

## 26. Stagnation



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

**Period Power** with Maisie Hill

## 26. Stagnation

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.

My friends let me tell you something about today. I have been up since 3:40am. The birds woke me up. Well, one bird in particular I'm going to blame. And I just could not get back to sleep. So at 4:30 I just decided to get up and get on with it and get some work done, which I actually really enjoyed. But we are in seagull breeding season so that shit gets really loud real early.

What's amusing to me is that as I was walking home last night I was contemplating adjusting my sleep time so that I could get up earlier and get some work done in the morning because I love the early hours for writing just before anyone else in the house is up. And I'd like to have some time off to relax in the day now that it's the summer and it's beach weather. So lo and behold I was up earlier today. So, even though I'm very tired I did enjoy it but it is however a shame that I didn't fall asleep until after 11:00pm last night.

No, I wasn't out partying. Well, actually I suppose it was a party of some kind because last night we started our theme for June in The Flow Collective. And it's called Getting Unstuck which is relevant to what I'll be talking about in this episode. One of my clients from The Flow Collective recently said that she loves how my podcast episodes tie in so neatly with what we do inside the membership.

And now, this is music to my ears because that was my whole intention when I created the podcast. I wanted opportunities to talk about topics that come up in The Flow Collective. And I also wanted a way to help you all, so it was great to hear that. And there is a really strong link with this episode

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and what we're doing inside the membership this month. The reason I was up until 11:00am, this was the party, was because we had a two hour kickoff call for the month which was basically a workshop, it was epic.

We did a relaxing visualisation, a guided exercise where they picked a situation where they feel stuck or an area of their lives where they want to create some movement. And then I asked them questions to help them figure out how to get unstuck. And they all took time in between questions to journal their answers down. Then I went on to share my top tips and coaching tools for the month. And then I coached some of them on the call. So it was a lot of fun. It was a party of some kind like I said.

And I was just so elated during it and after it which is why it took me a while to wind down, that and the sunset swim in the tidal pool which is my first one of the year.

So whether you're in the membership or not this episode is going to be helpful to all of you I'm sure, especially those of you who have cycle related symptoms like period pain, pain ovulation, mood changes, PMS and conditions like endometriosis and adenomyosis. So make sure you listen up if that's you.

Today's episode is, yeah, it's a snippet of the missing chapter from my book, *Period Power*. So for those of you who don't know about this, we removed a whole chapter from *Period Power*. It was going to be in the first section of the book and it was all about Chinese medicine and the cycle. And I think it was called Putting the Chinese Medicine Spin on your Cycle, because it is a very different way of looking at things. But we took it out early on in the editing process as my publishers felt there was a lot of information to absorb in the book already.

And I actually agreed with them, I think it was a good decision and it was already bulging as a book, even when we took that 10,000 word chapter out, it was still 126,000 words which was double the length it was meant to be. So I think I stand by that decision, it was a good one. But I know how

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helpful the content from that chapter is, for the missing chapter because in all my work as an acupuncturist I've seen my clients faces when I explain their cycle to them in terms of Chinese medicine.

So I did want to use the missing chapter somehow and I have because I turned it into two webinars which you get access to when you join The Flow Collective. We did a whole theme on Chinese medicine. And it's one of our most loved resources in the membership. My clients have used them to make decisions about how they care for themselves, through their diet, movement, resting as well. And you also don't have to work with a Chinese medicine practitioner in order to use that content.

In fact most of my clients haven't worked with someone privately and one-on-one and they felt the benefit. Of course you can work with someone, with a practitioner and I am completely biased when it comes to this. But I do love acupuncture and Chinese herbs for menstrual cycle issues. So today you are getting an introduction to an aspect of Chinese medicine that is crucial when we're talking about menstrual health but also your overall health and wellbeing, both physical and mental. So are you ready?

I'm doing this on four and a half hours sleep so buckle up because I'm going to tell you all about stagnation. The dictionary definition of stagnation is a state or condition marked by lack of flow, movement or development. So even from that definition I think you can get a sense of how this can impact the menstrual cycle because your period and all of the menstrual cycle is about flow. So picture a river that isn't flowing for some reason. The water becomes stagnant which Wikipedia tells me can become a major environmental hazard. It's the same with you.

When you become stagnant you can develop a health hazard. And we see that in the cycle and in reproductive health. So in Chinese medicine there are specific channels that flow through the body. And your chi which for the sake of simplicity let's describe as energy. Your chi flows through those channels. Other things also flow too but we're just going to kind of keep it

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simple today. So you can also think of these channels as rivers if that's helpful to you. And when energy flows you feel energised.

Your chi is moving and getting everywhere it needs to go. And you can see this most easily in kids. So when I think of my son whose five, he is full of beans. He's alert and raring to go as soon as he wakes-up in the morning. He's also not in any kind of physical pain. And he's able to move in and out of different emotional states just as easily as he moves his body. There's a real freedom of expression physically and emotionally. Let me tell you, he does not stop moving. He's moving all day long. And this is important and I'm going to come back to why in a moment.

So that's my son. Now let's compare him with the other male in my life, Paul. So, Paul is often tired but the tiredness shifts quickly when he goes for a run, or does some yoga, or exercise of some kind. And I was explaining this to a male friend of ours who was also talking about how tired he is because this is a telltale way of knowing if you're tired because you're deficient, i.e. you just don't have much energy or if you're tired because you have energy but that energy isn't moving.

If you feel tired but when you exercise you feel energised, the tiredness is due to stagnation. You've got energy but it isn't flowing. So then when you move that energy starts flowing and with it comes energy. On the other hand, if you're tired but you exercise and you feel more wiped out, the tiredness is likely down to deficiency. You just don't have enough energy to sustain the flow in the river. So I was also explaining to this friend that people who have stagnation are often depressed, grouchy or grumpy, irritable, angry, full of resentment, quite bitter or all of the above.

I am guessing that some of you or all of you are able to picture someone who this describes, whether it's you or someone else in your life. And just to add to that picture, people who have stagnation also tend to sigh a lot because they're trying to shift that energy somehow. So if you've got someone in your life who's prone to moaning and sighing, they are likely to be experiencing stagnation.

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And what's sad about that is that when you have stagnation it can be hard to take the action that's going to help you. Which is why having acupuncture or taking some herbs can be really helpful because it gives you enough to get things moving so that then you can take action. And this can be achieved I would say within a few treatments, not necessarily resolved entirely but enough to feel a difference and be able to get going with other things that will support you like moving your body.

People who are stagnant tend to take a while to wake-up in the morning. And Paul and I had a hilarious conversation this morning about this episode as I was asking him if it was okay to talk about him and his stagnation. And he said, "Make sure you tell them that you're the one who's dead to the world unless you've had a cup of tea." So I am telling you. And it's no wonder that we both rely on a morning cuppa. We have a child who wakes-up most nights. But he's right, I am prone to stagnation.

You all know about my history of debilitating period pain and how Chinese medicine radically improved it. Well, GZ my practitioner actually got rid of it entirely. And yes, I will post her website in the show notes because you can work with her virtually too. She prescribes herbs using virtual sessions. I mean if you're lucky enough to live near where she is then by all means please go and have some acupuncture with her, she's fantastic. But the reason I had period pain is because I had some stagnation going on. There was some other stuff too but there was stagnation.

And the premenstrual irritability and rage that I used to have, and all of the frustration there too, that was also down to stagnation. Why was it there you might ask. Well, because no surprise, I was repressing all of my emotions, just holding it all in. I was saying yes when I wanted to say no. I had no boundaries. I was over-committing myself. I was really pissed off to be frank. But I was burying that deep inside until the point in my cycle where my hormones made sure that I accessed those thoughts and feelings. And boy, I really felt them.

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So I've really worked on this particularly over the last couple of years through being coached and coaching myself. And I'm in such a different place with it all now. So stagnation can relate to physical symptoms like pain but it can also relate to emotional wellbeing too.

Remember how I was explaining that my son moves his body a lot and he also freely expresses his emotion. That's why he doesn't have stagnation. But in the next few years as he becomes more aware of society's expectation of him to not throw himself on the floor and have a good cry, there is the potential for him to start to head into stagnation territory, especially with two parents who are prone to it and I kind of feel like we're tiptoeing into that now.

I can definitely sense that since he started school he's more aware of some emotional things not being okay or wanting to kind of hide them from other people. But just as your genes don't have to be your destiny, neither do you have to resign yourself to the constitution you were born with. That's what we call it in Chinese medicine, or indeed the upbringing that you had.

So what's going to help my son in these years and for the rest of his life is ensuring he continues to move his body and that we support him in learning how to feel and process emotion and not bottle everything up. And these are things that adults need too. These are things that you will need too. And when it comes to pain, pain involves stagnation. There will be varying reasons as to why there is stagnation and what's causing the pain. It's very common in those of us born female to be deficient and stagnant.

So picture that river again, and the reason for it not flowing is because there isn't enough water supplying the river versus there being plenty of water but it's just being held up by an obstruction. So, pain involves stagnation and in the cycle that can relate to period pain, both in the lead up to your period starting and during it. It can also relate to pain at ovulation, that kind of aching dragging feeling where it feels like something's trying to happen. It's trying hard but it's not, or it feels like it's taking ages and you're grumpy and irritable too.

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The same with your period, if it feels like it's trying to start and it's just not, and you're just fucking over it, that's stagnation. Ovulation and menstruation are the points of movement in the cycle. So when there's stagnation one or both of them will be affected. Other symptoms include chest tenderness, abdominal bloating, mood disturbances, anger which can be suppressed and held in or expressed outwardly, frustration, resentment, jealousy, irritability and depression. And these often appear premenstrually or they might appear around ovulation and just kind of stick with you.

Then when your period comes and things move there's relief. But many of you have told me that you feel like you're in your autumn which is the premenstrual phase of the cycle. You feel like you're in your autumn all the time now. And that happens when the stagnation isn't dealt with, so it's there premenstrually. And then it becomes more significant and it takes up more of your cycle and then just really ramps up premenstrually, it's not pleasant.

You might also feel like your chest is constricted somehow. Sighing as I mentioned is common in those with stagnation, being prone to hiccups is too, feeling like you've got a lump in your throat, tiredness and irregular or painful periods. Stagnation can involve more than chi. Anyone who's a Chinese medicine practitioner listening is like, "You're going to talk about these things too." I'm not going to get caught up in the details with things here.

But stagnation can involve more than chi, particularly when we're talking about menstrual health issues such as severe period pain, heavy periods, dark or clotted blood, endometriosis, adenomyosis, cysts and fertility issues. And I talk about that more in the Chinese medicine webinars. But for now just know that stagnation is one of the big issues that we see in menstrual health when we're looking at it through the Chinese medicine lens.

Stagnation can also go on to cause other issues like headaches, migraines and sleep issues, just to name a few. So it's really worth addressing it and



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please know that these things can be improved. You can work with a practitioner but please make sure they're qualified in the UK to train as an acupuncturist. It's a three year full-time degree and it is hard.

Acupuncture courses have a 50% dropout rate because the training is so rigorous. We study western medicine, Chinese medicine and learn all the acupuncture points etc. It's a lot. My degree was actually four years full-time because we had to also learn Chinese language and culture. And we spent a semester apprenticing in a hospital in China.

You might have heard me talking about how I apprenticed with a consultant urologist. And being in the clinic with him was part of my degree and it was fascinating to see the two forms of medicine being fully integrated like that. One minute he's reviewing CAT scans and sending people off for MRIs. And the next he's putting needles in someone or writing a prescription for herbs, amazing to have that as part of my training.

So if you want to work with someone, find someone who is qualified and registered. And you can do that using the links in the show notes. But also know that you can work on this on your own too, even if you're working with a practitioner it's important that you don't just rely on their treatments. You might to begin with but once the stagnation clears you want to start doing things for yourself too.

And this is why my work has evolved into coaching because after years and years of treating women and seeing the same old issues coming up, the inability to say no, lack of boundaries, all the people pleasing and all of the pent up emotions. Because nobody's ever taught them how to be angry and how to process all the other emotions that they feel, this is why we focus on all of these things in The Flow Collective.

I was actually having a conversation with one of my private clients today who has endometriosis. And it's been a while since we spoke about her physical pain. So I checked in and asked what was going on and she realised that it's been a few months since she had any, which is fascinating

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because we haven't done anything to do with nutrition or anything along those lines. And some of my other clients have had this same experience that their pain has reduced without bringing in any of those interventions.

We've just been looking at what's going on in their minds, processing emotions, regulating their nervous systems and working on the shit that's been bothering them for years. And this might sound a bit controversial. So I want to be clear that I am in no way saying that their physical pain is all in their heads. Endometriosis is very real. It's a condition that can severely impact someone's life. And I'm a big proponent of using nutrition and other types of treatments and of surgical intervention too.

But let's also look at what's going on emotionally because there is a big correlation between endometriosis and mental health. So it needs to be included in the conversation. I don't actually work one-on-one with folks whose main reason for applying is physical conditions. I prefer to refer them to colleagues who are practitioners because I do think that it's important to address the physical side of things that way. But I also recommend that they join The Flow Collective so that they can make use of all the tools inside there.

And if you want to get on the wait list to join you can do so using the link in the show notes, we'll be open for enrolment later on this month and then you'll be able to jump in and watch the Chinese medicine webinars. That my friends is your introduction to stagnation in terms of Chinese medicine.

I'm going to head to the tidal pool and have a swim on my way home because I'm trying to get as many swims in because my bleed is due next week and I won't be swimming when I'm bleeding because swimming in cold water when you have your period can cause, can you guess? Stagnation.

Okay my loves, I will catch you next week. Have a good one.

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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.