

Ep #80: The Spoon Theory



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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 there, folks. Today's episode might sound a bit different because I am recording it from home. I'm currently in my living room. This wasn't the plan by the way, but as you're going to hear, this week isn't exactly going to plan. So I'm sat in my living room, sat behind the sofa with my mic and a laptop. And I am surrounded in what I think is a well fashioned DIY sound booth because I've used these foldout kind of play sofa cushions that Nelson plays with, to surround me to try and prevent echoes from happening.

And Nelson is upstairs. He has been instructed to watch a screen and keep himself occupied but he may come down and join us. So I'm just preparing myself for that eventuality. But I want to begin today's episode by telling you about my week because it ties into today's topic in the most perfect way. And as I'm going through the story of my week you might recognise similarities in your own experience somehow, or there might be some things that impact me that surprise you because they're just not things that you have to think about.

But you might have things in your life that impact you in some way that wouldn't impact me at all. So here's what's been going down. Last week Nelson had chickenpox and he was off school all week. And it also coincided with a launch in my business, The Flow Collective was open.

And ordinarily those two things happening at the same time wouldn't have been a big deal but five days before we opened the doors for everyone to join I just arrived at this place of deep knowing inside myself that I had to talk about the membership in a completely different way. Which meant overhauling everything for the launch on the frontend. So that means just

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everything public facing. Nothing changed in The Flow Collective. But I just realised that what we do is so much more than the menstrual cycle.

The menstrual cycle stuff's there but it's so much more than that. And I just had to trust that realisation and take action on it. It just felt urgent like I need to do this. And I kept my schedule very light that whole week thankfully. So I knew I'd be able to make those changes, but I didn't plan on Nelson being off school all week. So that meant redoing the sales page for it, redoing all the launch emails etc, etc. And we also had massive tech issues.

So the main piece of software that we use had an outage company wide. And anyone who hosts websites or pages with them, they just weren't there. You couldn't see them. And I remember on the day this happened as I was kind of figuring it out and making decisions, my assistant, Nicole messaged to me to say she was just amazed at how I was handling it all. And I really was. It was just how I was in this launch was just such good evidence of what the work is that we do inside the membership.

So I was able to work with my nervous system. I was regulating myself and I was able to remain in problem solving mode. I was able to make decisions and implement them, and not feel like doom and gloom and everything was going to shit. But then the weekend also came so we're kind of getting through the week, the weekend came, and it was very windy. And if you've been listening to the podcast for a while or you follow me on Instagram you've probably heard me talking about how the wind just really messes me up.

Some autistic folks love the wind, for others it's a nightmare. I'm definitely in the latter category. So by this point kind of the wind is the thing that I struggle to regulate with, it just, it takes a toll on me. So by the time Monday rolled around and Nelson went back to school, we also realised it was sports day. So I thought I was going to have a whole day and suddenly, oh, no, it's sports day. And it was still windy, and it was also hot. And then of course at sports day there's all the noise, the clapping, the cheering, so bit by bit I'm getting increasingly dysregulated.

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So I did some self-soothing. I took care of myself. I retreated. I did all the things I know make a difference. And then on Tuesday I had a coaching call to do in The Flow Collective, really looking forward to it and I also really wanted to just crack on with work because at this stage in the game that was my first opportunity to work a full day in I think 10 days or something like that. And I always prioritise being able to deliver and coach at my best on our calls. So sometimes that means rescheduling or cancelling other things.

I'm thinking about when I used to work with a personal trainer and how our sessions would be on Tuesday mornings but if it was windy and we had a training session, and I had a Flow Collective call later on that day I would often on the day go, "You know what? I'm happy to pay for the session. I understand the cancellation policy. But I can't work out today, I can't be outside in the wind. I need to take care of myself so that I can coach later on."

So kind of often I'm calculating things without necessarily realising I'm doing it because I've just been doing it for so long that it's kind of natural to me. And that's what I needed to do this past week. I needed to just take care of myself and spend the afternoon in bed. So we had an amazing coaching call. And the next day, Wednesday I went up to London and there are train strikes going on in the UK at the moment, all this week. And I'm fully supportive of them.

And thankfully the trains happened to be running on the day that I was going up to London but there were delays to the service. So I was meant to be getting a five to nine train in the morning and the first train ended up coming at 10:30 which isn't a big deal. I'd left loads of time to get to my appointment, except for the fact that I had forgotten to put lip balm in my bag. So I had dry lips and any time I'm dry, dry lips, dry hands, dry mouth, these have the power to dysregulate me very quickly.

So by the time I got up to London it was midday and it had been three/four hours of not applying lip balm. So the first thing I did was go and buy some, except when I'm at King's Cross, the station in London, I couldn't find it in

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the shop. And it's a large Boots which is a chemist, but I just couldn't find it. And by this point I just didn't have the capacity to ask someone because it felt like asking someone was going to cost me some of the energy that I had left. So it was actually better for me to just walk up and down to find it because for me speaking and conversation can take it out of me.

So that's one of the ways that I will seek to conserve energy. So then I found the lip balm but as I was choosing which one and at this point I just need to use some lip balm. But the thing is, the more dysregulated I get the more specific I am about things. so I can really need something, and it has to be this specific thing. So it's like as my dysregulation increases, my tolerance decreases. And this happens with food as well.

I can be really hungry but if I'm dysregulated then there's a smaller number of things that I'll eat. And they need to be cooked or prepared in a certain way which means that I need to be the one to make it. So here I am in Boots the chemist trying to decide on which texture and smell will be the most tolerable of these lip balms in front of me because none of them were ideal. And that's when I noticed someone watching me. And I have no idea if they were just checking out my tattoos because I'm heavily tattooed.

So in the summer people can kind of be a bit captivated by them. I was also having a great hair day, I don't know. Maybe this person was checking me out. Maybe they recognised me. Who knows? But I'm just trying to figure out this lip balm thing and kind of on the verge of having an autistic meltdown. And then I realised someone was watching me. So I ended up just leaving and going to another shop that I suddenly remembered was in another part of the station where I knew that the texture of the lip balm that they sell would be better and optimal I'd say, it had no scent.

And this person of course wouldn't be lingering around as well. And just to be very clear, I have no problem when people recognise me and come up and say, hi, it's always so wonderful to meet you in person and connect like that. So please know that you can. It's just much easier for me if you do come up and say hi rather than not. So I share my week with you just as a

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way of illustrating all the seemingly 'small things' that can add up and require something of you that may or not be available to you.

And that brings me onto the concept that I want to share with you today. Some of you may have already guessed where this is going. Now, this concept is not mine but it's one I love. And I'm sure some of you are already familiar with it, particularly if you are neurodivergent. But this is really applicable if you have a chronic health issue, if you have long COVID, if you're pregnant, or postpartum, or even if you're trying to conceive.

It will also be helpful if you're experiencing mental health challenges or perhaps if you identify as being highly sensitive or an introvert. Or just depleted in some way whether that's anaemia or you just feel depleted. So someone called Christine Miserandino came up with this metaphor. And she was in a situation where she was describing her experience of living with lupus. So lupus is an autoimmune disease.

And in her blog post about this, Christine recalls an experience that she had with a friend. And they were in a diner and her friend asked her, "What's it really like to have lupus?" She really wanted to understand. And we will link to the blog post in the show notes, by the way. You can also go to my website maisiehill.com and head to the podcast section which is where you'll find a page for each episode and that always includes any relevant links as well as a full transcript if you prefer to read things.

So Christine and her friend are in this diner and her friend asks about this. And it's a big question to try to answer in a way that someone who doesn't have a chronic illness can get. So Christine's trying to figure out how to do this. And she sees that there's lots of spoons around, them being in a diner and all. So she grabbed all the spoons she could and gave them to her friend and said, "Okay, here you go, you have lupus." And this is a quote from the blog that I'm going to share that Christine said.

"I explained that the difference in being sick and being healthy is having to make choices or to consciously think about things when the rest of the

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world doesn't have to." So these spoons represent what you have available to you in one day. So you can think about that in terms of energy, what you can do before your pain level increases, or you kind of reach your tolerance level, your capacity, and that can be your capacity for thinking as well, your ability to make decisions and take action.

And if the idea of spoons doesn't work for you then think about it in terms of any other unit of measurement like money, or lives on a computer game. So you start off the day with a certain number of spoons available to you and as you go through the day you use up spoons, or money, or the lives on the video game. And in this exchange, Christina tells her friend, "Okay, your day starts, and you get ready." And the friend's like, "Okay, what's the big deal here?"

But then Christine explains all the ways having a chronic illness impact you when you're doing something seemingly simple like getting ready in the morning. And they went through a whole day like this. And as they did her friend realised that there are so many things that cost spoons, that if you're 'healthy or full of beans' that you just wouldn't know about. So this metaphor really took off. And it's referred to a lot in neurodiverse communities which is how I came across it.

So people will often refer to the amount of spoons that they have as in I'm low on spoons or that's something I can do when I've got lots of spoons. And in sharing about my week I've already given you some examples of this from my life. And things that can use up my spoons are often related to sensory and social things like wind, noise, conversation, making phone calls, being touched, having dry lips, having my hair down. And you might just think, well, just tie your hair up, what's the problem? But the sensation of that can also be problematic for me.

It's the same for wearing a hat, or sunglasses and I definitely keep centring my mind, shall I just cut all my hair off? But I also love my hair. I don't really want to cut it off. So I think my point here is that just even needing to consider these things can use up someone's spoons but we're going to kind of explore this as we move on.

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But I also have safe outfits. Outfits that I can wear that don't use up spoons because sometimes having a neckline that's just a bit too high or doesn't sit right on my body. Has the ability to really mess me up so I can end up wearing several outfits across of a day just to suit me at different stages of what's going on for me sensory wise. And it's so important to honour these things. I feel very strongly about this. This is something that we don't need to use thought work to change our thoughts on. No, no, no, these things are very real.

But typically what we need to do is use thought work to support prioritising these needs and preferences. And I say needs and preferences because my experience is that sometimes it's a need and sometimes it's a preference. There are times when it's been a need and that's it. There's been no preference and it's like, no, no, this is a need. But now I'm in a place that's more flexible, I have more resilience I would say in my nervous system. And so sometimes it's a preference but other times it's a need. So that's the language that works for me.

I could definitely go off on a tangent about this but for today I want to bring it back to spoon theory. So my experience of being low on spoons is that it's like being on energy conservation mode. Knowing there's not much left in the tank and needing to choose wisely about how my remaining spoons get used. You know if you're out about and the battery on your phone is low, you get more choosy about how you interact with your phone. Maybe you don't scroll as much as you usually do on social media.

Maybe you text someone and let them know, "Hey, look, my battery's close to running out, can you pick up stuff for dinner, or meet me here", or whatever the case may be. And by the way you can do this when you're low on spoons too. You can let the relevant people know what's most important. And sometimes we can skip this part because we're shit at asking for what we want and stating our needs. And I think this is the place where thought work is so appropriate and helpful.

We never want to use thought work to deny our experience of something, whether that's sensory sensitivities, or racism, or abusive situations

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because the goal isn't to be able to put up with or endure things that are harmful to us. But we can use thought work to support ourselves as we make changes. So I'm thinking particularly about, and the members of The Flow Collective all have heard this story, my soap dish story. I don't think I've shared it here on the podcast before.

But Paul years ago, he went to Paris and brought back this saucer from some café that is significant in some way. I don't even know the full story, but he brought back this soap dish, from when we got together this soap dish has been there. It's a saucer from this café that he would use as a soap dish. And every time the soap got put back on that saucer it would rattle on the sink. And every time that happened it would rattle my nervous system. And to begin with I was just like, "That's just so annoying." And I just saw it as an annoyance.

And then as I got to know myself and my sensory sensitivities, and that I'm actually autistic then I was able to be, "Oh, that's what this is." And kind of once I was able to do that and with the support of coaching I just said to him, "Look, we need to change this soap dish situation. It messes me up. It kind of startles me. It's alarming and I don't want to feel alarmed when I'm just at home relaxing with you guys." And he was like, "Oh, I didn't know. Of course, let's change it."

But before knowing all of this stuff I was just, I think, in a place where I was using thought work to be making it okay to have that soap dish. So that's what I'm talking about. Sometimes we need to change the circumstance. Those of you in The Flow Collective know what I mean when I say that. You need to change the actual situation rather than change our thoughts about it. But what we might need help with is using thought work to be able to prioritise our needs like that and to have conversations with other people about what we want to happen.

And you can also use thought work to not judge yourself for your spoon situation and what you have the capacity for because it's one thing to have this going on and another to add judgement and shame to it because that's even more exhausting. So if you want to, you can reflect on how your

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experience of being low on spoons might vary depending on communication, whether that's with a flatmate, your parents, your partner, your colleagues.

And I know those of you listening might be like, "Well, just communicating that can use up spoons." And I very much get that. When I'm really low on spoons, speaking up like this is that's possibly how I'm going to use up my last spoon. Still might be a wise choice though. But what I find is that there's a window where I can communicate this more easily. So say my spoons are at a four or a five out of ten, there's a good chance that I can communicate at this stage, and it won't require so much of me.

Whereas if I'm down to one or two spoons then that exchange is going to cost me. It's like your battery is on two percent. And that text could be the final way that you get to use your phone before it dies. And it may be the wisest choice. It might be the best thing. But it's the lower you get on spoons the more significant each of these things becomes. And my experience is also that the less spoons I have things just become non-negotiable. And I think that can really serve us.

This is an area where being black and white about things is actually useful. I was coaching one of my one-on-one clients this morning about it. And we were talking about how you either have the capacity for something or you don't and to just let it be that simple. You're either available for it or you're not. And when this is going on, we're kind of, we're either in or we're tiptoeing around the oldest part of the nervous system, the one where we just shut down and seem lifeless. And we literally play dead in the hope that we'll survive by doing so.

And there are different flavours to this. It doesn't have to be a literal freeze where you stop and drop to the ground and just freeze. You can check out for a moment from a conversation. You can be numbing out on Netflix or just kind of pull out of a conversation and disassociate somehow. Or just being in energy saving mode where you're using your spoons wisely. And there's a hopelessness here which makes sense because this is very

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different to the fight or flight energy and that way of the nervous system working.

Because when you're in fight or flight you're taking action. There's energy, there's activation, and you're doing something, even though you can then go into collapse after it. But I think the thing about being in this withdrawal state which lots of people who have an autistic shutdown for example will experience. But you don't have to be autistic to have this experience of your nervous system. We all have nervous systems like this. It's the oldest part of the nervous system, been around since we were lizards. So we all have our experiences of this.

And when we're in this part of the nervous system, it can be a real place of need. It gets very primal. And we need our needs to be taken care of. And sometimes that can be by ourselves, or it can be with the support of someone else, or both. And just remember, these different nervous systems like fight, or flight, or freeze, these states aren't bad. They're just all part of being human and they're helpful. But what we want is to reduce feeling hijacked by them.

So this is a lot of what we do in The Flow Collective, just noticing the nervous system responses, being able to work with them. Being able to be in them. And then come back to a place of regulation and of safety because usually what we do is make being in one of these dysregulated states a problem and they're not. I mean it might suck to be experiencing it but they're always in service of survival even if it feels like you're going to die whilst you are in that state.

Someone actually asked me recently about what The Flow Collective is all about. And I jokingly said to them, "Well, I help people to feel like crap." But it's true. We see it on our wins thread all the time when members are celebrating that they were able to feel really crap. And that they were able to feel disappointed, or rage, or other emotions that historically have been tricky for them to inhabit or maybe felt dangerous for them too. Or that they noticed that they were in fight or flight and were able to work with that state.

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So now I just kind of want to backtrack to something I said earlier about being available or not, having the capacity for something or not. Because what's interesting is that once we make space for that, once we accept in ourselves, I just don't have the capacity for that, when we accept that we're not available for something. What you might then uncover is that you want to because once that pressure has been removed and that sternness of, well, you have to, or that you need to do something.

Once that's been taken away the desire to do it can come through. And sometimes that can be enough to create some energy in the system. And you might then choose to use that to do that thing, whatever it is, or you might not. And I think this is really about getting to know you and your situation, and the nuances of your spoons. Because you might think, well, I've got enough energy to do this thing now, using thought work, processing, working with my nervous system.

Or you might think, well, you know what? I'm still not going to do it. And I think this is the thing of getting to a place of, I'm going to say recovery. And I'm thinking about my experience particularly and I know for many of you have experienced something similar where there's that stage of recovery where it's like you're in a place of need. Things are non-negotiable. It's like well, this is just what I have to do, and I can't do that. And then after that it's like you're kind of starting to come out of that a bit.

And there's a bit more flexibility and approach but it's like you've kind of got to that stage where you can do a bit of back and forth. And you're relearning things, there's some rewiring going on and then things continue from there hopefully and ideally. But it's in that in between stage where it's like, yeah, I've gathered some energy here. Maybe you've gained a spoon. I know it's a controversial thing to say but I like to consider the possibility, or I invite you to consider the possibility that you can gain a spoon.

And then you get to just choose do you want to do that thing, do you want to use it? And there are times when I intentionally use up spoons and when I do that I plan around it. Our Spring Forwards workshop a few months ago I'd had COVID just before that. And I knew that date was coming up. I think

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it was maybe two weeks after I tested positive. So I did very little for that whole week running up to the Saturday where we had it just to make sure that I was topped up on spoons. And I'll probably do the same one for our summer one in a couple of weeks.

Even though I don't have COVID, I mean my memory's still not the best, I will say. But I will just make sure I'm nicely topped up on spoons so that I can do that workshop and really deliver and run it in the way that I want to. But there are other times when I won't use up spoons. Kind of reminds me of this Seinfeld episode. I love Seinfeld by the way, I've watched every episode four or five times, it cracks me up.

But there's this particular episode of Seinfeld called The Sponge. And Elaine who is played by Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and I just love her anyway, as in Elaine the character and Julia Louis-Dreyfus the actress. So in this episode, Elaine finds out that the Today Sponge, which is her preferred method of contraception has been taken off the market. So she's devastated. She can't believe it. And she just goes around New York trying to find them. And just going into chemist after chemist asking.

And then finally she goes into one and they have them. And they have a box of them. So she buys the whole box. But then she has them but the guy that she's seeing, she's kind of assessing, is this guy Sponge worthy. Is it worth using a Sponge upon him or should I save it for someone else? And I think that's how I approach things. Is this spoon worthy? So other kids' birthday parties, Soft Plays, definitely not spoon worthy. My kid's birthday party at a Soft Play, definitely spoon worthy. Do you see what I mean?

And of course the cycle comes into this as well. I have more spoons in the first half of my cycle from day three or so until ovulation. And then I have less spoons when my hormones are low after ovulation and a couple of days before my period starts. As well as the first couple of days of bleeding if I haven't rested enough I would say. And this is why cycle tracking is so important to me because I just don't load those days up with tasks that

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might challenge me. I do tasks on those days that give me energy, or I give myself a day off.

So the other thing that I want to bring in here is that something can be very spoon worthy, but I know that I won't have enough spoons for it. So the other way week, Paul was DJing in London, Touching Bass put on an event, and you can listen to the show on NTS which is an amazing radio station if you haven't come across it yet. We'll link to their show and also to Paul's, he has an NTS show. So there was this event on in South London, near where we used to live, and I knew it would be amazing.

But my period was due, and I just knew I wouldn't have the spoons for it, so I didn't go. And this is important for you all to hear. Honouring your body, partnering with your nervous system, all of these wonderful things, it's great work to be doing but that doesn't mean that you will always feel great. I was annoyed that I didn't have the spoons to go. I was frustrated not to go. I was sad about not going. And it's okay to feel this way. It makes sense. You don't have to just feel amazing that you're taking care of yourself like this.

I can at the same time as experiencing those emotions also love the level of care that I'm showing myself. But I don't have to love the reality, but I can get to a place of acceptance with it. So before I finish off this episode I want to give you some examples from members of The Flow Collective of what this looks like in their life so that you can hear some more examples. And if you're a member I really recommend heading to the thread about this. If you search using the hashtag Maisie Post or type in podcast, it will come up and you can join in the discussion.

But I really want all of you to listen to some examples because it's so helpful, often very validating to discover that there are other people and that it's not just you. So here we go.

I have sensory processing disorder. One of the sounds that I'm particularly sensitive to is dishes and silverware clanking together and scraping against each other. So one of the tasks that is really hard for me is setting the

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table. It was really difficult for me especially as a child or teen to explain to my family at gatherings that setting the table really is a big task for me compared to other family members that don't have sensory issues. Socialising is taxing, not just for my brain but for my body, and even with people I consider myself relatively close with my mask is hard to keep on after a while.

And if I've been put on the spot in conversation I hold the mask even tighter. It's a physical thing as well, the mask, holding my body rigid and upright, forcing myself not to fold my body in on itself, clenching muscles, my jaw can look up etc. The physical strain of masking is then a trigger for a fibromyalgia flareup to follow which can cause intense physical pain throughout my body and fatigue for several days or weeks if I don't radically rest and recover after. I run low on spoons when I'm struck down with a period of Crohn's related fatigue.

With little warning I can go from feeling fairly normal, I work full-time keeping on top of the house, the shopping, planning, and socialising with ease to not being able to keep up with the world, feeling lost and needing to nap. I also experience mental exhaustion, brain fog surrounds me. And verbally I feel that I can't get my words out in the right order. Before joining The Flow Collective I've previously felt massive guilt and laziness when I've stopped for a bit. But I've learnt great lessons from the Doing Less workshop and the responsibility series.

I am becoming braver at saying no, not feeling the need to justify and importantly, not spend my wilting energy worrying what people think if I cancel plans or change my mind. That's amazing. I just want to say. And I think this is the other thing is whatever is going on for you internally then there's also the thoughts about what other people think about it. And often there's that self-judgement, often we've had very real experiences of other people judging us and shaming us and things. So all of that comes into play too and that's where thought work and exploring things in this way can be very useful.

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Okay, a few more examples. Going to the shops, mechanic, dentist, doctors and generally speaking in a situation where I perceive there to be a process that I might get wrong makes me anxious. And I need to plan through my conversation and if it goes differently it stresses me out more. During the social interaction itself I'm fine but the following day I just want to be alone and potter about. It feels like my body has shut down and can't function very well.

And I just want to say, with this one, I do this too, a lot of what's been shared here I resonate with, and I know many of you will as well. And for me that pottering about is really important. That's good medicine the pottering around. Here's why. When you're in that nervous system state where it's the shutdown, the collapse, the withdrawing, the numbing, the kind of retreating and distancing. It can take a while for your system to come back online. And that's not about you as a person, it's just how our physiology is.

It's just about the nerve supply and how things work physiologically. So going from that frozen state which again doesn't have to be you frozen on the sofa, it can be that. But it can also be you going about your day but feeling frozen inside and distanced from what's going on within you and around you. And so that pottering is a way back into regulation and safety because it's like your body is doing things, little things, that probably don't require a lot of thought or decisions because they're just habitual.

And that's a really supportive way of bringing your body back online and returning to the part of your nervous system where you're feeling safe, and connected, and regulated. Just a little sidenote for you there. The unseen effort that goes into functioning, I describe it as constant decision making, this or that. And that is exhausting in itself, made worse if I'm away from home. I have to leave buffer days after any event because I know they will trigger symptoms.

So I prepare myself for these 'bad days' with food in the freezer and books, trashy TV, films but still emotionally it can take its toll especially if the invitation turned out to be lukewarm, i.e. not spoon worthy. I constantly

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have to decide if that payoff will be worth it. And I think that's an important one. It's like is it going to be spoon worthy, is it going to be worth it? And sometimes that can be a very black and white thing.

But of course I think if you're kind of fairly topped up on spoons then that's a good opportunity where we can use thought work to make the experience what we want it to be rather than feeling just kind of going along with what the experience is. And that we can create some of that experience to a degree I would say.

Being dyslexic, I find reading and writing a challenge. I have to put in a huge amount of effort to function and always second guess everything I do. I find linear thinking challenging and I need to put extra effort in for things like filling out long forms, reading a book front to end or even booking flights and online shopping. I get exhausted in loud environments or anything with sensory overload. I also find it very hard to answer questions when tired or overstimulated.

And this is very common by the way. For this person and for everyone else this is very common when this is what's going on with your nervous system. So it's an emergent property of being in the nervous system states, particularly I find when people are going into that freeze state, that shutdown, that collapse. It's like, no, don't ask me what I want for dinner, just put the food in front of me. It's that kind of thing.

So this person continues, I have ADHD and fibromyalgia. When I was at my worst and still quite often showering takes so much energy. It's not just the washing, it's the before and after, the standing, the different muscles used, also standing is a big one. I always have to keep in mind lying times or even just waiting a short amount of time when also doing other activities is so exhausting. And I always make sure to sit and wait if that's an option.

This also resonates for me, and I don't have fibromyalgia by the way. But I do tend towards feeling depleted and weak. And I have a long history of fainting, particularly on busy public transport, I would often faint on the tube and just wake up on the platform. So I would always plan my whole work

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life when I lived around London based on times that I felt I could be on the tube or not. And as I said, I don't have fibromyalgia so I can just imagine for this person, even more consideration here.

Okay, someone else shared, today one person who wasn't even talking to me used up my spoons. Multiway conversations, I can't cope with. Yeah, I'm with you there. Multiway conversations are a big no, no for me. And it's been really great to use thought work and work with my nervous system to just be able to say, "Look, I can't do this." To be in a group of four people and there being two conversations and just to say, "Guys, I can't take in anything that's being said. I'm happy to leave the conversation but I'd much rather we just all have one conversation together."

And to be able to say that from a really regulated place, that has been so significant for me, and I want to give myself a bit of a pat on the back for that because it has taken a lot of work to be able to do that. But it's just like we talk about a lot, it's just a muscle, once you start flexing these things get easier and easier. And I think that's also important to consider that doing these things initially might feel like it's costing you spoons. But it's the long-term strategy and the long-term growth from that is that it just becomes your new normal.

And when you are at that stage where you are really integrating things and able to do them with less thought and with it requiring less of you then that's a really incredible thing. So that's it for today. A bit of a longer one today but I hope you found it helpful, I can't wait to hear how this one goes down. So if you're in The Flow Collective I'll see you over in the community or if you follow me on social media or you're on my email list then I will catch up with you there. Have a good week.

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.