

## Ep #59: Resiliency



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

**Period Power** with Maisie Hill

## Ep #59: Resiliency

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, hello and welcome to episode – I'm hesitating to say it, I think it's 59 of the *Period Power* podcast. I'm a bit all over the place this week. I have been away in the States for work, I made it. I spent a week in Louisville, Kentucky and I had the best time. If you follow me in on Instagram, then you've probably seen my stories where I shared my tactics for avoiding jetlag because I've never had jetlag and I've done some long-haul flights.

I've never made it all the way to Australia, but I've been to China, Thailand, the Caribbean, and I've never had jetlag. But because it's been a while since I've flown longer than a few hours I was thinking, is it because I was younger and now that I'm 41 I'm going to get it? So I used all my same tactics, and I didn't get it. So here's how it panned out.

I got up at 4:15 in the morning on the Sunday and I'd only had about four hours sleep because this was basically Christmas for me, and I was just so excited. And then I stayed awake for 23 hours straight because between the journey time, me getting to Heathrow in a cab, being there three hours before, my flight to Atlanta, the layover, the second flight etc, it was a long one. So I used caffeine which was my first time because I kind of started drinking caffeine late in life. So previously when I've done this, I've done it without caffeine.

And my secret to doing that is drinking plenty of electrolytes. And I love having electrolytes on hand just in my cupboard at home for when I'm feeling a bit depleted. In the past they were great for hangovers, but they were also great for illness and things as well and they're really good for when you are flying. So I had plenty of electrolytes, I watched movies, did a bit of work on the flight. And I booked a flight that meant I'd arrive in the

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evening local time. So I could just go to bed exhausted, wake up and be adjusted to the time zone.

So if you do this what I recommend is that you get outside in the morning as soon as possible and get the light on your retinas, on your eyes to signal to your body that it's time to wake up. And you can start moving your body. Just give it the signals it needs. And you can do this every day by the way, you don't have to be flying and trying to prevent jetlag. You can do this every morning; it makes such a difference to the cortisol awakening response which is just your hormones getting going and signalling to your body it's time to get moving.

But what I didn't realize is that in Louisville at this time of year the sun doesn't come up until 8:00am which was annoying because most of our days started at 8:00am. So instead what I did is I went to the hotel gym, I did a workout and that helped my body to wake up and coffee. I did rely on coffee.

And what was really cool was that I got to work out with my friend Keena, who I've never actually spoken with. We've sent voice notes to each other, we follow each other on Instagram, we're friends on Facebook so we message, and we send voice notes. We've even done Peloton rides together, but we've never been on a call, we've never met in person. And then suddenly here we are getting to work out together. So it was just amazing to do that, have breakfast. And it was a very cool start to my time there.

So then I had the Monday to adjust and then the Tuesday I had master coach training all day which is advanced training. And it took place virtually, so it involved a whole day of me, and my peers being coached on screen. And it was emotional because the thing is even if you're not the person getting coached in that moment, you're still receiving the coaching that everyone else is getting because there's always ways that you can apply the coaching someone else is getting to your own life.

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So it's pretty full on in the best of ways to be in a hotel room and going through this for an entire day. It was incredible and I just felt like an entirely different person by the end of it. And then I went straight to the welcome drinks for Stacey, my coach's event, we had a three-day event. And that's when I couldn't stop bawling my eyes out because obviously after all the coaching I was primed for being emotional. But to meet so many people that I've shared so much with these last couple of years but never met in person it was just such a big deal to me.

And every time I hugged someone I would just start crying, it was very emotional. And I really loved it. I loved that I was able to be that emotional in a large group of people and be received by them and it all be perfectly fine. It was great. So then the three-day event started, and I only left the hotel a few times because the event was in one of these huge hotel ballrooms. And then we had meeting rooms for our small group work. So we started at 8:00am every day, finished at 6:30. We had COVID testing every morning before we started.

And well, I'm an instructor for this round of the mastermind so every afternoon I was coaching a small group of amazing coaches which was so much fun because I love to do business coaching. But I don't do much of it, so I love that my coach, Stacey has given me this opportunity to get my kick somehow. And then at the end of this three days we had our award ceremony which is always – oh my gosh, talk about tears.

Just to be in a room of predominantly women, business owners and coaches who are doing such inspirational work and creating such a huge impact in the world and making money. It's just the best thing and it just feels like as a room, the ripple effects are so huge. And to have an evening where we could really celebrate that and celebrate all the growth that we as individuals and as a group have gone through in order to step up and do these things is just so meaningful.

And that wasn't even the end of the week because then I had a whole day of coaching in a small group with Stacey. So the week flew by, but I also feel like a year happened in a week. And what was most transformative for

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me was that I was really able to drop some of the shame I didn't know I still had about myself as a neurodiverse business owner and I got some great coaching around that.

And I could also see the impact of all the master coach training that I've been doing on my coaching because I was really willing, this might sound a bit weird but bear with me. I was really willing for the people I was coaching to be pissed off at my coaching because being a coach means saying the things that your brain would rather you keep in your head. The brain always wants to keep us safe. So when you're saying things are maybe going to be a bit challenging to someone it can mean risking the relationship with your client in order to help them get what they came for.

And of course you do it all from a place of love and service to your client but between my socialisation and my former people pleasing tendencies, I'd much rather stay safe by doing things that result in me being liked by others. And maybe that resonates for you in your life as well. But when coaches want to be liked by their clients what we end up doing is denying our clients the opportunity for a transformation. And that's what they've paid us for. And in that moment when we choose to censor ourselves, we don't trust ourselves and we prioritise ourselves rather than our clients.

And again it's not like we ask these questions or make comments in a way that's mean. It's really coming from deep love and a deep desire to help. But as a coach you have to be able to trust yourself. Anyway I say all of this because I'm really proud of myself for holding space for the women in my group because some of them were pissed at my coaching. And one of them was furious, these are all their words by the way, I'm not dramatizing it. And I was able to hold space for them telling me their thoughts and feelings and taking things from there.

And I'm so proud of them as well because they took all the coaching. They went away, they self-coached, they were willing to look at it. And then they came back the next day saying that they'd got it, that they'd got to the bottom of what I'd picked up on. Because the thing is, when you get coached and you feel resistant, or defensive, or uncomfortable, that's when

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you know that you're onto something and that there's about to be a realisation or a shift, a transformation of some kind.

And if you can get curious and if you can be willing to lean into that discomfort then there's just so – oh, I just wish I could capture it in words. There's just so much available to you if you're able to do it. And not everyone will. There might be times when you don't want to. That's okay too but it is an opportunity and I just love that they all took the opportunities that came up. So it was just incredible.

Anyway I'm home now giving myself the week to integrate everything that happened last week, to let my body just process the discoveries I had, to let my mind process it all, do some self-coaching on the stuff that came up. But I'm holding back on any doing, like bursts of action because it's day 23 of my cycle. The kindest thing I can do for myself right now is to rest and let it all settle into place.

Whilst I was away, because we spend so much time thinking about the problems our clients have and how we can help them to get better, faster results, I came up with some great ideas of things to finesse, to teach, to teach again and things to put in place in The Flow Collective. But I don't want to rush to implement them because it's like when you do that sometimes when you're rushing, can be a disservice to what your brain has figured out. And in the past, I would definitely have been worried about missing out and not capturing the moment.

And a lot of my clients talk about this as well, it's like they realise something, they have a great idea and there's this urgency to put it into action because they think, well, all sorts of unhelpful and untrue things. But now I'm in the place where I can trust myself so much more. And I know that it's all in there and that it's not going anywhere. So that was quite an introduction to today's episode. And today's episode is all about resiliency.

This has been coming up as a word and a topic over on my Instagram account just in the comments. So I really wanted to take some time to talk about it. It's definitely been a bit of a buzzword in the last couple of years

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particularly with everyone going through the pandemic etc. So I wanted to take some time to explore it. So I'm going to start out with a dictionary definition and then I'm going to tell you, well, you can probably guess what I don't like about this definition. And then the way that I like to describe resiliency.

So the definition I found is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, toughness. So when we're talking about humans being resilient and I know that this is a dictionary definition, it's not a psychological definition, but the whole toughness thing. I think it's important that we look at that because a lot of the time when we're talking about resilience it does conjure up this image of strength and resistance, of toughness. It has this forcefulness to it.

So think about an area of your life where you would like to feel resilient. And just notice, just bring it into your mind and notice if what you actually want is to resist it rather than feel resilient. Because for me there's a big difference between the two, especially when I think about the two of those in my body. So when I'm feeling resistance I experience a tension across my abdomen, it's like I'm guarding myself against something, or bracing for an impact.

So there's a level of stress response that's taking me into a slightly activated state where my nervous system is preparing for fight or flight. It's like my inner state is reaching out to meet something happening on the outside world. And I feel similarly when I'm feeling defensive. There's this bracing quality, this preparing to defend. So that's what comes up for me when I explore resistance in my body as an emotion.

Resilience feels very different. So I still feel it in my abdomen, but it has this deeper quality to it. It's a more internal experience and there's a warmth to it. It feels solid. It's got some oomph to it, there's like an inner strength there. But at the same time I also feel this openness across my chest, a softness in my shoulders because when I feel resilient I also feel capable. And I don't need to defend myself, or brace against things, or try to resist them.

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And as I'm describing this, if this is sounding very alien to you this practice of noticing and naming emotions in my body and how they affect me, or how they present. It just comes from spending time with my emotions and processing them, noticing how each of them feel in my body, where I feel them, what the quality of them is like. It just comes from a continual practice of noticing and naming what's going on in my body which is a lot of what we do inside The Flow Collective.

And this is really relevant to feeling resilient because the typical picture of resilience is not experiencing emotion, it's of being tough, being able to push things away like your emotions. And I want to tell you that the secret to feeling resilient is feeling your emotions, noticing how they show up in your body and processing them. That's going to help you to feel resilient especially when you know that emotions aren't a problem.

So let's move on to how I would describe resilience. I would say that it's adapting well in the face of adversity. Being able to flex and move with what life throws at you. It doesn't mean you won't experience it, but it doesn't take you out. So I'd like for you to picture bamboo, I think about bamboo quite a lot. Bamboo is incredibly strong, but it also bends and that's what makes it so resilient.

It's the same with tall buildings, think about skyscrapers they're designed to have some give in them, to move a little. They move ever so slightly and that's what makes them resilient. Yes, there's other things as well that come into play with both bamboo and buildings but that's just the summary. And I'm all for pushing ourselves, seeing what's really possible, but let's do it in a sustainable way, one that's in line with our values because I don't want to harden myself to adversity and push myself to the point of breaking. And I don't want that for you either.

So be on to yourself and notice if and where you're thinking that this is what it means to be resilient and that that's how you need to treat yourself. And similarly being resilient doesn't mean putting up with things or taking things on that aren't yours to take on. Nor does it mean always being a picture of



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calm contentment, that's not what we're talking about. So that's my thoughts on resiliency, for feeling resilient.

And now I want to look at the impact of hormones on resilience because for sure this comes into play. So with your cycle there are times when you might feel less resilient. Typically in the days just before your period starts, as your period's starting, that's when there's a hormonal drop off and at the start of your period when hormone levels are low. And then after ovulation when there's another hormonal drop off. And not all of you will have this experience but these are the times that I hear about most often.

There's also other times when you might not feel resilient and that depends on other health factors, your experience of your cycle and sensitivity to what your hormones are up to. So some of you might feel the least resilient just as your period is finishing especially if, for example, you experience anaemia after your period or around the time of your period. When other people are starting to feel more resilient you might be feeling less resilient so there are variations here.

And you might feel most resilient when oestrogen is peaking and when testosterone is around which is in the run up to ovulation. There's that powerful hormonal combination but for some of you, you might feel resilient premenstrually. It really all depends on your experience of your cycle. And you're going to know about that from tracking your cycle. If you haven't got the cycle tracker that's a free download on my website, go ahead and get that. You can just follow the link in the show notes.

But I also want to talk about what can go on in postpartum, after you've had a baby, in perimenopause and post-menopause. And it might sound weird to kind of lump all of those together but I'm doing so because at some point in perimenopause, oestrogen declines which is also what happens after you have a baby. And when oestrogen is low you can get symptoms like stiff joints, poor memory, vaginal dryness, and poor verbal recall.

I can remember months after having Nelson trying to describe where something was to Paul, and I just couldn't. I could see it in my mind, but I

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just couldn't get the words out, I couldn't describe it to him. And I would also just forget my words all the time. So that's what I mean by poor verbal recall. So I think of oestrogen as a hormone that helps us to feel mentally and physically resilient.

That means that during the phases of the cycle, or phases of life when oestrogen is low we feel the impact of it. We feel the impact after having a baby when hormone levels are low. We feel the impact of it during the menopause transition. One in eight women leave their jobs due to the menopause transition. And that's not just about what they're experiencing, it also relates to the support or lack of support that's going on around them, including in a place of employment.

And the other horrific statistic, I mean there's many but the huge one is that around the time of menopause 50 to 54 is when women are most at risk of committing suicide. And I'm saying women with all of these pieces of research and statistics because that's how the research describes it. But of course it's going to apply to anyone who has ovaries. So hormone changes during the menopause transition can leave you feeling less resilient to what's going on in your life, things that previously you felt able to handle but perhaps struggle to now.

And for me this is such a tell-tale sign with my clients when they say, "Well, this kind of thing never used to bother me, it never used to be a problem but now I just seem to lack the ability to handle it. So they may be feeling quite perplexed, and this is how it can end up damaging someone's sense of self and having such a strong impact because their identity is also affected.

Because if you don't know that your hormones are changing, and the changing hormonal landscape is influencing all of this then what you end up doing is finding ways to blame yourself. So then what we have is a whole load of negative self-talk on top of everything else that you're experiencing. But also consider that the time around your periods ending and the decades that follow are when oestrogen continues to be low. And

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that impacts your bone density so you're more prone to osteoporosis and fractures.

So hormones for sure also impact physical resilience, very literally your bones. And your skin typically also becomes delicate too. And that's just a couple of the physical changes that take place. So there's less physical resilience but thankfully, menopause hormone therapy commonly known as HRT, not MHT, but that along with lifestyle changes can really help so all is not lost. It's not all doom and gloom.

Alright, I want to finish up with some practical tips for feeling more resilient. Get some sleep. Lack of sleep has a significant impact on how resilient you are. If you're in perimenopause or post-menopause consider hormone therapy, which by the way, can also help you to get better quality sleep and more sleep overall. Consider if you're eating enough. And are you eating enough nutrient dense foods? Because when I fall into relying on sugar and caffeine, which does happen occasionally, don't go thinking that it doesn't.

Actually I'm going to call myself out on what I just said. I don't fall into eating sugar and caffeine. It's not something that just happens to me. I'm actively involved in that process. But one sure fire way to feel more resilient is to eat enough and to eat nutrient dense foods. Also connecting with other people and being in community increases your resilience. It changes the neurochemistry of your brain. And I see the impact of this for myself because I'm in my coaches' group. I just spent that week away.

I'm around lots of other CEOs who are predominantly female and we're all working through the shit that comes up when you decide to stop playing small, when you decide to take up space and be courageous. And all the work involved to feel safe making money when there are people who have a problem with it, of which there are plenty, I can assure you. And I see the same in The Flow Collective, the impact of being in a community of folks who are all on a similar journey.

Another top tip, especially with your cycle, ease up on alcohol intake, especially at the points in your cycle where you're less likely to feel

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resilient, those drop off times that I mentioned because you don't want to have a hangover on those days on top of having a shift in hormones or low hormones.

Those are the points though where you might be more inclined to reach out for alcohol as a coping mechanism, not that it is a coping mechanism. But you might be drinking in an attempt to get out of feeling emotions that are uncomfortable for you or experiencing thoughts that don't feel that great.

Which is why we do so much work in The Flow Collective on noticing and naming emotions, processing them and being willing to sit with them instead of avoiding them, resisting them, and trying to do all these behaviours to just stop an emotion that is realistically only going to last about 90 seconds. So that's it for today. I will catch you next time.

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.