



How can I be enough for the people around me without being left depleted and exhausted?

Learning to live in harmony with your menstrual and life cycles

I have always enjoyed party planning and Christmas was always when I really came into my own. This was all well and good until a few years ago when things seriously spiraled out of control.

Control and pig-headedness were definitely the driving forces behind what became chaos. It started with a big family panto outing followed by Christmas eve party, Christmas day for 25, Boxing day about the same, a 600 mile drive up to Scotland where we hosted a New Year's Eve party and at some point a French Epiphany cake tea party for all the kids we could get our hands on! By the end of it, I was like the empty shell of an exploded party popper.

Party poppers no more! Many lessons were learned from this and I can happily say that since then, Christmases have rapidly been downgraded. Last year we scaled down to four of us eating curry (which took all of an hour to make) by the fire, followed by some kite flying. For the first time in my adult life, I came back from the winter holidays feeling nourished, rested and ready for January.

Isn't that obvious?

Well, sort of. In the end, there's nothing wrong with throwing gatherings by the dozen, it's fun! What I needed to come to terms with was that winter is actually a time for recharging, withdrawing and sleeping. Not a time to be a firework on speed! On reflection, I'm lucky to have a July birthday- perfect for outward energy and party planning.

How is this relevant to my cycle?

It really is very simple. So simple, yet it has changed my life. You can liken the phases of your menstrual and life cycle to the seasons of the year and plan your diary accordingly. In that way you will know exactly when to be generous with your time and actions and when to hold back. So how is a woman's cycle like the turning of the seasons?

flower in spring You are coming to the end of your period and all your happy hormones begin to rise - perfect for growing new projects and fresh ideas. Last March I had a humdinger of a declutter and it felt amazing!

love in summer You are a movin' towards some lovin' and ovulatin'! All that oestrogen and testosterone is peaking and it's time to dance, go on a date and change the world!

slow down in autumn You are post ovulation, and progesterone- a more gentle hormone is on the rise. Time to relaaaaaax and perhaps think of stocking your fridge full of yummy healthy treats for your winter time

tuck yourself in this winter Like, definitely not time to be throwing parties! All hormone levels are dropping and you need rest, space and peace so that you can recharge and connect with heart wisdom. Think 'cave time'! You might find that if you give yourself space and stillness then this is a time for exploring life's options.

Hang on a minute, I'm peri or post menopausal! How is this relevant to me?

Well in terms of your menstrual life cycle, you are in Autumn. Now more than ever, this is your time to go inwards, retreat and reevaluate. You will (or will soon) no longer be influenced by fluctuating hormones. If you are able to give yourself time and space to reflect, you can be your absolute authentic self. I will repeat myself here; you need time to go inwards, retreat and reevaluate!!! Women who do so have reported being at their happiest and most fulfilled than ever before.

So how do I realistically and practically apply this to daily life?

Easier said than done, I know. I'm self employed, work from home and have older kids which basically means I have much more flexibility than say, a nurse who is also a single mum of a toddler and has ageing parents. In some form or another, adapting and living according to your cycle will look different for each of us. What matters is the intention and you will find ways even if they seem simple at first.

Start simple

This might mean that when you're in your winter/on your period phase, your little one watches a bit more cbeebies than she usually does. Or that you order some food in rather than tramping around the supermarket with an overloaded trolley.

If you're in summer/ovulation reach out to some girlfriends for a drink at the pub or have a boogie in the kitchen with your significant other, or your granny, or your dog!

Tell those around you where you are in your cycle and what that means you need from them

Yes that means your significant other, or your granny, or your dog! Educate those around you. My partner definitely knows when I need space and when I'm up for some fun and why. This means that he doesn't get offended when I would rather be in another room with a book when I'm in my winter.

Don't hold back, if you have kids- you would be doing the world a great favour by sharing this age old wisdom

Physically write it in your diary

Whether you still use a paper diary, it's all online or use use a tracking app- write it all down. Women who use this strategy often put "W" for winter, "S" for summer etc.... It makes all the difference and it means that you can plan and play accordingly. For example, if you have a choice- you will probably want to give that presentation on an "S" day rather than on a "W" day.

Anticipating and planning your life around your likely future feelings could be life changing. Have fun, be creative with it and keep it simple. You will learn exactly when to hold your energy within and when to send it out to those around you.