

20. Making Decisions



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With Your Host

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Period Power with Maisie Hill

20. Making Decisions

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.

Welcome to episode 20 of the *Period Power Podcast* which is all about making decisions. I've had an interesting couple of weeks over here because we haven't had any hot water or heating. Well, actually that's not a 100% true, there have been a couple of brief periods where we have had hot water and heating but not for more than 12 hours or so and then it's just stopped.

And it's been a really interesting process to go through because I can see the parallels between what's going on with the boiler and what the journey to improving your health often looks like. So I might do an episode all about my boiler, we'll see.

My partner Paul got his Covid vaccination on Saturday and he's been feeling okay, he felt a bit off but okay. And I'm getting my Covid vaccine tonight and Paul my partner has been asking me how I'm feeling about getting it because there's been some recent concerns in the press about the side-effects and that side of things. And every time he's asked me my answer has always been good. Kind of like, "Why do you keep asking me?" But I've been thinking about why. Why do I feel so good about it? And I mean I think there's obvious answers to that.

But I mean why do I feel so good about that decision? I know this might seem obvious to some of you who are like, "Of course it's a great decision." But I mean just in the context of actually making a decision because he keeps looking at me like he's surprised that I'm so solid about getting it done as in no concerns about the side-effects whatsoever. I'm just cracking on and getting it done.

20. Making Decisions

So I've been mining my brain for the answer to that so that I could share it with you because I just had this sense that it's one of those straightforward things that would be useful for me to figure out and explain to you. And this is how I spend a lot of my time, just trying to figure out how I can break things down in a really simple and clear way especially the things that these days are more straightforward for my brain so that you can use them in your life.

So, although I've started off talking about getting a vaccine, that's not going to be the bulk of what we're talking about here today. This is about making decisions in any area of your life whether we're talking about something to do with your cycle, something to do with your work or your relationship. So when it comes to making decisions I see a lot of my clients and a lot of you all over on Instagram getting tripped up in a few different places.

And what I see happening a lot is that you'll make a decision and then question it and flip flop back and forth between what to do or one option or another. And of course that feels really crappy and it usually leads to a lot of ruminating and just going over things in your mind continuously and never getting anywhere. And the reason that I feel so good about my decision to get vaccinated is because I decided.

And I really want you to hear this. It might be useful for some of you to just think about it if getting a vaccine is a really obvious straightforward thing to do. And you're thinking, well, why would you feel anything else? Because some people will have other thoughts and feelings about it, think about something else like another decision because the thing is, I'll just say it again because I really want you to hear this. It sounds so simple that your brain might want to dismiss it and move onto something else.

But the reason that I feel so good about my decision is because I did decide, as in I made a decision and I stuck with it. I didn't indulge in confusion. And I spoke last week in that episode about why it's important to get out of feeling confused as quickly as you can because it's just not helpful, it's never helpful. I also didn't go back and forth, umming and ahhing

20. Making Decisions

about things. And the reason you will find yourself doing this is that you haven't really decided because if you have really decided you wouldn't spend time umming and aching anymore.

You haven't committed to your decision and being all in on it. So instead you just keep finding reasons to go down an alternate route and then convincing yourself the other way. And that just goes on, and on, and on. And staying in indecision is the best way to waste time and energy and use up your mental bandwidth. This is why I love talking about decision-making because when you're just continually weighing things up, all the pros and cons you just never actually get anywhere. You're putting a lot of thought into the decision but all that's happening is you're stuck in indecision.

And being stuck sucks, it just doesn't feel good does it? And indecision can actually be agonising. And in the Chinese medicine side of things you're stagnating. And stagnation is really something to avoid because it can lead to symptoms like period pain, pain at ovulation, breast and chest tenderness, digestive issues, irritability, mood changes. All those kinds of things can be hugely influenced by what we could call in Chinese medicine, stagnation.

But think for a moment about the correlation between making decisions and your stress levels because when you're in indecision you are most likely in a stress cycle. And the longer you stay in indecision the longer that stress cycle will remain open, because what we want is to experience stress and then close that circuit off. You want to achieve resolution.

But when you're in indecision you don't achieve resolution, you just stay stuck in that stress response. And when that's going on that will be impacting your health including your hormonal health. So again this is why I love talking about making decisions. And when you stay in indecision which is a choice by the way, all that happens is you ruminate, and worry, and feel overwhelmed, and anxious. And the reason you'll do this is because at the heart of it you believe that there is a right decision to make.

20. Making Decisions

And maybe it feels like your health, your relationship, your career etc all depends on you making the right decision. So I want to free you up from that today by just waving my magic wand at you and letting you know that there is no right decision. There's only ever the decision that you make right by deciding that it was the right decision. And how does it feel when you think that there's a right decision to be made? It doesn't feel great to me. It just activates my nervous system. It causes emotions such as fear, worry, dread and that's not where I like to make decisions from.

This I just want to say is very different to being open to different possibilities or being inquisitive about what might be helpful to you in a certain situation. And of course there will be times when you make a decision and then somewhere down the line you get more information and you want to change your mind then you go ahead and you do that. But again that's different to chopping and changing your mind.

For example, you could umm and ah endlessly about a piece of software to use. I say this because I've been going through this in my business a bit recently. Well, actually I haven't because I've had the wonderful Veronica helping me to figure all of this out. But say you spend time umming and aching about something like a piece of software, that would be very different to if you just decided and committed to something and actually figured out if it suits your needs, you'd get to that solution quicker and with more information than you got if you were just sat around wondering endlessly.

Or maybe you find some software that's a great fit for you but then you learn that the company isn't allowing any discussion of politics in workplace and making very poor decisions around the diversity equity and inclusion policies. Which is what a company called Basecamp who have – I promise, this isn't going to turn into a software episode. But a company called Basecamp have just announced this and if you're using Basecamp you might then decide you're not going to give them your money and look for an alternate platform who are antiracist.

20. Making Decisions

Something that I'm commonly told by people who get in touch with me through Instagram or clients of mine is that they will tell me that I just need more time to make a decision. And this is very familiar to me. I'd say this is my go to when it comes to making decisions. Let's just wait, like that's going to magically change things. But time never solves anything. I can tell you, I have tried this many times.

I'll tell myself that I'll know the answer in a few days time when I've had a chance to think about it properly. But this is just my brain lying to me and trying to avoid doing a bit of work basically because guess what? In a few days time I'll be no closer to making a decision. The only way I'm going to come to a decision is by sitting down and deciding, or standing up and deciding, don't have to be sat down.

Now, your brain might tell you that you need more information to make a decision. And I'm all for researching things especially when it comes to medical stuff. I'm a big proponent of informed consent. But you have to be onto yourself about if doing lots of research is actually helping you. For some of you it will. Some of you it won't, and that will also vary according to an individual. It's not like some people are good at this and some people aren't. It will depend on the context.

So be aware if you're progressing towards actually making a decision or if you're staying in indecision, and worry, and overwhelm. And I'm not saying that you should or shouldn't do something by the way, or that you shouldn't look into things. I think that's a really great thing to do. And there are certainly ways to manage where your mind goes as you read up about things and do research. But I know that many of you just end up losing sleep over it. So that's what we're talking about here.

Another thing you might do is think that you need to speak to a loved one or perhaps if it's work related, a team member to see what they think. And there are times when this is appropriate. My partner Paul is a graphic designer and there are areas in my business where I might ask for his input

20. Making Decisions

on things, things that I don't know much about. But when I do this I remain responsible for my decision.

But there have been times when I've asked other people for their opinion in the hopes that they will just make a decision for me. But all this does is hand over responsibility to them because when we ask others to make a decision or help us to make a decision, that's how we phrase it.

When we do this it's usually because we want to avoid being responsible for the decision because if you're questioning your romantic relationship and your friend says, "Yes, you should leave." And then you leave your partner but then you regret it and then you can blame your mate, or your friend, or your sister, or whoever told you.

I gave that example because I was watching an old episode of Sex and the City. One of the early episodes where Carrie makes the mistake of telling a friend that she should leave her husband, just an offhand comment and her friend is just so grateful to her. And she leaves her husband and just expresses gratitude to Carrie for liberating her from that relationship.

And I didn't get to finish off the episode but I think what happens is she ends up getting blamed for the relationship ending when her friend decides that she's miserable and she wants to get back together with him. But this is what we do. We just hand over responsibility for our decisions to other people. The other phrase I hear a lot when someone is trying to decide something is, "I don't know what to do."

When I'm coaching in The Flow Collective or with my one-on-one clients I have this general rule and they're not allowed to say, "I don't know." Well, I mean of course they can say that but they know when they say that that I'm going to then say to them, "Well, say you did know. What would you do?" So listen, don't tell yourself that you don't know. This is so disempowering and such a discredit to your magnificent mind.

You do know, even if you don't know information and you want to get that information, your brain does know a starting place to get that, it's called

20. Making Decisions

Google, or it's called *Period Power*, or *Perimenopause Power*, or whatever source of information you might want to go to. That's a starting point and that's all you need. But you might hold off on accessing your inner guidance because you fear what other people might think about you or what they might say about you.

So you might be avoiding making a decision because you're people pleasing and you're just trying to control what other people think of you rather than managing your own mind. Another mistake I see happening is when someone says, "Well, it's a big decision to make."

Recently I bumped into someone I know and they were talking about some really significant things that have happened in their life the past few months. And we're talking big life events here that have had repercussions which have left this person needing to make some decisions. And as we were talking over they kept talking about how big the decisions were. And that is absolutely how they were thinking about it all.

But I pointed out that as long as they were going round in circles thinking about it that way they wouldn't be able to make a decision because they were seeing this decision as a huge thing that would forever impact their life. I mean just the idea of it makes me want to bury my head in the sand and not make a decision. And I'm not the one who's dealing with all of this. So I can well imagine how terrifying and paralysing this is for them.

And what I suggested to them that I want to share with you all is that they start by making one decision, any decision, doesn't matter which one, just to get some motion happening. And by the way one of my favourite things to recommend for times like these is to do a walk and talk or a walk and think if it's just you on your own because actual forward motion, the physical act of moving your body forward through space can really help your mind to take a step forward. So I'm thinking activities like walking, running, cycling, swimming, they're all great for this kind of thing.

20. Making Decisions

So you start by making one decision and then what will happen is your mind and your nervous system will start to realize that it's not so bad after all. And then you can keep working that loop, that neural pathway by making another decision and reminding your nervous system again that it's okay to do this. The world isn't going to end.

And yes, of course there will be times where you realise you need to make another decision and course correct. But that's not a big deal as long as you're being compassionate towards yourself and you're not making it mean all kinds of terrible things about you, which you're not going to do are you? I'm thinking things like I always make the wrong decision, those kinds of things. You don't want to let your brain go there. And if this is your tendency, please make sure you get on the wait list to join The Flow Collective because we can help you.

I also want to say that you don't have to be a 100% sold on something to make a decision. If you're waiting to be 100% certain then it's going to be harder to make a decision because when was the last time you were a 100% certain about something? I've been thinking about this and I've been really struggling to think of something. Because if you're always waiting to magically be 100% certain before you make a move on anything your life is going to stay the same and pass you by.

Okay, this is a bit of a punchy episode. You can tell I'm in the run up to ovulation. Some final tips for you when it comes to making decisions, not making a decision is a decision, if it's not a clear yes it's a no. It's like you're playing blackjack and you're deciding to stick or twist. Not deciding is sticking with how things currently are and that's okay. Make that decision and move on, don't waste any more time, or energy, or thoughts on it.

I also love making decisions at the start of my cycle when oestrogen is trickling in, so that's day three to six for me. Though I have to say I'm not really feeling that happening so much in this cycle. I'm starting to get there but I'm just kind of wondering when oestrogen's going to arrive because my verbal recall hasn't been great. I've been struggling with names and things.

20. Making Decisions

Anyway, day three to six is when I like to be okay, here's the plan, this is what we're doing, let's go. And then I start taking action from there.

And if you haven't listened to a previous episode I did which is called Massive Action then make sure you check that out. I just had someone in The Flow Collective who listened to that episode and they started taking massive action and they started applying it to all the stuff in The Flow Collective because they recently joined. And after three weeks of taking massive action they've just had a massive reduction in their period pain. So massive action is where it's at.

But when it comes to the cycle there's another time that I like to make decisions and that's towards the end of my cycle when my period is close to starting. And I just want to tie up loose ends. So at the start of my cycle my focus is usually on big picture things. And I make decisions and take action around them. And then the smaller things that are less important I like to sift my way through them in the final days of my cycle and that's when my sister Beck gets loads of messages from me.

But I do want to say, there's no right or wrong time to be making a decision, whether it's your cycle or anything else. You just want to get in the habit of making decisions and taking action. Being decisive is also a practice. The more you do it the more it becomes a habit. Something you can try if you've got a bit of a backlog of decisions to make, you can just give yourself half an hour a week that's dedicated to making decisions but don't forget to be doing them as you go as well, they don't all have to be saved up.

Okay, that is it for today. I hope you found this useful. Go forth and make decisions and I will catch you next time.

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.