

## Ep #75: Being Playful



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

**Period Power** with Maisie Hill

## Ep #75: Being Playful

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.

Hello folks, it's midway through May. I mean I just can't believe it. I'm actually wearing calf length clothes, skirts, and trousers. I've got a very low tolerance for cold, so my ankles really do only come out once it's warm enough. And I even had my first swim in the sea yesterday. It was a lovely sunny day; the water was still freezing of course. I mean it's the UK after all.

And I was cracking up because I shared that I'd been for my first swim on my Instagram stories and my friend Keena who lives in America commented on how she was just confused because I'd been swimming, but I was wearing a fleece in the photo that I took afterwards. Listen, let me tell you how cold it is over here. You've got to really take care of yourself and warm up as soon as you get out. So we are well into spring now. And the start of summer is actually only a month away.

So all my creative juices are getting going for summer especially for what we're going to be doing in The Flow Collective. And that means that it won't be long until the doors open for you to join. We currently only open the doors around the time when each season of the year is coming to a close.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves because today I want to talk to you about spring. I love spring. It's become my favourite season of the year and of the cycle. And I'm really feeling that momentum that often comes with the spring season especially when we're really in spring. It's not the beginning and we're kind of getting closer to summer so things are ramping up. And I'm also in the spring season of my cycle as I record this. So I have definitely got that double whammy effect happening right now.

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But I love bringing in the qualities of spring at other times as well. Did you know that you can do that? That's the thing about the seasons. They all have their own qualities, and you can work with those qualities in that season, but you can also bring those qualities into other seasons if you want to, if it's helpful for you to. And that's really easy to do when you use thought work, which is what I teach my clients to do. And this came up on our coaching call this week in The Flow Collective because we've been doing our first collective massive action week.

Now, if you've been listening to the podcast for a while you'll have heard me talk about massive action, if not check out those episodes. But massive action is simply taking action and being willing to fail, that's key, being willing to fail until you reach your desired result. What massive action looks like will vary greatly depending on what your goal or your desired result is. So some of my clients are working on external goals like getting a new job or finishing their PhDs.

And others are working on internal goals like improving their mental health or creating a loving relationship with their body. So how they go about doing that is going to vary greatly, although I will say there's some common threads running through all the goals. And the great thing about working on things like this is once you build the skills to meet one goal you can use those skills for something completely different. And that's why there are these commonalities even amongst the varied goals that everyone is working towards right now.

So for some people their massive action actually involves them doing less. It might be resting more than they usually do. It might involve doing things for pleasure. And on this coaching call I was coaching on the things that are getting in the way of my clients from taking massive action. We covered all sorts of things but the topic that came up that I wanted to talk about today with you all on the podcast is about being playful. So as I said, at the time this episode goes out we are in the spring unless of course you're in the southern hemisphere in which case just feel free to go with it.

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But before we kind of look at spring in detail, I want to backtrack a bit and invite you to think about winter. So in winter we're usually inside a lot more than other seasons, most of us at least. We are tucked up in jumpers and blankets. And our bodies can go through this process of contracting, of closing off and tightening. We go more internal, and you can experience that as being more internal in terms of your environment and staying in. And you can also experience going internal as an internal process, very meta I know, but basically just going more inside of yourself.

And then as the days get longer and brighter and we move into spring we begin to emerge from the depths of winter. And I love to notice the timing of this within myself and compare it to what I see around me in nature. It's always when those new green shoots just start to pop up through the leaves that have been on the ground since autumn. There's a kind of back and forth that goes on here, I'm sure there's part of what's happening is me seeing the shoots and that creates a thought and a feeling inside of me.

So I'm more upbeat, a bit more positive, there's some energy kind of building. But alongside that I do believe that we naturally respond to the seasons shifting. And as we emerge from winter our physical bodies change. I feel my posture change and I see other people walking around much more upright. They stop looking down in front of them which is of course what we do when it's raining and windy, especially here in the UK. And your posture and where your eyes look really impact your mood and energy.

So when the weather shifts and we move into spring we start to look up and we also look out. Your gaze goes from what's right in front of you to what's beyond that. So think about how that influences what you see as possible for you and your life. In winter what's possible isn't really the vibe. It's more just dealing with what's right in front of you and no more especially the past couple of winters. And this might be true of your cycle as well. It's just like, okay, I'm just going to focus on what's necessary and no more.

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But as you start to look up and out as we emerge into spring that will start to influence how you think and feel. And I really feel this living by the sea. I think a huge part of why I was able to write my books is because we moved to Margate. During my pregnancy with Nelson I had an overwhelming urge to see a horizon. And I used to just climb up any available hill in order to see a horizon which was really just the horizon of the city. And I just really craved one that wasn't buildings. And when you live by the coast or maybe if you visit the seaside there is an expansive quality to it.

And so your perception and your belief around what's possible kind of naturally expands. And that influenced my ability to write as well as my actual writing. Now when I go into London for a day or so I love coming back and getting out at Margate Train Station and just immediately seeing the horizon. I really feel that in my body. And as I'm talking about this, as we're talking about expansion which you may remember is my word of the year, I'd love for you to pay attention to what's going on in your body. What do you notice? How do you feel?

Can you feel that expansion within you? What does it feel like? And how does your mind respond to it? Does your mind go with that expansion, or does it trample all over it and give you a list of reasons why things aren't possible? Just notice that for a moment. Spring for me really is all about what's possible which is why we've been leaning into this in The Flow Collective. And so much of my work is driven by a desire to help you all to really see what's possible both in terms of the goals that you go for and how you go about making them happen.

And I love seeing the leaps that happen in The Flow Collective, especially the ones that are happening right now. It gives me goosebumps. And it's so fun to see my clients getting results that they had no idea were even possible. The other tendency that you might notice happening is that once we're in spring you want to connect with others more. You want to come out and play.

And in your cycle this can happen around the time your period is finishing as you enter the spring season of your cycle. But whether you have a cycle

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or not I want you to consider what the start of spring feels like and how that relates to your behaviour. So you can consider the spring season of your cycle, or the season of the year, or both because they might be similar, or they might be different.

And as I said, I live in Margate, a seaside town so in the winter we get a bit battered with the wind and the rain. Pretty much everyone hides away. But once the sun comes out suddenly you see people you haven't seen in months. More people come and visit so there's this really obvious shift both within me and around me, we're all just coming out to play. And play is one of the qualities of spring. So before we start talking about play specifically, I want to invite you to take a moment and consider how much play is present in your life at the moment or if it's there at all.

Hit pause if you want to and just think about it. And as you consider how much play is in your life and where play exists, how do you feel about the level of play you currently have in your life? Are you surprised? Are you disappointed? Do you feel sad? Do you feel proud? Again, just notice. And when we're talking about play that of course can mean actual playing, playing sports, playing a game of some kind, a boardgame or a kind of more sporty game. But it also includes being playful.

And I would love for you to consider play as an activity and as an approach. That means that it can be what you do and/or how you do it. And this is really key for me. Being playful is just so important to me. It's part of who I am as a person and how I go about things. So you will know most likely that I'm very serious about my work. It means a lot to me. I'm very passionate about it, I'm very dedicated. But I'm also very playful in how I work because as I was saying to my client on our coaching call, being playful doesn't mean you're not serious about what you're doing.

And this is where I disagree very strongly with the dictionary definition of being playful. So the definition in the dictionary for playful is done as a form of play rather than intended seriously or wanting to have a good time and not feeling serious. Because I don't think these things have to be in opposition. You can be serious about something and be playful. Have you

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seen kids play? They're very serious about playing, highly committed, very determined in their play. And I'm very serious about my work but I'm also very playful in how I do it.

So when I'm coaching my clients, very serious, very committed. And we coach on some serious topics, some kind of traditionally heavy ones. But how I coach is playful. And the caveat to that is I'm playful when it's appropriate and I'm not there laughing at someone or yeah, being inappropriate. But it's that ability to hold space for something that can feel very heavy in a light and tender way. And that can involve being playful. And that means that our coaching calls are effective. We're really looking at the root of things and we have fun whilst we're doing it.

And I was reflecting in preparation for this podcast on how I have come to be playful in my approach and I think it's just who I am. My work is all about helping you to really see what's possible to just blaze past your limiting beliefs whilst also tending to the parts of you that need to feel safe and that requires some tenderness. And I'm able to dance between these and bring them together by being playful, to be light-hearted whilst also being firmly rooted. And that's why I can hold space for the heavy shit without me or my clients being weighed down by it.

And I had this question come up quite a bit on Instagram recently about how I'm able to do the work that I do and not take it onboard, to not get worn out or burnt out by dealing with other people's issues and this is why. And believe me I used to be. I used to be very affected by my clients having a hard time. But thought work has really made a huge difference. And I just don't do it now. I don't take my clients' stuff onboard. I think about their issues, sometimes maybe more than they do, who knows?

But I do that without being attached or enmeshed in what they're dealing with. I do it by being curious and playful so that I can come up with things that will help them and help you. I mean this is literally every episode of the podcast, everything I teach in The Flow Collective. It's my process. I get curious, I play around with things, I test them out on myself, I share them with others and then I edit and refine, and I just keep going.

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And being playful prevents me from being rigid and blinkered in my approach. And it helps me to consider everything. It stops me from heading towards perfectionism. It stops me from criticising myself and stomping all over my ideas and desires before they've even got going. When I think about *Period Power*, I had no idea at the beginning of how I would be able to synthesise all the information I had in my head, the research, the concept into one cohesive book that made sense.

So I just played around with things. If I didn't do that, I would have just been diluting everything before it even came to life. And being playful is how you can bring things to life whether that's a book, a project, even a human being. Just think about it, play is the reason why so many of us exists in the first place, because it led to sex.

I was reading some articles earlier today, some research about play and lack of play can lead to depression and irritability. When we play it stimulates the growth of your cerebral cortex and it releases those feel good endorphins which can lead to an increase in energy and mood. Being playful also stimulates your creativity. It helps you to problem solve effectively and come up with solutions that aren't as available to you when you're experiencing stress and pressure.

And when we're being playful, we're also in a nervous system state where we feel safe and connected. We're alert, we're interested in what's going on but we're able to be curious about what's going on because we're not experiencing a real or perceived threat. So that has an impact on your stress hormones which then influences the rest of your health and your wellbeing. So there's a lot to be said for playing and being playful. And I'd love for you to consider where you could bring play into your life. Where do things currently feel heavy?

And how would it feel to bring in some playfulness, some light-heartedness and what would that look like? Before we finish up for today there's two playful activities that I want to recommend to you all, but you can do whatever works for your body and what feels good to you. These are just things that I'm able to do physically and that I really enjoy. Also remember



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that you can make mundane tasks fun by being playful in how you do them. That's always an option.

So here are the two things that I have been enjoying recently. The first is playing catch. And you could just carry a tennis ball with you, or a frisbee, or whatever floats your boat. And ask a friend or ask a colleague maybe to go for lunch especially if the weather's nice where you live these days. And just bring it out. I think it's really hard for people to resist that invitation to play. Because even if they're a bit nervous and there's some kind of thoughts that are getting in the way, inside we all have a deep desire to play.

So when there's an invitation to play, we respond to that. There's actually an ad on TV at the moment which kind of relates to my second recommendation for a playful activity. I can't remember what the ad is actually for. It's set in an office and it's a goodbye party or a congratulations party, I can't remember but there's a balloon there. And the balloon is set free and then someone from the other side of the room just runs across the office to stop the balloon from hitting the floor. And it just turns into a game of keepy-uppy. And I love doing that. It's such a fun game to play.

We've had quite a few kids' birthday parties recently and there's often a balloon in the party bag. So we've been playing a lot of this at home and it's so much fun, completely captivating, you just get lost in it. I remember one day Paul went out to do something and Nelson and I were playing it. And I don't know how much time elapsed, but Paul came home, and we were still playing it.

And think about what that does for your body, for your stress levels, for your hormones. Even just to focus on something because when you're doing something like that, you have to be fully present in the moment. You can't be thinking about other things. And that is just wonderful, what a gift to give yourself. So that's my other recommendation, go out, buy a balloon, blow it up, and play keepy-uppy. Okay, that's it for today's episode my loves. Have fun being playful and I'll catch you next week.

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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.