

## 38. Taking a Leap



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With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

**Period Power** with Maisie Hill

## 38. Taking a Leap

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 38 of the *Period Power* podcast. It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September. It is day two of my cycle and it's the first day back to school for my son. So, you can imagine my horror to go downstairs this morning and discover that we had only one teabag left. Still better than none. I managed to make two cups of tea with it. But it wasn't the best start to the day, I have to say.

With it being the start of my cycle, I am really feeling the back to school vibes. August was a huge month for me. And the coaching that I personally received from both of my coaches as well as my peers and all of the self-coaching that I've done since because of that coaching, it's just been really massive for me. And I kind of just feel compelled to put all of that into action now that I'm in September. I've just sat with it these past few weeks because coaching can be very uncomfortable.

I was telling the members in The Flow Collective that at every stage of receiving coaching and of being a coach, and at every stage of business, coaching is uncomfortable. And it can make you want to go and hide under a duvet. And just try to forget what your brain has been opened up to. And sometimes the only solace is watching your colleagues get coached and seeing them want to vomit with the coaching that they got.

So, they all found that hilarious to hear because they're used to being on the receiving end of my coaching. So, I think it was quite fun for them to hear about me being on the receiving end of coaching. And needing to do the work after that coaching to get myself onboard with it and really explore any resistance to it. And to just get myself into a place where I'm now ready

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to take the action that I want to as a result of that coaching. And this kind of relates to the story that I want to share with you today.

So, something happened to me a couple of weeks ago. And I want to tell you all about it because there's some powerful lessons. There's kind of a few different lessons in this. And I also think it will just give you a giggle. So, I have mentioned before on the podcast that my son is particularly active, as I think kids should be. But he's particularly active. He loves climbing and jumping,. And I actually really enjoy watching him climb things because I can see the relationship he has with his body. And I can see the trust that he has in himself and in his body.

And I think some of this kind of goes down to that before he was born I had a client when I was working as a birth doula who told me something called The Pikler approach which is a type of caregiving that's based on having a kind and respectful relationship between an adult and an infant. And it involves free movement, uninterrupted play even when you're dealing with a new-born who's just staring at something, not interrupting them. Because you have that urge to be involved with them, to just let them enjoy that for themselves.

And it also involves this natural pace of motor development. And what that actually meant is that we did things like not sitting him up until he could actually sit up by himself. And we didn't help him to stand or to walk. And we didn't hold him in any of those kinds of positions until that's what his body could actually do on his own. And it worked fantastically for us, it really suited him, it really suited us. It really brought in lots of things to do with consent, which I, as you know, think is really important.

And the best way to teach people about consent is to practice it with them from when they are a young age. So, I loved it. And I do think it's influenced the trust that he has in his body and his physical abilities. And one of the rules we had is that if he couldn't get up somewhere by himself then it's somewhere that he shouldn't be. So, if that's something at the playground, or a wall, or a tree.

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Anyway, he is fantastic at climbing, and he has a great sense of balance. And with it being the holidays and the COVID restrictions being more relaxed I thought I'd take him to a local climbing centre. And I booked us in for a trial session. So we get there, and he's as soon as we get in the room he's straight up there. And there's just multiple walls of varying abilities, all with – I don't know what they're called, like the hand-hold things that you grip onto and move up. And I start climbing too, but tentatively compared to him.

And a little bit of time goes by. And then the guy who is running the session and supervising it comes out with harnesses for us. And this is when I realised that I've booked us in to also use ropes and to go up the highest wall. So Nelson is well up for this. And my stomach just dropped when I realised that there was a harness for me. Now, what I should tell you is that I don't like heights. My body is very clear that heights are dangerous. And I also don't do well with jumping of any kind, even small jumps.

So over the summer I've been working with my personal trainer, Emily, and to begin with I really hated using the skipping rope. And there was only a point in my cycle where I could tolerate using it. And the rest of the time it's like my brain just doesn't compute with doing it. So it doesn't feel good to my body. But I have noticed that I've been increasing my tolerance for jumping using a skipping rope because previously it really turned my stomach. But it's kind like my window of tolerance for it has increased with practice.

So I basically just have this very sensitive vestibular system. I don't like going on swings, short car journeys as a passenger they make me feel nauseous, they always have. And for those of you who don't know, the vestibular system just involved parts of the inner ear and your brain, and they provide a sense of balance. It's a sensory system that just gives your brain information about motion, and head position, and spatial orientation. I told you, you were going to be learning a lot today. So my vestibular system has a low threshold of what it can handle.

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Whereas my son's vestibular system actually requires a lot of input. He loves spinning. He loves jumping, climbing, all the things that are pretty much no-go's for me. And not surprisingly there is a big link between the vestibular system and your experience of feeling safe. So those of us who have a low threshold of what our vestibular systems can handle, we can end up in a stress response quite quickly. So hold onto that because it's going to be relevant to what happened next.

And I should also say that I am highly competitive, my son is too. And it does Paul's head in because we're just so competitive. So when faced with a nine metre wall, my personality is straightaway, of course we're going to go to the top. Why would we not do that? But my nervous system is busy trying to tell me that this is a really bad idea. But competitive Maisie wins. It's a pretty instantaneous decision to get to the top.

And I want you to hear the lesson in that that I just decided I could do something and that I would do it. So many of you negotiate with your dreams because you haven't actually decided to go for it. And even if you have no idea how to actually do it, you can just decide that you can do it and that you will do it.

Okay, now I am in the harness, and I start climbing and off I go, no issues. In my mind I'm Gwen Stacy, aka Spider-Woman. And I'm scaling a nine metre wall with ease. And I'm feeling really proud of myself and I'm enjoying it. And all of a sudden I'm at the top. So I take a moment to let it sink in and feel proud. And then the guy yells up at me, "Okay, well done. Now fall backwards." Because the wall I'm on, and the rope system that I'm attached to is a piece of automated equipment.

So you know how typically when you see someone rock climbing there's someone else on the floor who's holding the ropes when's someone's climbing up or rappelling down? And that wasn't the setup that I was using. Instead it was this piece of machinery that automatically adjust the ropes as you go up and down. And in order to trigger it to hold and release you as

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you go back down you have to literally let go of the wall, let go of the rope and fall backwards.

So think about, maybe you've been on those group training activities where you have to fall backwards into the arms of a colleague and trust that they're going to catch you. So it's that movement, that kind of falling backwards, but nine metres up. So this is where my nervous system kicks in and the guy, he keeps telling me to let go. But all I do is stay perfectly still. So everyone there is just cracking up, and I'm laughing a little bit too. Not so much at this stage. But I do recognise why it would be hilarious.

And so this is also when I suddenly remember that there's a viewing window halfway up the wall, on the adjacent wall to the one I'm climbing up. So I am suddenly aware that I'm being watched by multiple people. And this is key, and I want to explain why.

When your nervous system perceives a threat one way it can respond is by freezing. So first of all my nervous system is going, "Oh my God, we're nine metres up and the only way down is to fall backwards. What the fuck have you got us into, Maisie?" There's probably going to be more swearing, by the way so if you've got kids around, hit pause or listen to this later. So clearly the answer to all of this is let's just cling on because why the fuck would we ever let go? That's not a good idea to do that, holding on is the best idea.

So I'm already in freeze mode. But then I've got this awareness that I'm being observed. And I want you to imagine our ancestors millions of years ago. And they're out and about in the fields, actually, probably more savannahs than fields. And they're just doing their thing. But suddenly they become aware that a predator is nearby and that there's a threat, they're in danger. So their options include fighting, fleeing, so this is the fight, flight response that we've talked about before. But another aspect of the stress response is to freeze, as in if I just stay really still then they won't see me.

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And this is where my nervous system has taken me. So I'm just up there, nine metres up, doubling down on freezing. But clearly I've got to get down somehow. So I just yell to the guy, "Can't I just climb down? I'll just climb down." And so I can feel my brain is kicking into gear a bit and looking for a way out. But he actually tells me that it's safer to fall back. Whether or not that's true, I don't know, I have a feeling he was just trying to get me to do it.

But now I'm questioning him in my brain going through this up there, and thinking, what the fuck is he talking about? Of course I can climb back down. So again, this is another way my brain is reengaging and I'm starting to think a bit clearer. And I'm coming out of that freeze mode. And this is when it hits me that this is going to make a great podcast episode because it's the perfect analogy to teach you all about taking a leap, and also about your nervous system, and your vestibular system, and all the things.

So then I laugh to myself that that's what I'm thinking about when I haven't even got back down, and I haven't figured out how to get back down yet. So that process of laughing at myself is also helping to regulate me. And I actually get a lot of questions over on Instagram about what I mean by regulating myself. And it's basically working with my nervous system so that it's okay and it can handle life. And I will do a whole episode about this in the future. I know you're all interested in that. So bear with me, it is coming.

So, essentially I'm up the wall and I'm bringing myself back to safety. I'm regulating myself by talking to myself, by joking around with the guy about how to get back down, by laughing. And starting to move my body in tiny ways, bearing in mind I'm on a wall, so I can't really move all that much. But I'm starting to kind of bring subtle movement into my extremities so that I'm waking my body back up and coming out of freeze. I'm preparing to do something.

I'm still not quite sure what at this stage, but I'm preparing for it. So he tells me to let go on the count of three. So he's like, "Three, two, one, let go."

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And I obviously just keep clinging. So now I'm just laughing again and that's more regulation. So then he's like, "Okay, this time. Three, two, one, fall back." And now I'm just cracking up because I hate being told what to do. I don't do well with verbal instructions as a general rule, my brain's pretty resistant to them.

Sometimes it's just because I have slow audio processing. So it can just take a while for me to understand them, or I don't make sense of them. I'm much better with written instruction. But that's not an option in this scenario. But I also just don't like being told what to do. Apparently even when it's for my own good, which pretty sure Paul would also agree with that. So, now what I have to do is rapidly coach myself on receiving instruction and being okay with receiving instruction that is for my benefit. Aren't our brains hilarious?

So I know that I can't hold on forever. So I just do what I know how to do best, and that's I just returned to myself. I tuned the bloke, and his instructions out, just dialled that volume down. And I tuned out everyone else's voices and I just focused on me. And I let go and I fell backwards. So listen, fear of the unknown will make you freeze. And your brain will yell at you to stay safe by doing what's familiar to you.

But when we do the same things all the time, we get the same results. And that's great when we're trying to repeat results when they're getting us good results. But if you want to create something different you have to do things differently. You have to think differently and become a different version of yourself.

So I've got some questions that I want to give you to reflect on and to bring all of this together for you. You can hit pause if you want to think on it, but here they are. And by the way, they'll all be in the transcript. We do written transcripts for all the podcast episodes, if you just use the link in the show notes it will take you through to a section of my website with the transcript on.



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Where in your life are you avoiding taking a leap? Where in your life are you trying to climb back down the wall instead of jumping off it? Where are you freezing because your brain is telling you it's not safe? And this doesn't have to be with a big thing like quitting your job and hitting the road. This isn't a movie. It might be a conversation you're avoiding and putting off. It could be a first step or a final step towards a goal that matters to you. And what is it that you need to let go of in order to create the result that you want?

Okay, that's it for today. I hope you've enjoyed it. It's good to have an opportunity to laugh at myself, I will say that. Okay folks, I will be back next week. Have a good one.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of the *Period Power* podcast. If you enjoyed learning how to make your cycle work for you, head over to [maisiehill.com](http://maisiehill.com) for more.