have when I think about thought work and when I think about having an unmanaged mind versus a managed one is of a wild horse versus one with a rider. And as I'm saying this, I have a sense that I'm about to butcher a lesson that comes from Darwinism or some kind of eastern philosophy. But let's just roll with it because I think it will help you to understand this and that's what I ultimately want. So, forgive me if I'm butchering it.

So, the unmanaged mind is a wild horse who just goes where it wants to. Versus the managed mind is like a horse with a rider who is directing the horse where to go on purpose. So, let's say I've done some thought work, I've explored my thoughts, I've managed my own mind instead of just letting my thoughts run the show unsupervised. I've cleaned up my thoughts that were causing me to judge myself and feel shame and probably anxiety and other things too. If I then decided I want to feel organized that would be very different because I'd be deciding that from a place of sufficiency instead of not enoughness. Do you see the difference?

And this is what I spend a lot of time coaching my clients on. Making decisions that come from sufficiency, self-love, and compassion towards yourself. To get back to what I was saying earlier, so often we come up with resolutions because we're judging ourselves, critiquing our bodies and our lives and I want to encourage you to not do this. Instead, the starting point of this process is knowing that you're a fantastic human being, that you are perfect exactly as you are. From that place you decide what you want to feel more of.

So, what do you want to feel more of? If you're struggling to come up with a word then check out the link in the show notes for this episode because I've put a list of feelings together for you. This is something you can use now to

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come up with a word for 2021, and at the start of each menstrual cycle. I'm telling you it makes such a difference. So simple, so powerful.

And usually, I like to pick a word by the end of day three, because my experience of my cycle is that after that point my brain is just already off on one. So, I know that I need to pick something to focus on before that happens so that I can have that focus throughout the cycle and to really be prioritizing things.

My word for 2020 was uncomfortable, which might sound like an odd choice. But I picked uncomfortable because what I really wanted was to grow this year. And I knew that the key to that kind of growth lied in my willingness to feel uncomfortable. And I have felt uncomfortable a lot this year. Maybe not as much as I could have, but I don't know, it's weird because when you're willing to be uncomfortable things happen quite quickly and you also adjust and get used to them quite quickly.

So, I've maybe gotten over some of my own achievements with my ability to be uncomfortable here. But this has been a year that I've stretched myself very much on purpose and that has come from deciding to feel uncomfortable.

It was easy for me to pick uncomfortable but I found it a bit harder to pick my word for 2021. It was close between fun and ease for a while, because I tend to like picking the hard way in life. Like going for the growth, going for the hardest things. But what I've ended up landing on is effective. I want to be effective this year. And what a really great way to start of being effective, with my work in the world and by launching my podcast.

Once you've picked your word for the year, or for your cycle, I would love it if you would just head over to Instagram, my handle is [\\_maisiehill\\_](#) and find the post that relates to this podcast episode and let me know what word you picked. I'm really curious to see what you decide you want to feel more

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of, either for this year or for your cycle. So, I will see you over on Instagram. Have a lovely week and I'll catch you next time.

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.