

15. Massive Action



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Maisie Hill

Period Power with 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. Are you ready? Let's go.

Hi folks. I don't know how your week is going but it's been quite a week over here. I was on BBC Radio 4's Women's Hour on Monday talking about all things perimenopause with the wonderful Emma Barnett. And that was the day that my book *Perimenopause Power* entered the top 100 all books on Amazon.

And I know that many of you aren't fans of Amazon. And I, believe me; fully support your decision to buy from independent booksellers. But do know that wherever you bought it you can still leave a review on Amazon should you wish to so that other folks can find it and decide if they want to buy it or not. There have been a few reviews complaining about me swearing in the book. But I like to think that they actually sell my book to the kinds of people who would like it so there you go.

I've also been planning out the next few months inside The Flow Collective. And I cannot wait to meet our new members. If you're listening to this episode the day that it comes out, then the doors are still open to join but only for today. So if you're listening to it on Thursday or after you've missed your chance. But if it's Wednesday and you want to join us then now is the perfect time to just use the link in the show notes because enrolment is closing at 9:00pm UK time. And then that's it, doors closed until the summer.

The other reason that this week has been busy was because it was my son's birthday at the weekend. And oh man, I had such an emotional time because I was baking his cake and I'm going to give you the recipe for it because it was so delicious. My friend Natalie recommended it to me and it

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tasted so good. But it's also gluten and dairy free. And as I was baking it I got really emotional because I was thinking about my mum who died 18 months ago and I was thinking about all the amazing cakes that she made for us over the years, also premenstrual, just for some cycle timing context.

So I was thinking about my mum and just missing her and starting to well up, so I was kind of on the verge. And I had the radio on and when I'm in my kitchen and I'm just cooking I love listening to Heart 80s. And as I was listening and cooking, a song by the Eurythmics came on, There Must be an Angel, that's it. So my mum loved the Eurythmics so that – I was already on the verge of crying and then that song came on and that just got me going. So I was crying whilst trying to whisk chocolate sauce, I didn't want to solidify anymore before I got it in with the batter.

And I was just really missing my mum and just fully whilst whisking letting myself really feel that grief. And that kind of moved its way through me and I was kind of coming out of it. And I'd stopped crying so full on.

And then a Phil Collins song came on called You Can't Hurry Love. And I could start crying again now. My mum, I remember dancing around the kitchen with my mum to those kinds of songs when we were little. So that just got me going all over again and I was just going through all these emotions. And it was really good to just feel them, and not judge them, and not make them a problem. So I love – I just love 80s music, and I'm there for all the memories and all the feel good songs that I think lots of us could do with at the moment.

I turned 40 the other month and I was kind of hoping to have an 80s themed party so you'll all have to come to that post lockdown when we can do that. But I did want to give you something else in the show notes. You're going to get lots of links in the show notes today.

But just for some contrast against the 80s music I want to share a link to an amazing radio show that my partner Paul did recently for NTS. And it's this just three hours of incredible music that I've been listening to a lot. And it's

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just amazing. He's just got the best taste in music. And I love all the music that he discovers. It's a great three hours, it's quite a journey to listen to and the final hour also goes up a few notches. And just always has me dancing around in my chair whilst I'm at work or I do get up and dance around too.

And because it was my son's birthday I was reflecting on his birth. And I shared my birth story in a couple of Instagram posts. And you all had so many questions about my experience of pregnancy and birth. So I'm going to figure out a way to share that with you. I think you could find it really useful. And it's quite nice for me to reflect back on it.

Over on Instagram at the same time I was also asking you what you want me to cover here on the podcast. And you gave me a lot of amazing suggestions. And some of them are now in the works for April. So thank you for suggesting them. I'm really looking forward to putting these ones together for you. Let's just say that.

Okay, let's crack on with today's topic which is massive action. And this is going to be relevant whether you want to improve your cycle somehow. Or maybe you want to reach a goal in your personal or professional life because taking action is important and necessary when it comes to goals. But I'm also going to be spending some time telling you what it doesn't have to be. And in the midst of that I'm also going to share with you the specific actions and strategies that I follow to improve my period pain just to illustrate what I mean by massive action when we're talking about the cycle.

Right, first of all let me define massive action for you. Massive action is when you keep taking action until you get the result that you want, very simple. Let me say it again, massive action is when you keep taking action until you get the result that you want. You just take action consistently until you reach your goal. Usually what happens is we do a little bit of action and then our brains go, okay, that's enough for today. Or I guess that didn't work. What's the point in trying anything else? We just stop.

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Or maybe once in a while you might do something bigger. For me that would happen more easily in the run up to ovulation when I might be feeling on top of the world due to oestrogen and testosterone peaking. Or it could also happen when I'm premenstrual and I'm like, "Let's just go for it. Let's stop mucking around, change some things, make them happen." So they're the points in my cycle where I'm most likely to take massive action in a kind of more spontaneous way.

So here's how you'll know if you're not taking massive action. And I'm going to tell you how you will know if you are. So you'll know if you're not taking massive action if you procrastinate. So procrastination is passive action. And it can take up so much mental energy and there can be a lot of negative chitchat going on in your head.

And the reason that you might procrastinate, it's worth thinking about why you procrastinate and really asking yourself why and getting to the bottom of it. But I'm going to suggest that it might be to do with fear of failure or criticism. And if you're wondering if that could be the case or you just think this is something I could do with some help with then definitely check out the previous episodes of the podcast because they're going to really help you.

And as a side note just whilst we're talking about procrastination, I do actually think that there are times when procrastinating on purpose is helpful. With some of the members of The Flow Collective this month, they're allowing an idea to just percolate in their minds. They're noticing that it's there, they're giving it attention but they're not taking practical action on purpose.

And this is what I do with big projects, whether we're talking about my books or specific things that we're doing inside The Flow Collective, I often think about the month before I actually start doing anything with them. I just like to let them germinate. And I tend to them. The ideas are there and I pay them attention but I just let them be. And what I find is that with time my cycle just starts working my ideas without me doing much. And then

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eventually it just gets to the point where I feel compelled to take action. And when I do, it's massive.

So that's an example of when I think procrastination on purpose can be a useful strategy. Another way you'll spot if you're not taking massive action is if you spend a lot of time feeling confused and overwhelmed. And a lot of people get stuck here, it's very understandable but it's also not helpful. So we want to be on the lookout for it. And if you find yourself thinking things like I don't know what to do or I can't do this, or there's too much to do. Then you are of course going to feel confused and overwhelmed. But all of this is optional.

And sometimes this can come from not being clear on what you actually want. So it's good to get specific about what you want and how you'll know when you've achieved it. And for those of you in The Flow Collective just remember that modules four and five inside the Harness Your Hormones course, that's in the bonus section of the app, that's there to help you overcome any confusion or overwhelm and come up with a more helpful way of going about things.

The other way that not taking massive action will show up is that you'll take action but only sporadically. And that might be in line with your cycle. And there might be a certain point in each cycle where you take action and then you just don't the rest of the time. So you might buy a supplement but only take it occasionally like when your symptoms hit. And I've done this myself by the way. So if that's you, you're not the only one. Or maybe give things a go once or twice and then stop.

So let's say you try acupuncture out and you go once hoping for a miracle and a miracle doesn't happen so you stop going. Now, I say this as a practitioner, one treatment can make a massive difference especially if you're in an acute situation. So let's say you're experiencing period pain or you have a headache, any kind of acute situation like that. When you have a treatment when that's going on, it can really relieve things. It can make a big difference.

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But generally when we're talking about treatment strategies there's a compound effect to most of them which is why a course of treatment is usually recommended. Of course if you go and you have a treatment and you just don't like it or maybe you don't like the practitioner, their style of treating or their personality then you don't have to keep going. You can try someone else though. So it's always good to do a sense check on that. And if your gut or your womb are telling you this isn't for you then pay attention.

But consistency makes a difference. It's the same as if we were thinking about finding a romantic partner. You're more likely to meet someone if you take massive action by going on lots of dates than if you go on one or two and then stop. I've given some reasons already about why you might be not taking massive action. But it might also be because you've already decided it won't work. But failure isn't a problem when it comes to massive action because you're just going to keep going until you get there.

So I love massive action for this because it's a great strategy for all you perfectionists. And I'm a recovering perfectionist by the way. So you are going to experience some failure along the way and that's okay, that's normal. And it can be a very fast route to success. If you haven't listened to the episode I did about failure yet, definitely check that out.

The other reason that can get in the way is if you think that there's a perfect way to go about taking action. I see you all you perfectionists. But I'm going to return to that in a bit, so hold that thought. So that's how you'll know you're not taking massive action and why. And here's how you'll know if you are taking massive action. You'll feel committed. So committed is an emotion, a feeling, and when you feel committed, or inspired, or courageous, or motivated, or whatever emotion works for you, you're more likely to take action consistently.

You'll also notice that you're prioritizing your goal and taking action accordingly. And constraint definitely helps here as in not working on five goals all at once, instead you'll be prioritizing one goal at a time. That might

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be on different days of the week or it might be for a long stretch of time. You've got to work with context of your life.

But having some constraints and prioritizing things will make a difference. Because when you do that and you spend time thinking every day about something that you can do that will support your goal then you're going to get there through that consistent action, through that massive action. And by the way, when we're talking about doing things every day it can actually mean taking time off believe it or not which might sound weird when we're talking about massive action.

But if I'm working on a goal part of my plan will usually be to go on walks or to spend some time reading non-fiction because I know now after some trial and error that my body and my brain function best when I spend some time outside, when I move my body and when I stop thinking about my work. That's how I work best.

The other way you might notice that you're taking massive action is because you spend more time taking action than you do procrastinating. I know it sounds obvious but it's worth pointing out. You'll also see that you're becoming accustomed to failure. This is such a great benefit of taking massive action.

Now what I want to do is fill you in on something that I shared with the members of The Flow Collective the other week. And this was about my journey to sort my period pain out. So for those of you that don't know, I used to have debilitating period pain. I wouldn't be able to leave the house. It was very painful. And I was reliant on pain medication that didn't exactly do the job a lot of the time. And I would wake-up in the night if it had worn off and I'd be running scorching hot baths at 3:00am.

And there were several months where I burnt myself with a hot water bottle and had blisters across my abdomen because the internal pain I had was just so severe that I didn't realise I was burning myself. It was full on. So that's what was going on. And I was at the point at this moment in time of

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saying yes to keyhole surgery to investigate the pain because I was wondering if it could be endometriosis. And that's what my doctors were kind of discussing with me.

But as I was trying to decide what to do something very interesting happened. I left my long term relationship at the time which let's just say it wasn't a great one for me to be in. And lo and behold the next period I had was virtually painless. And as I'm sure you can imagine this astonished me. I had heard that this kind of thing could happen. I was aware that it could but I was amazed that it was happening to me because I just didn't think that it would. And I mean I was so delighted that I really thought I was cured, I thought that was it.

I was kind of hesitant to believe it but I was really hoping that that was it, I was cured. But it was short lived and the pain gradually came back to the same degree in the periods that then followed. But that brief freedom of having one bleed with less pain was enough to give me hope.

And I should probably go back in time a bit. Prior to this I had been trying to improve my period pain but it was a bit of a half-hearted attempt. I'd go to a couple of acupuncture sessions or some other kind of therapy and then I'd stop or I'd try something else out but not really commit to going all in. I wasn't taking massive action. I was taking some action but I wasn't taking massive action.

And sometimes this was due to finances. But underneath that a lot of it was because I didn't really believe any of it would make a difference. So I would just convince myself that I'd be wasting money that I just didn't have to spare. And even though it was hideously painful I think I'd just resigned myself to periods being like this until I had that reduced pain for that one period.

And also around this time I wasn't treating myself well, certainly by kind of remaining in that relationship. And so that was showing up in other areas of my life as is often the case in terms of not taking care of my own needs. So

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when I had this period with less pain I was like bloody hell, this is possible for me. And yeah, another part of the story I was telling myself was that it was possible for other people's period pain to get better but not for me. And I'd recommend checking in with yourself and seeing if that's a belief that you hold too, that it will work for everyone else but you.

Anyway that seed of possibility from that one thought, this is possible for me changed everything because that was when I committed to being all in on improving my period pain. I had no idea how by the way. I had no idea how that would happen at this stage. But that was the moment that I made the decision to be all in no matter what. And I committed to taking massive action, taking action consistently until I got the result I wanted.

And I know a lot of you are at this point probably really desperate to know what you should do in order to improve your symptoms, whether we're talking about pain, or irregular cycles, PMS, or PMDD. And you're probably thinking along the lines of well, if I only knew what to do. And that's familiar territory to me. And sometimes there is one thing that's a bit like a magic bullet that changes everything. And that can be a particular type of supplement or having a certain type of treatment, or taking medication, or having surgery.

Sometimes it might be changing the type of menstrual product that you use or not working in the evening, it could be anything. But more often than not it's a combination of strategies that helps. That's why we have a different them every month in The Flow Collective so that layer by layer you're improving things from different but complementary angles. And what I see happening when someone has this idea that there's one thing that's going to magically change everything is that it can end up preventing you from taking any kind of action at all.

And this kind of analysis paralysis happens because you think that there's a perfect course of action to take that's going to solve everything. So all that happens is you get stuck in indecision versus giving things a go and seeing what works. I spoke about this in episode 12 which is all about

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failure and how taking action and being willing to fail your way to success is a quicker way to get there because it gives you information. And you can use that to keep going and find out what creates the results that you're after.

But to return to this thought that I had that less period pain was possible for me, that made me feel determined and that changed everything because here's what happened. I prioritised me and my health above everything else. And I say this with a massive smile on my face because this fundamentally changed so much about me and my life. But what I want to point out in saying this is that that was a decision I made. It didn't just happen. I decided that I wanted to prioritise me and my health above everything else.

And then instead of trying a bit of this and a bit of that in terms of treatments, I committed to the ones that I felt would be best for me. And I know you're going to want to know what they are. So here you go, get your pen and paper ready, acupuncture and Chinese herbs, and nutritional therapy too. Later on I added in the Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy, or ATMAT as it's abbreviated to.

And these have remained my favourite combination when it comes to reproductive and hormonal health because they really work for me and they have worked extremely well for my clients too. So I love recommending them. You don't necessarily need to do all of them. I did, that combo worked really well. You don't need to do all of them but they're my favourites. There is a lot of other great stuff out there. But they're just my favourites. They're my preference personally and professionally.

This next one might shock you all a bit. So because of I was taking massive action and determined to sort my period pain out. I spent 20% of my income on treatments and therapy, yeah, because I was seeing a psychotherapist as well. And at the time, I know this because I looked back at my tax returns, I was earning £14,000 a year, 14 not 40. I was working

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as a practitioner in a doula and I was on call for clients all the time but I wasn't charging much.

And by the way, in case you didn't know this, when you work as a practitioner you pay a significant amount to rent a room and for various other things. So I was working and I was working hard, but I wasn't earning much. It was just enough. But to be honest with you I was just so thrilled to be doing this work and I loved my clients. And I was just really quite happy with my life. Fortunately the rent where I lived at the time wasn't crazy high. So I was okay with doing that. It was tight but I chose to spend 20% of my income, I think it worked out to £250 a month or something like that.

So I was going to a student clinic for the treatments and also I think I got reduced cost psychotherapy as well. But being able to do this or deciding to do this it just changed how I view myself and my health because what had to shift in order for me to make that kind of investment when I wasn't earning much money, I really had to see myself as worthy. And since then I've always been willing to invest in me and my health. And it's only recently that I realised what making that decision has done for me in lots of other areas of my life, not just my health.

So I also changed my diet and invested in some supplements. And talking about money I actually remember being so nervous about paying for all of them, the amount shocked me. And I almost asked the nutritional therapist, "Well, if I was going to buy three of these which ones should I get?" And had I done so I'm sure she would have got that, she would have understood and she would have given me some guidance had I asked. But I decided to trust her and trust the process, trust the investment and just get them all.

And when I was doing that I remember thinking about all the hours I was losing to being in pain. But not just being in pain but worrying about being in pain. You know how pain affects you even when it's not happening to you because you just worry about when it's going to happen next and what it's going to be like. And I was also worried about my fertility. And at the

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time I didn't even want to have kids but I did want the option. And the idea that I wouldn't have an option was getting to me, I was finding that stressful.

So really what was going on was my period pain was invading my thoughts even when I wasn't in pain.

The other thing I did was I also prioritised my needs with my periods. So I would cancel clients when I was in pain and eventually I just stopped scheduling clients in for days one and two. And that was just a boundary that I had with myself. And I was upfront with my clients about why. If someone was in labour, because I was working in some birth [inaudible] as well, I would still go and just go in on the painkillers to kind of get it through.

But you can see how I kept taking action with all of this. And a lot of it was incremental, like remembering to take supplements every day and to take them at the recommended dosage. And being consistent with the treatments rather than just going once or twice and then doing nothing for a month. I really went with the treatment course. And there was a bunch of other stuff that I did along the way. And some it really helped. Some of it was huge for me to do and some of it wasn't so helpful but I kept going and my period pain stopped. And I haven't had period pain since. Wild.

I mean and so many other amazing things have happened of course because of this course of action that I took. I'll probably talk about that another time. But now that I've walked you through what massive action is, let's talk about what taking massive action is not. So massive action doesn't mean hustling, I know that hustling, and grinding, and that's something that's seen as admirable and something that we should be doing supposedly. But I don't think it is.

I don't think we need to be hustling and you'll be doing your hormones a serious favour if you develop an anti-hustle approach to life. Massive action also doesn't mean being forceful or punishing yourself either. By the time

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you reach a goal you don't want to be so burnt out from the process that you can't even enjoy it.

And I would also say that massive action can mean resting too, resting is an action. I know we don't think of it as such but it is. So much is going on when we rest and so much comes from rest. So you could be taking massive action by practicing radical rest. That could be a very purposeful way of taking massive action. But you might have to retrain your brain if in doing so you start thinking of yourself as lazy, which isn't true.

Okay my loves that is it for today. I hope you've enjoyed hearing about massive action. I will see you tomorrow in The Flow Collective or next week on the podcast. Have a good one.

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 for more.