

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

**Period Power** with Maisie Hill

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

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, and welcome to episode 47 of the *Period Power* podcast. We're getting close to 50 episodes which feels momentous because a lot of work goes into this every week. So I'm feeling really proud of myself for creating so much over this past year and for doing so, so consistently. But it also feels like I'm just getting started. And by the way it's so important to stop and recognise our successes. So are you doing that? Because I want to invite you to do the same if you're not, or if you already are maybe do it even more.

So what do you want to acknowledge or celebrate yourself for today? So you can probably hear I am a bit sniffly today because my allergies are playing up. I've tried recording this episode so many times and it sounded awful. So I'm hoping that this is the one and that I can get through it without having a sneezing fit. But I have to tell you I have been having the most fun week because I've been welcoming our new members into The Flow Collective. It's been amazing to meet you all and to start to get to know you.

What's really interesting to me is that now the podcast has been going for almost a year we're seeing people sign up who have already been using the free content I share here every week. And they've already had these shifts happen just from the podcast and now they've signed up ready to take things deeper with what we do in the membership. So I think it's going to be really interesting to watch what happens next because I suspect what's going to happen is that results start happening even quicker.

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

So it's going to be great to watch what happens next and to see how things unfold for all of you. But today I want to talk to you about all or nothing thinking and how it will affect your cycle and your life. It's going to be a fun one.

And I've got a worksheet for you to use alongside this episode. If you're already on my email list, you'll have a link to it in today's email when this episode goes out. But if you're not on my list just use the link in the show notes to go to episode 47 on my website, [maisiehill.com](http://maisiehill.com). And you can fill out the form to have it sent to you and then you can print it off or use the fill in kind of version of it on a screen.

But before we dive into all or nothing thinking I want to give a quick shout out to Smudge and Dicey who left this review. The must listen to podcast, another epic episode from Maisie. I didn't think there was a difference between being nice and being kind but how wrong I was. Listening to these podcasts and being a member of The Flow Collective have made the biggest difference to my life ever.

So I wish I knew who this was, but I don't actually get to see the names of who leaves a review, just your screen name. So thank you Smudge and Dicey, whoever you are, you said you're in the membership so you can let me know over there.

Okay, so what do I mean by all or nothing thinking? Well, it's very black and white. It's doing one thing perfectly or not doing it at all. And this is such a great topic with the holiday season coming up because that's when all or nothing thinking, and behaviour is very common. So we can go a bit wild over the holiday season with spending, and with food, and alcohol. And then flip to the other extreme in January and not drink alcohol at all, and go on restrictive diets, and don't spend any money.

So you're either doing something in what we could call – well, both of them are extremes actually. But sometimes you just might not be bothering at all. And I would love it if we stopped approaching health and life this way, I

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

really would. These stop start efforts don't result in lasting change or improvements. And in fact, restricted types of health behaviours can involve this rebound effect where you go from one extreme to the other, like you're not drinking alcohol at all or you're binge drinking.

They all rely on willpower which will only get you so far and they cause a lot of negative self-chatter because you're essentially creating a situation where you have to meet these impossible standards. And when you don't because you're human then the go to place is usually self-criticism, self-judgement and a whole heap of shame.

And then when you're going through those emotions guess what happens? You're more likely to use external pleasures, perhaps the ones that you've told yourself you're not going to do, to try and get away from your emotions or to try and numb your emotions. And that doesn't work of course. But without awareness or a way to work with those emotions, a way to process them you're likely to go back to the behaviour that you've been strongarming yourself to not do, like consuming sugar, or drinking alcohol, or online shopping, or whatever it is.

And it's no wonder that we do this because the extreme methods are glamourised aren't they? The juice cleanses, the various dietary methods, the intense workouts. And they have their place. Some people love them. There's some that I can't get onboard with, and I don't want to. But some of them, there's a time and a place for them. And that will depend on an individual, where they're at and what's available to them. But we also kind of fall into this trap because of perfectionist thinking.

So we think that if we do something seven days a week to the degree that we have set out to do it, if we are able to do that then we'll be able to feel good about ourselves. And I have given this a go and I can tell you it doesn't work. For a start, doing things perfectly all the time is pretty challenging, and it takes quite a lot of energy to do.

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

And even if you do achieve it, then you have to maintain it because if you don't then you're going to have those thoughts about yourself like being a failure, not being good enough, not being disciplined or organised enough, so that doesn't work either. And doing it doesn't feel great because you're pushing yourself, maybe even punishing yourself in the process. Trying to control things all in an attempt to live up to this impossible standard that you've set yourself via your socialisation, mass media and social media.

The other thing to watch out for here is if you have thoughts and beliefs running in your mind that you have a complicated problem or that your life is complicated. Because if you have thoughts like that, then you'll believe that you need a complicated solution, that if you're going to address your health then you must need a complicated, multistep, highly involved, probably costly strategy.

And there are times when more involved strategies are helpful and necessary. But for the vast majority of us the vast majority of the time what we need is to make things really simple. To implement things one at a time, succeed at them and see what results we get from them. I want you to do things in a way that's actually achievable and sustainable.

That's why in The Flow Collective we have the Harness Your Hormones program that the new members are working their way through at the moment. Because I've literally stripped back everything I know down to five simple modules that are doable. And those modules are not filled with endless suggestions and different directions to take.

I spent months, endless hours planning them and really thinking about what are the five steps that anyone joining The Flow Collective needs to take in order to get results with their cycle and their life no matter who they are and no matter what they're struggling with. And whilst we are on this topic, I just want to remind all the new members who have just signed up, you've got access to our vault of previous content, over 20 webinars.

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

And I just want to remind you that you don't have to watch or listen to everything. It's more valuable for you to do the Harness Your Hormones program and apply what's in there. And for all of you listening notice where you are in consumption mode in your life and thinking that you need to do everything. How is that preventing you from actually moving forwards and getting results?

Now, let's talk about some other ways that all or nothing thinking can show up because this relates to your cycle too. So think about the phase of the cycle where you feel at most home. Is it your winter, the time of your period, your spring which is preovulation, your summer, ovulation, or your autumn which is the premenstrual phase? And I know not everyone feels great in the run up to ovulation but many of you will feel great then because that's when oestrogen and testosterone peak.

So this could be a time when you feel on top of the world, where you feel capable, confident, you love how you look, you love how you feel and who you are. But then what happens is you ovulate, and those hormones drop off. So you might suddenly feel quite different. And it requires more of you to do the things that felt easy only a few days before. And this is the beauty of cycle tracking because you can have that understanding, you can have that awareness of what's going on hormonally and have compassion for yourself.

And if you haven't already downloaded my free cycle tracker and guide, head to my website [maisiehill.com](http://maisiehill.com) and go to the free stuff section so you can get started with it. Because whether you're aware of your cycle or not, you could have very different thoughts about yourself at different parts of the cycle. I know a lot of you have very different thoughts about yourself when you're in the first half of the cycle compared to the second half. And this is how black and white thinking shows up within the cycle.

So you might go from one thought to another like you nailed it or you failed it, you're a good friend or a terrible one, you're a great mum, a great parent, or a shit one. You're a perfect partner or employee, or you're awful. And

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

what this looks like is that there's a time when you're being everything to everyone else, maybe in your spring and your summer because oestrogen can have that effect. And then you get so overwhelmed by what you've taken on that you withdraw and try to preserve your energy and your mental bandwidth, maybe even your mental health by retreating.

And for sure there is nervous system involvement in this, we just did a whole month about how and why this happens in The Flow Collective. It's been amazing to see how you've all run with it and used it in your lives. But there's these different ways that we need to be considering this. And it's so important to be on the lookout for all or nothing thinking because it will derail your efforts, whatever they are.

So many people think they need to wake up and do 10 minutes of yoga immediately, followed by meditation, and then journaling before gliding into your kitchen and having a perfectly brewed green tea or a smoothie followed by some kind of gourmet breakfast very Instagram worthy. And then your day is somehow meant to continue with the same unachievable fantasy version of yourself and your life.

And that's just a fast track to disappointment in yourself and in your life, and criticism and shame. Because what will happen is you'll probably end up with thoughts like I'm a failure, I'll never be able to do this. I'm never able to be consistent enough so what's the point in doing anything. Can you see how it's like all or nothing? I always give up so what's the point in starting. Every time I do this something happens. I don't know why I bother.

And then you just stop bothering and we're back into flipping from one extreme to the other which is not good for your physical or your mental health. And of course all or nothing thinking can also show up in how you think of others too. So think about the people in your life, maybe your colleagues, your kids, your partner, your mates, how often do you have thoughts about them that involve things like you're always late, you never remember, every time you do that.

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

And any time that the words always, never or every show up in a sentence either in your mind or maybe they've actually come out of your mouth, that's a sign of all or nothing thinking. Your brain has gone to the extreme. And this can happen in your thinking about yourself but also your thinking about others.

So when you spot those particular words, here's how to interrogate them. Start off by finding the facts. Is it true? Is it true that you're always late? Is it true that they never remember something that's important to you in some way? And by the way if it bothers you it's likely because you make them not remembering mean they don't care about you or don't love you, or they don't respect you. And you might think, well, if they loved me, if they really cared about me then they wouldn't do whatever it is. So just keep an eye out for that.

So you want to find your thoughts about what's going on and ask if it's true. Is it accurate? And most importantly, is it true all of the time? And once you've answered that you can ask yourself, why is it a problem for you and is it really a problem? So I have found an example from my own life to share with you.

So my partner never remembers my birthday. That's a thought that I have. He never remembers my birthday. This is a real example by the way. So if I think he never remembers my birthday, that's black and white thinking because there's that never word in there, I've gone to the extreme. So let's go through the questions. Is it true? No, it's not. Sometimes he does remember. Sometimes he remembers on the day. Sometimes he remembers quite late in the day. And sometimes he remembers in advance. So it's not true.

So why is it a problem for me? It's actually not a problem, we just laugh about it quite a lot. I just know that he is not great with things like dates and names. He is amazing with faces and sounds, he's really into music so he's really great at remembering music and what people look like, recognising faces. So why would I make the way his particular brain works, a problem?



## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

Because if I did, I'd just be causing suffering to myself. And really, I can take responsibility for my experience of my birthday. I can just tell him what I'd like my birthday to be like and remind him that it's coming up.

So if you want other people to live up to a particular standard, maybe a high standard, maybe an impossible standard, you will also have that standard for yourself as well. You won't be particularly forgiving of yourself. And I'm not saying here let's go dropping our values or our standards but it's good to actually know what they are, to name them. And to assess if they're actually useful to us.

So maybe you might have a thought that you need to work out for an hour every day without fail. Is that true? And is it true all the time? What about if you're sick or if you have an injury of some kind? Because I have heard over the years from a lot of people who haven't been able to work out because they're not physically able to. And they've made that mean so much about themselves.

So can you see how asking why it's a problem if you don't work out every day would be really useful? Because that question is going to help you to find all your thoughts and beliefs and then we know what we're dealing with, and we can use thought work to explore it. So where does this kind of black and white thinking show up in your life? What impossible standards are you setting for yourself and for others?

Remember there's a free worksheet that you can use which has all of the questions I've mentioned today on it, and it's fillable. So you can use it on a screen, you don't have to print it out. I really recommend that you answer these questions, you just take a few minutes, maybe a bit longer to do it because my worksheets have a great track record for helping people.

One of our members actually used the same one, the same worksheet 100 days in a row because they found it so helpful. So I listened to that feedback, taken it onboard and decided that I want to share some with you here on the podcast as well. So just head to the show notes and click

## 47. All or Nothing Thinking

through to the episode on my website to get your worksheet. And remember that's where you'll find a transcript for each episode too.

Okay lovelies, I will see you next week, have a fantastic one. I hope you found this helpful. I'll catch you later.

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.