

Ep #54: Overcoming Difficulty: Becky's Breakthrough



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Maisie Hill

Period Power with Maisie Hill

Ep #54: Overcoming Difficulty: Becky's Breakthrough

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 everyone. I am really excited about today's episode because I've got a guest on the podcast with me today. And I always get excited about all of our guests, but I think I've been really thinking about how I wanted to close out this year on the podcast. And I've been reflecting on my year, and I was contemplating sharing my experience of the year, but I was like, I don't particularly want to do that. And then I was like, oh, it doesn't have to be my year.

And my guest today and I have been talking about doing an episode together. And I was like, "Wait, Becky is the perfect person to come on the podcast and talk about having an epic year and all the things that have happened." So today my client, Becky is here, and I know that you're all going to be so inspired by whatever we end up sharing because there's so much that we could touch on and I'm just really excited for where the conversation's going to go.

And I just have that feeling, I just know in my bones, I know in my womb that so many of you are going to take so much away from this conversation. So before we just jump into the conversation because I know we're going to get stuck into so much, Becky, why don't you introduce yourself, let everyone know your pronouns and anything else you want to say at this stage.

Becky: Hi, everyone. My name is Becky. My pronouns are she, her and they, them. And I am a queer neurodivergent artist and life model living in Iowa, USA. I'm a Brit but I've been here for three and a half years now.

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Maisie: Amazing. So let's just start things off with letting everyone know when you joined The Flow Collective, why you signed up and if you had any hesitations and what they were.

Becky: So I joined The Collective in February of this year, 21, having joined Maisie's free webinar that she did online in January. I had been contemplating joining The Flow for probably about six months at this point. I had come off the pill in May of 2020 having been on it most of my adult life. And fortunately a trainer I had at the time had actually suggested that I read Maisie's book, *Period Power*.

So I felt very fortunate that at the moment that I actually came off the pill I went straight into reading this amazing resource of information to help me basically hit the ground running, if you like. So I actually started temperature tracking at that time as well straightaway because I knew that I didn't want to go on any other form of contraceptive. So I actually downloaded the free tracking sheets that you have on your website, writing something physically rather than on a computer is really attractive to me.

So I started sort of tracking. It was quite loose to begin with until I got into it and obviously read the book more. And the book was awesome in the fact that it's one of those books that you can dip in and out of. So the more I got to understand my cycle and the different parts of it I sort of found myself constantly going back in and out of it and understanding more. Yeah, and then so I think I had probably started looking into you a bit more. And I had constantly gone back to the website quite a bit.

And then of course I'd read that you had The Collective. And I think around September I was like, "This actually sounds really cool." But I'm sort of one of these people that sort of likes to really think about what something can bring to my life. I very much go through cycles of working through different things. I always like a project and a challenge. And I kind of was in that place where I needed to – well, I wanted to look after my cycle health for my physical but also my emotional and mental wellbeing as well and to understand it all much better.

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As someone who for want of a better word, I actually probably resented having a cycle when I was younger. I had horrific periods and cramps which was actually the main reason for going on the pill. And also as well I never wanted children. So having a cycle was to me a real annoyance. It was always something I don't want in my life. And so we can go into this more obviously as we get into the conversation but that is something that I'm grateful to have become a part of The Flow because of it's actually helped my relationship with my body and my cycle and actually having a period as well.

Maisie: I love that you say that because that for me, I've been thinking a lot about The Flow Collective and the ultimate purpose or goal of it. And I think what it just comes back to for me is people feeling more at home in their bodies and able to be in their bodies and have a positive experience of themselves. And that includes the cycle-based stuff and things of course, but it also goes beyond that. So I love that you've touched on that. So when you think back to the journey that you've had so far, I'm curious what the top things are that you've taken away from being in The Flow Collective.

Becky: So there are lots of things, for instance, on a sort of more surface level, I guess, if you like, is that I really love how you work the themes each month that we have and how they all interact with one another. And they build upon one another. I love having the worksheets to go through that you give us, that work with the given themes. And the webinars at the beginning are always super useful. And it's great to have those resources to go back into whenever you sort of feel you need to.

There are a few themes that you've done since I've joined that I probably hadn't been in the moment of doing them. But that's not really so much of an issue because that content is always there to go back to. And I've found on a few occasions where we've been going through things and maybe in the moment I've been like, I'm not sure if this is relevant to me right now. And maybe haven't felt connected in the moment. But maybe a month or two later I'm like, "This is totally relevant now and this makes total sense."

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And I actually found that things have been seeping into my subconscious anyway just by attending the calls from whatever anyone else had brought to the table. And realised that I'd actually been doing some of that work anyway, but it was just becoming more obvious in a moment. But that's a great resource to have to go back to at any given moment and also to go back and visit things as well when things kind of resurface.

Because inevitably whenever you're working through something even when it feels like it might have a stopping point there's always a point where things re-emerge. And it's nice to be able to go back and just reassess.

Maisie: Yes, and this is why we've been kind of returning to some themes as well because people are like, "I'm kind of ready to go through that one again and to work on that." Because it's like the power of repetition and of being able to return to something, to take it deeper, to work with it in a different way. And I think for me I remember and correct me if I'm wrong, but I feel like one of the themes that was most significant for you was the getting unstuck one, is that right?

Becky: Yes.

Maisie: I remember you mentioning that to me, yeah. So why was that so significant for you?

Becky: Okay. So getting unstuck if I remember rightly was June and I joined in February. So at that point I kind of feel like I'd sort of been really getting into the themes and kind of trying to attach whatever I was going through at the time to those things. And they were totally relevant. But when getting unstuck came up I realised that there was a huge thing that I'd been stuck on for the best part of 20 years of my life.

And I think particularly since moving to the States three years ago and obviously especially with living through the pandemic in the last year and having a huge amount of headspace. I realised that there was just something that I hadn't been dealing with for a very long time because life happens and there's always a reason not to deal with deep seated feelings and emotions.

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And they get left and unattended and I had been having these cycles of thoughts which was to do with when I came out to my parents when I was 19 years old and told them I had a girlfriend. And the situation at the time wasn't really dealt with. I wasn't abandoned. I wasn't kicked out. But I definitely felt at the time unsupported by my mum and dad especially and immediate family. And at the time it, I think being young and I moved away to university not very long afterwards. So it was like I just got on with my life. I went and lived my life, and it wasn't really something I thought about.

What I think also is to just make note, I also got in a relationship a few years later with my partner now, still, of nearly 17 years, Doug. And I think it was obviously just like, well, that's who I was with. My parents, and I think especially, or at least my projection of feelings was that my dad especially was more happy with that situation, that relationship. And so it never felt right to go back and talk to them about how I'd felt I'd been treated when I had come out even though that is still a huge part of who I am.

And I think those feelings just got buried and because my dad became ill and then subsequently died nearly five years ago and sadly, I never got to speak to him before he passed about it. And I think since then I've just felt, well, all the feelings that you do kind of go through, through grief that realising that I just felt an incredible sadness that I'd never actually gotten to speak to him about how I felt and just resolve it really, them feelings that I had of rejection. Because I had nothing but love for my dad. I loved him massively. He was a wonderful human being.

I was really close to him growing up and I felt that that had been lost and especially in his last few years I just felt really disconnected from him. And I know now especially that that was because I didn't feel I could be completely open to him because I was still harbouring feelings about feeling rejected when I was younger. And I guess since his passing obviously I've moved to the States, but I've had all this time.

So these feelings have resurfaced, and I just realised that they were thought patterns that I was continuously going through and talking endlessly to Doug about how I felt done wrong by or unsupported. And it

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upset me massively and mainly because I think I just felt so supported in every other aspect of my life with my parents, my family. Being an artist, being a naked model for years, and years, and years, never batted an eyelid. Moving to America my mum was like, "Yeah, go have the adventure of a lifetime."

And so I think that also made it quite difficult because I felt like I was really pulling them up on an aspect of their parenting that was 'wrong', if you like. And yeah, so I think those thought patterns had just been going over, and over, and over, and getting stronger, and stronger, and stronger.

And I think upon joining The Collective I realised that with actually learning what I was learning through listening to other people being coached, and your webinars, and learning how to self-coach it was really obvious that okay, these feelings actually now need to be dealt with. But actually maybe there's a reason why it's now, it's because I'm being given the tools to actually deal with this in a correct manner.

Maisie: Well, just to be able to at all because these aren't things that most of us are taught.

Becky: No.

Maisie: So then it's like even if you're aware that there's something that requires something of you and that perhaps wants to be worked through, and processed, and worked with in some way. It can feel so overwhelming and frustrating when you're like, "Well, I know that this is here. But seriously, what the fuck am I going to do with it? How do I go about doing this?"

And so any kind of framework or tools that we have that enable us to do that just makes such a massive difference because then it's like, I can see what the next thing is that I can do here, whatever that is. Which was so much of what we spent that month on. Yeah.

Becky: Yeah, I had gotten to that point where I wanted to do something about it. It was inevitable that I was going to do something about it, but it

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was a matter of when and how am I going to do it coming from the best place possible.

Maisie: How did that happen for you?

Becky: Well, I think when the unstuck theme came up, I was very much at that tipping point. And it just was like – I don't know if the universe gives us signs or what. But it was like, okay, this seems like maybe I should talk to someone else now other than Doug about this and actually get some help. I'm in the right place to do this. I feel safe and I feel connected to the group and to you. And having never spoken to anyone else outside of Doug it was really important to me to get an outside perspective. I think at the time I was dead certain it was something that I was ready to do.

I think I definitely needed other people to hear me, to go through the process with me. The thing that I was stuck about I think specifically that urged me to fill in the form to get on the coaching call was that I knew that it was going to be a few years till I'd actually be able to be in person with my mum. And I was very much grappling with the situation of do I wait two years or do I actually have a phone call and just do it now, strike whilst the iron's hot kind of thing.

And me being the person that I am I would have much rather have done it in person. I get a lot off of feeding off of people's facial expressions and body language. And also as well I just wanted to be with her. This is something that was a huge, huge thing. But the reality was that it was going to be two years and I don't think it was going to be possible for me to harbour any feelings for two years to see her to do it in person. And what I didn't want at that point was for me to hold those feelings any longer and then they become more of a problem for me in my relationship with her.

Everyone's been through enough in the last year or two. I didn't want to throw more rubbish onto the bonfire. Yeah, so that's kind of what pushed me to get in on the call for sure was making this decision. And I think when I put in the form it was like do I wait, or don't I wait? But I think I also knew in the back of my head I think this is probably going to be a phone call and

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not an in-person thing. But I think I just needed to say it out loud and to come into the group and speak with you and go through that process, thinking out loud.

Maisie: Yeah, that's the thing because we always have these things going around in circles in our heads. Or even if we're sharing them with other people in our lives, that the other people in our lives is very different to sharing something with a coach. Because a coach is sitting alongside with you and being led by you, but it's we're not involved in your life in the same way that a partner, or a friend, or a family member is.

So we don't believe people's nonsense when they're coming with things and you're going to get asked questions that you probably wouldn't be asked by the people who you share your life with. So it's quite a different experience. So I think there's just so much value in having that conversation. So we had this conversation and how was that for you? Because I think that was the first time I coached you.

Becky: It was. I remember feeling nervous at the time because it was a big deal. Also having never spoken to anyone outside of Doug about it before as well was a really big deal but I was excited. And I felt also quite calm because I kind of knew that it was the right thing to do. It was what I needed to do. And at that point there wasn't really anything that was going to get in my way at that point. It was just like I'm on the train, it's moving. I think you used the analogy in the call actually of it being a rollercoaster and I was on the tipping point about to go over the top.

Maisie: I would love for everyone to just hear how you're describing this. I had decided the train was already going. Sometimes we can talk about things in a way that it's like the universe has conspired in a certain way and suddenly it's the perfect time. And I do like to believe in a little bit of that goes on. But I think for the most part it comes down to how you're thinking about things.

And I think it will be really interesting actually, I know I always recommend that people listen back to the coaching that I give them. But I think it will be

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interesting for you to listen back to this podcast and just hear how you're talking about it. You had decided the way you're describing it now and also I think on recollection this was my experience of you sharing then was that you were very certain, certain that you wanted to do something. And you were just trying to figure out what that something was.

Becky: Yeah, I think I got to a place having held onto it for so long and then having had the opportunity to sit and actually realise what those feelings were and where they were coming from. And I do believe the joining of The Collective that definitely spurred me on. That was what I was doing. It just felt right. It was definitely giving me the tools to be able to voice something that had been rattling around in my head for a very, very long time. Yeah.

Maisie: Yeah. So we coached and then what happened?

Becky: So you coached me which was awesome. I really felt held by the community and by you. And that is also just as a sort of sidenote but also a very big thing to me when you asked, "What are the big things that I will take away from The Flow", is that feeling of acceptance not just by you but by everyone in The Collective. And that was huge for me because it's not something that I feel I strive for necessarily. I'm quite happy in my own being for the most part.

There is just something that's always quite magical when you know that people are just allowing you to turn up exactly as you are, your whole being. And when you feel that it is magical. And I remember definitely feeling that and feeling held by everyone. That really was special. And coming into the call and then going away from it, I definitely, I think like I said, I came into the call thinking pretty much knowing that I was probably going to make the phone call rather than wait. It was just a matter of talking it through.

I think by the time the phone call was ended it was just like, yeah, this is what I'm going to do. This is what needs to happen. I'm going to make this phone call. And I felt more ready for it. And then obviously we had

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discussed about me going away and thinking about how I was maybe going to think about doing that. How I might or when I might do that in relation to my cycle. I had kind of sort of worked that out at the time I was around ovulation.

For someone who is really quite anti-social and likes to keep myself to myself I knew that that was also going to be the best time for me to deal with a huge thing like that because my hormones were going to be on my side, not just in terms of being able to project my feelings and speak about such things. But also being in that lighter part of my cycle where I feel much more open and being able to give more to other people without expectation of what might come back. So that was key.

So that happily coincided with the coaching call. But I think because I was in that place and I suppose sort of focused time for me, if I'm working on something I can continue to push through and find a flow and a rhythm with things. So I was very much not going to rest on my laurels in that sense. But I also can have a tendency to just go in at the deep end. So I did decide not to just make the phone call to my mum. I decided to take your advice, think about how I wanted to do it.

And I actually thought about how I like to communicate, how me and my mum communicate. That was really important to me. And how I would be able to say everything that I needed to say to her without interruption. But also in order to ask the questions I needed to ask but then to give her space to be able to react as she needed to. And me and my mum have actually written to each other pretty much most weeks since I left home at 19 even when I only lived a few hours away and that's continued to this day. We still write to each other weekly. I have a whole archive.

And I love writing letters. I love the act of writing physically. So I actually decided to write a letter to her and read it to her on the phone basically. But before I called her, I wrote the letter and then I brought it back into The Collective and did a little video recording of me reading it. And just said, "If anyone has any advice, anything that I might have missed out or anything

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that you think might be inappropriate then please, anything would be great.” And I had a flood of responses immediately and it was lovely.

A lot of acceptance, a lot of support, some really useful advice actually of thinking about how I might hold space for her when I finish reading my letter.

Maisie: And more space for yourself as well as you read that letter and caring for yourself through that and caring for yourself on the other side of it as well.

Becky: Yeah. And I think also that's why writing the letter was key because it wasn't me just asking a question and then leaving space. It was me being able to say everything that I needed to say. And there was quite a lot. And one of the things that I didn't want was for any of that to get lost or for me to forget what I wanted to say. And I didn't want it to be necessarily something that I had to continually revisit, but, oh, I forgot this, but what about this?

Maisie: I love the level of care that you brought to this. And just how intentional you were with all of it. Just to reflect back to you, that's what I have seen. Well, in this but also in all the other things that you have got up to this year. But just the level of care and intentionality that you've had with it all.

Becky: That was really important to me because having lost my dad and having felt like I'd not had an opportunity to maybe reconcile my feelings of how I felt about what happened, even though I had maybe difficult feelings I never felt I didn't love my dad. Or I didn't have horrible feelings towards him. So I never wanted to come at it from a place of well, you didn't do this for me. You didn't do that for me. You should have been there for me. It wasn't about that. It was purely about having resolve for myself so I can move on in my own being.

And also therefore I knew that that would give me better space for my mum and my dad. And that I might actually be able to grieve for him because that was something that I definitely not consciously was allowing myself to do anyway.

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Maisie: I think that's such a powerful thing for you to touch on, Becky, and for everyone to hear. Is the ability to do that for your relationships with other people even when they are no longer with us is that there are still ways to tend and even heal those relationships through that process of caring for yourself.

Becky: Yeah. And in reading the letter I feel – to my mum, so going back to, I read the letter in The Flow and as I say there was lots of wonderful advice. So I went away and did some self-coaching, re sort of thought through some of the things that I was maybe considering saying or asking. And I think by that point I was just so, so there. There was no reason for me to not do it. I was in a good place with it. I felt I had done the work. There was never going to be a right time.

Maisie: Well, you made it the right time.

Becky: Yeah, well, I guess, yeah, I guess I did in the work that I'd put in.

Maisie: You did.

Becky: But also making that work with my cycle. And then you can't always time these things perfectly but it kind of did work well in that respect with the energy and the focus that I had. And the openness also as well that that time in my cycle affords me. And so I pretty much, I think I called her the day after I came on The Collective and asked The Collective for the advice. And I spoke to her, and she listened to my letter. She just gave me space and she listened.

And the thing was I never thought that she was necessarily going to react badly to it. And as I say, very supportive parents. But I also didn't genuinely know how she would take it, whether or not she would react from a position of feeling she had done wrong by me and that that was going to be difficult for her. But she was very open, and she just gave me the space. And at the end she just gave me a moment and she said, "Is there anything else that you want to add?" And there wasn't.

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And so she just asked me a few questions. But she just said that she was really sorry and that she had genuinely thought that she had spoken to me about how her and my dad, what they'd spoken about it together and how they felt about it and me. And that they felt nothing but love and support for me and that who I wanted to be with didn't matter to them as long as I was happy. And she just said that she was really sorry that I had been harbouring these feelings, these unknown feelings.

And that she was sad that I hadn't been able to come to her sooner. I think especially in relation to obviously my dad passing and having these unresolved feelings towards him and not really having, you know, I explained in my letter to her that I felt like I hadn't been able to grieve properly or at all. And she just, yeah, she was just very, very supportive, very, very open.

And then she actually wrote me a beautiful letter that I received about a week later just sort of going over what we said in the call and about how much they loved me. And that they never felt ill of me. It didn't change how they felt about me. Yeah, so it was really beautiful. And then a week later when I spoke to her again she just said, "Is there anything else that you'd like to ask me?" She was just really calm and open. And it was a huge relief, it really was.

Maisie: Yeah, I bet. It's just such a big thing to carry and for such a long time. And I think that's what was evident to me as I was coaching you was the significance of this, the heaviness of it. And it just, you know, especially hearing you talk about it now, it was just like you were just ready to put that down, whatever that looked like, just ready to put that down. So, Becky, as you're sharing this, I'm quite curious about what it was like for you to open yourself up to that.

Because like you said, you didn't know how she would respond. And when we do these things, we don't know what's going to happen next and we don't have control of the other humans unfortunately. And so I am just curious about what it was like for you given the history here and everything that had kind of gone on for you in the decades that had passed since this

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happened. And then to kind of open yourself back up to things again, how was that for you and how were you able to do that?

Becky: So I think as we touched upon, it was a matter of this is the time. It had got to the point where this cannot be buried any longer. This is when it's going to happen. And I think becoming a member of The Flow just really opened me up to that actually that this was a possibility. Because I think I was aware that I would be able to do that for myself and that it was a necessity that I was going to have to do it for myself to give myself some sort of inner peace.

But I think the tools that I learnt within The Flow that not only with the coaching but also with the understanding of my cycle and just being able to be open to all of those things and to use them to my advantage as well. That was all new, and reasonably new information, that was all new knowledge. And if anything, those are the things that kind of helped me, they gave me that push towards you are ready, you can do this. You do need a bit of coaching. You need to feel your way with this, but this is why you're here.

This is giving you a huge opportunity to be able to deal with this, this deep-rooted thing, this obstacle that's just there always in the back of your head. And when it came to the call I think – I was rewatching it actually this morning. And a thing that actually came up for me in it was, I think a noticeable moment in the coaching was when I was talking through about if the conversation didn't go well, how might I deal with that? And it was almost like a little light bulb. And I just said, "If it's not okay then it's not actually my problem."

Maisie: I remember that.

Becky: And that was a huge moment because although I kind of knew in my heart that it would be okay, obviously I wanted my mum to say that she accepted me and that she loved me no matter what. But I don't think I'd ever considered up until that moment that if she didn't completely accept

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the situation or what I was telling her, that that was actually okay because how she feels is not my issue to contend with.

Of course I have feelings about how she feels because of course I want her to feel good, and to love me, and accept me, and all of those things. But also for me to be me I don't have to base my self-worth and love on other people accepting me and loving me.

Maisie: Everyone please hear what Becky is saying.

Becky: Of course we all want love and acceptance for who we are because well, it just makes us feel good.

Maisie: Yeah, it's a human need. We want that from others. But I just love what you said, we don't need to base our self-worth and self-acceptance, and all of these things based on other people.

Becky: Yeah. But I think the even bigger realisation that is that especially as my mother I don't have to have that from her. It's something I want but it's not something that has to happen. And that was a really big light bulb moment. Because I think ultimately that was like me giving myself permission, ultimately it was that last little thing, it was the permission to do this for yourself, the release of it.

Maisie: Yeah. And you went and you did it.

Becky: I did. I thought that she would be okay because I have a very fortunate, very accepting of other life choices and very supportive. So I didn't think it would be bad as such. But I don't think I expected to necessarily get the response that I did. And yeah, I couldn't really have wished for it to have gone any better.

Maisie: I can feel my eyes welling up a bit now. I mean all our calls, you know this, they're all so special for a variety of ways. But it was just your willingness to be courageous, and your willingness to be coached, and your willingness to take action. And to go away and to do more coaching, and to

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bring it into the community, and then to go ahead and take this action and have the conversation.

And your willingness to care for yourself and accept yourself through that process, it was just so inspiring, and I say that for me personally but also, I know the impact that you had on the community in allowing us to share that journey with you was just so special. And I know you are just such a valued member of The Flow Collective. And I also know that in subsequent months we got feedback on how people seeing you get coached, and then the stuff that you were sharing in the community then had an impact on people in their lives.

And we also had people then showing up on the win threads that we have every Friday talking about how they'd come out to their parents, and friends, and things. And it was like I could just see the ripple effect of you and the power of that. And that's why I wanted you to come on the podcast and to talk about it here. Because this is just such an important conversation for people to hear. I am wondering also, so that's what happened then, what were the effects that happened after that for you?

Because like you said that that month you just became aware that this was keeping you stuck. So then we looked at it and you went away, and you had this conversation with your mum and had this incredible response which I'm so thrilled that that's what you got. But then what happened after that, how did you see things?

Becky: The immediate thing was actually it was just such a huge weight lifted. I spent a day crying for my dad pretty much immediately which I think was probably well overdue by that point. And it was nice. It just allowed me space to think about him. And it wasn't that I hadn't thought of him. It was just allowing me to remember all the good things, all the things that I loved about him, and all the things that I missed about him and still do. It's actually his birthday today, so it's [inaudible].

Maisie: Is it? Oh my gosh. Wow. How did that happen? How did we end up scheduling this?

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Becky: Do you know what? Yeah, it's just an absolute fluke that this was the one day that I could do of the dates that you gave me.

Maisie: Oh my goodness.

Becky: I know.

Maisie: So you were able to grieve him?

Becky: Yeah, I was able to grieve him. And then I just kind of got on with life. It was like a release. And I was not harbouring those feelings. I was not going through those endless thought patterns anymore. And it allowed me space to really focus on what was coming next for me which was subsequently something else that had come out of the coaching when I'd first joined. So as I say, I joined in February. And in March we had the doing big things.

And for me my situation here is that I am actually not allowed to work. So I was trying to find ways of doing something specifically with my art in a way that kind of worked with the sort of margins that I could work within. And I had actually as it happened, that month had come up the opportunity to put in a proposal for an art exhibition at an experimental gallery space. And so I put in a proposal I think at the beginning of that month and had it accepted. So I was kind of working on those ideas.

And obviously the month that followed I was kind of working through all of that. And then yeah, so that theme was very, very relevant actually at that moment in time as well and was really, really useful, especially at that moment in time with getting to know my cycle as well. I was really trying to figure out how my creativity kind of worked with that because there was evidently times when I didn't want to go in my studio and paint or make stuff. So my head was somewhere else.

This was also, at the same time as it happened that I learnt that I was neurodivergent. And so I was trying to figure out how all of these things work together, my cycle, my creativity and my neurodivergence and how they all interacted. And it was very much about learning how to work with

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my brain as opposed to against it which I had kind of been doing for the majority of my life up to that point.

Maisie: Yeah. And I really remember that because it was like you had that proposal accepted. And then it was all this was kind of going on in the background. And it was suddenly there was this deadline of there's going to be a show. And how do you work with that with all these other – what would be the word? These different aspects to you and the stuff that you're discovering about yourself and then suddenly there's a deadline of your show happening. How was that for you?

Becky: Yeah. I mean I have to say it was super exciting because having not really been able to do very much since arriving in the States. I mean obviously I've been making things and trying to figure out how to make things work for my life here. But there hadn't been any opportunity to actually have a real focus, if you like. And I'm someone that needs focus. I need a deadline. It really is helpful to have routine. Routine is key.

And so it was exciting. It was nerve-wracking. But I think the excitement, just kind of pushing the momentum. And because of these new realisations, although learning about the neurodivergence at the time and learning at the same time how that related to my cycle as well. It was a lot of information to take in, tracking helped massively. So I'd gone from just tracking maybe my physical symptoms or my emotional state on any given time to also tracking things like sensory issues.

Or in relation to my cycle, when I was doing certain times of work best. So for instance we talked about me sort of having resented having a period for a long time. It's actually one of my favourite times of the month now. With the exception of day one which is usually pretty grim, but I just tend to lay down where possible on that day. It's actually a day where my neurodivergence actually chills out. And I love it as a time for being in my head and by myself but not in a sort of dark way.

It's quite a positive time for me. It's quite a positive light headspace where I sort of find I come up with ideas. I kind of feel there's an expansion that

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almost goes on within me. That I am open to accepting a lot of things. And you talk about dreaming a lot, that time is definitely a time for being like, "Well, anything's possible." I'm not going to do it right now because I don't have the energy, but I am open to all of these things. And I tend to write a lot.

And in terms of making it work to my creativity, it's a great time for thinking about ideas that I've come up with or it's a great time for research, and organising, and just sitting with things. And I love the calmness. It's only about four days that my brain calms down for, but I am always very, very happy for it to happen.

Maisie: Yes. One of the things, I'm pretty sure my memory serves me right, feel free to correct me though. But I seem to remember that in the run up to your exhibition you're kind of having this moment of, oh my God, it's about to happen, that it's coming up soon. But then kind of very quickly realising just how ready you were for it.

Becky: It was, all of a sudden it was here. And yeah, I realised that because I'd actually been working with my cycle, I'd kind of put everything in place that I needed to. So I'd worked ahead as to for instance when the gallery gave me the offering of having a viewing. And me understanding myself in terms of how I am socially and when I'm more outwardly going. I did opt to have that when I knew I would be most receptive to being around other people which is around ovulation.

So I purposely picked a date when I knew that I would kind of deal with being around other people a lot better. And if going away and having to self-regulate wouldn't be such a big deal afterwards. So that was huge.

Maisie: Excellent self-care.

Becky: And it really did help, it really, really did. And I think in the run up also having worked out when I would need certain things ready by. Also as well I think about two weeks before the exhibition, I was due to install the exhibition I actually changed my idea quite significantly. And fortunately

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that was also down to having put in place, I arranged a series of studio visits from local artists who had also exhibited in that gallery space.

And so I got them to sort of come and review the work with me. But also to just get help and ideas for hanging the work and anything that I might have missed. It's very easy when you're rattling around in your studio in your own head all the time to miss things, or to not think about certain things. So it's always good to have an outside resource, people that you trust.

Maisie: Yes. I think this is really key because I think so often, we just put it on ourselves, I have to be the person to figure this out. And yes, we are all hugely resourceful, and capable, and able to figure things out but also, we're pretty good at making life hard for ourselves when it doesn't need to be. And it's just thinking ahead, well, what other resources are available to me beyond what I can do for myself and being resourceful? And how can I take responsibility for my experience of this and ensure that I'm going to have the best experience possible here? And that sounds like what you did.

Becky: Yeah. And I think that definitely is a direct sort of thing that came from my coaching call because my unstuck coaching call was in June. And I think that realisation that I did have support and that it's okay to ask for help which as we all know we are not taught that we should ask for. So I think it kind of opened me up more to the fact that it is okay to ask for help. It's not a weakness. It actually just makes you stronger and more prepared. And I think having had that coaching call in June made me realise that.

And then so when it came to coming out of that call and having dealt with my mum and all of that stuff, and I was clearing my head for really getting into the final stages of preparing for my show. It was like, well, yeah, I can ask these people for help. That's only going to make things better for me, get outsider information. And it did massively help because actually what one of the artists brought to me which I hadn't paid attention to was that I'd originally, I had this huge drawing that I was going to stick to the glass of the gallery window.

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And one of the artists pointed out to me that they actually have massive condensation problems in this gallery. So my drawing was likely to be destroyed or fall off. And I hadn't thought about that at all. And I was so grateful. But it wasn't a problem, it was really awesome actually how it just happened. It wasn't like, I didn't go into some sort of freefalling, falling sort of, oh my God, what am I going to do. It was almost like I knew instantly what I needed to do when she told me that.

And it was almost like the work was meant to be that way anyway, it was just that push to put it in a slightly different direction.

Maisie: That's what I love watching all of you as you do this work in your own way in whatever way it's relevant to your lives. Is I think one of the common things that I see with the members of The Flow Collective is this ability to catch yourself when there's a kind of downward spiral that becomes, there's the potential where you could end up worried, feeling overwhelmed.

And not necessarily in your situation, Becky, but just speaking more generally, we can end up feeling shame and lots of quite disabling emotions because you kind of freeze and they're not productive in any way. And I just love seeing how so many of you are able to just either avoid that downward spiral entirely or just catch that you are on it and course correct. And do what you need to in order to support yourselves or ask others for support as you navigate getting out of it. I think that's such an amazing skill to develop.

Becky: Yeah. Well, it's definitely been a massive pro. And it's not always bullet proof.

Maisie: Yeah, of course, we're all human.

Becky: We're all still learning.

Maisie: Yes, of course. And all these emotions are just part of the human experience.

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Becky: And that's definitely something that I have learnt this year with being a part of The Flow Collective is actually just learning to sit with difficult feelings and not trying to push them away. Even though that is the most natural reaction is to just distract yourself, sometimes distraction is good. But also to understand that all feelings are important. And it's not just about waiting for the good ones to come along, if you like, or the difficult ones.

And definitely speaking from self-experience this year is that the difficult ones actually teach you the bigger lessons. And also give you the biggest rewards as well when you go through them. And at the time it's shitty and horrible and you just want those thoughts and feelings to fuck right off. But you definitely come out of the other side feeling more whole, I guess.

Maisie: Yeah, because you're not rejecting a part of you. These emotions are part of us and when we're rejecting them we're basically denying part of ourselves and saying, "Well, this part of me isn't acceptable."

Becky: Yeah, definitely.

Maisie: Wow. Is there anything else that you would like to share before we wrap up, Becky? I mean I know we could just talk on and on about so many things. I have so many more questions.

Becky: I could talk, and talk, and talk.

Maisie: We're going to have to do a part two at some point.

Becky: I'm totally up for that, I really am. I think if there's anyone out there like me this time last year who's kind of sitting on the fence about what you may or may not get out of joining The Collective. I would definitely just say get off the fence and join if you're in a position to.

Maisie: Yeah. Being on the fence is uncomfortable, just decide either way. If you're a no, you're a no, if you're a yes, you're a yes but just don't stay on the fence.

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Becky: Yeah. I'm not very good at staying on the fence. I'm pretty good at knowing if I'm a yes or a no about something. But yeah, it has – I would say this past year for me has probably been one of the most challenging years of my life from an introspective point of view. But sitting at this end of it I am extremely grateful for the experiences because I do believe they're giving me much more. And more to the point, giving me much more of myself, to myself.

Maisie: Yes. Yeah, I love that. And, Becky, I just really want to acknowledge and celebrate you for all of your awesomeness. You are just, I think, such a leading light in life but particularly in our community. I know someone was just singing your praises on yesterday's call about the impact of you being open about being neurodivergent and sharing some of your experience in the community there. We've got quite a few neurodivergent members. And neurodivergent or not, I just see the impact of you in our community.

And I am so thrilled that you were up for having this conversation on the podcast because now that impact spreads even further. So I am so glad that you decided to sign up. I am so glad that I got to coach you. And I'm just thrilled to know you, thrilled that your art is out in the world as well. Becky's artwork is incredible. So we will put a link in the show notes if you're happy for us to for people to check out your artwork. Becky, thank you so much for joining me today. And I'm very excited about part two at some point in the future and we can see what happens next.

Becky: Yeah, I'd be totally excited to do that. Thank you for having me.

Maisie: Thank you for coming on, Becky. Alright, everyone, I knew that was going to be an amazing conversation. And I'm so glad that you got to hear it. So have a good week, everyone and we'll be back next 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.