

Going with the flow - Using our menstrual cycle to create balance

by Janelle Fletcher

Being a woman is much like being a wave on the ocean, not a straight line on a graph. For the ocean to be like it is, it needs ebb and flow – not just one or the other. The crest and trough of the wave, the high and low tide and the waxing and waning of the moon are all natural cycles that are reflected in the two different phases of our menstrual cycle.

Women have been given this wonderful natural wave-like cycle to help keep us in balance, but too often we prefer to be a machine on auto-pilot, and not to be surfing the waves.

Put simply, sometimes we need to act and discover and at other times we need to rest and recover - in an alternating pattern, rather than being on consistent “do, do, do” supercharge.

Crest of the wave - Light of day - Create, Act and discover

From the beginning of our menstrual period until ovulation, (follicular phase symbolised by the waxing moon) the egg is growing, ripening and getting prepared to be released at ovulation for conception. In this phase of our cycle, we are setting the scene, initiating new projects, developing, creating, growing and preparing to “give birth” to something. We are “energiser bunnies” with an outward, active focus - feeling at our best with loads of ideas, enthusiasm and optimism. People around us either love our motivation, task completion and generally happy, sociable mood, or they don’t get a look in because of our “head down, butt up” attitude!

Creativity at its peak

Ovulation, which occurs at mid-cycle, (symbolised by the full moon) is accompanied by a sudden rise in our hormones – reflected by a temperature rise in our body. Metaphorically, ovulation represents creativity at its peak. At mid-cycle, “all systems are go” and we are naturally more receptive to other people and to new ideas – we are more “fertile”. Sexual desire also tends to increase as our “sexual attractiveness hormones and scents” are in “full swing”.

Trough of the wave - Dark of the night – Reflect, Rest and Recover

The second phase, (luteal phase symbolised by the waning moon) is our more evaluative and reflective time, a time to rest and recover and let the project take root. Physically, the baby that may (or may not) have been created, is settling into its new home environment. This phase gives us a chance to look back upon what has been created. No wonder in this phase, we want to go inward and spend more time alone - craving the comfort of chocolate, a warm nook and a good book. Emotions sometimes take the better of us, and our loved ones may take a wide berth around us!

Flow or resist?

Like our cycle we should have phases of outward focus, giving to others, being goal orientated, creating new projects and seeing them through. The other phase of our cycle reminds us to be more reflective, inward-focussed, receptive, emotionally-expressive and allow ourselves to rest and rejuvenate.

When we resist, rather than go with the flow of our body’s wisdom and cycles, our health can be impacted – particularly in the area of women’s health eg. endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, fibroids, premenstrual syndrome, seasonal affective disorder, burnout and other physical, emotional and mental health issues – all of which can ultimately impact our relationships, intimacy, family life and general enjoyment of life.

Waves of Wisdom

- Enjoy the experience of being a woman – embrace the waves, the ups and downs, the fluctuations.
- Love and appreciate your body for what it has got you through to date. Treat it with greater kindness.
- Maximise your creativity and effectiveness by being in flow, rather than being on constant super-charge.
- Take some time out. Learn to receive. Alternate time with others and time on your own.
- Express what needs expressing. Find someone supportive to be your sounding board.

Nature's cycles and our menstrual cycle teach us balance. Start reflecting on what your body is telling you and balance that out with listening and acting upon such wisdom.

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