

MENSTRUATION (INNER WINTER) - DAY 27 TO DAY 5

"The menstrual cycle is like a fine-tuned symphony, a fascinating interplay of hormones and physiological responses played out in the orchestra of our magnificent body. Mother nature prepares us for a potential pregnancy every cycle, whether or not you want to actually conceive. Let us take a tour of the normal 28-day cycle known as the menstrual cycle. "

Unknown Source

Menstruation.

Your bleed.

Your opportunity to rest, reset and stay with yourself

Now, no one exists other than you.

Even if you have kids and you are technically still responsible for them, now it is your time to be more with yourself.

Menstruation is the deep winter, the midnight hour or the dark moon of your soul, where all is quiet and still.

Now is when your "outer lights" (meaning your attention to mundane or material life) have been dimmed and your inner "lights" are now in full force.

These lights are:

- Your intuition
- The awakening of your feelings
- Your needs
- And the calling of your soul

Finally, it is time to put yourself first and others second.

The natural powers of menstruation are:

- Detachment
- Inner connection
- Effortless presence
- Stillness
- Expansive awareness and altered states of consciousness
- Restoration - purification, soothing and healing
- Bliss
- Acceptance
- Forgiveness of self and others
- Receiving love (self-love)

- Intimacy and union
- Experiencing all life as sacred
- Ecstasy and visioning
- Inner guidance and instruction

Menstruation is your chance to truly reboot and recharge, and if you do that, you're perfectly set up for success with the seasons that follow. This is really important to remember, especially for busy moms like us. Hiccups are guaranteed, so don't try too hard to make this perfect. This is not about perfection. This is about trusting the wisdom of your body and knowing how to support yourself on the next cycle.

As you start living and practicing this day in and day out, you will see that you are waiting for "your bleed" to allow yourself to reboot and restart. If this is not true power, I don't know what is!

Menstruation is the time to abandon all responsibilities and do nothing. I know what you are thinking, "this is impossible, I am raising young kids, how can I drop everything and do nothing?"

Here's the thing, you might not be able to lie down flat for two days (although that would be ideal), but you can make sure all meals are made ahead of time, arrange your partner, family member or a friend to take your kids for a walk for an hour or two, or even if this is not possible, to just chill at home without doing anything "productive".

Allow yourself to stay in bed and if kids want to be close to you, allow them into your bed and snuggle away. Or just stay home all together, get yourself a warm cup of an herbal tea and sip on it while kids are playing in the living room beside you.

This is not the time to start anything new, or go to places if you don't absolutely have to. This is the time to say "no" to most social engagement. If you can't then be extra mindful and conscious about your food choices, who you choose to talk to and how long you stay. We'll get into that in a bit.

"Menstruation is the great interrupter of our masculine world: it brings a stop to busyness. IT comes to reset and reorder our being so we can maintain our vitality and wellbeing.

It is a wonderful pit stop on what otherwise be a dizzying, out of control, 24/7 rollercoaster of a life."

It is as crucial as sleep for your physical body, and equally essential for your mental health and emotional wellbeing."

During this time you egoic identity (that is all about me me me) "dies", so now that you no longer have her, it is time to practice developing and cultivating a relationship, presence and deep trust in yourself.

As you do this, you learn to meet the Great Emptiness and are now held in the tender and gracious arms of the Great Mama.

Gradually, you emerge from menstruation with a fresh, more evolved iteration of you: to be expressed, shaped and tested in the world once more.

Your first task is to know when menstruation is roughly due and mark yourself in your calendar as 'unavailable'. Do very little now.

If you have a birthday party to attend with your kids, its ok to say 'no' to it, or to arrange someone else to pick them up and drop them off.

This is the time to "Raise the red flag' and call in your allies and get all hands on deck. Remember, you can offer the same practical help to your girlfriends when they menstruate, so this is a win-win.

Say 'no' to the world and say 'yes' to yourself. Nothing is an emergency and no one is dying.

- Sit in an armchair and stare out the window
- Lie on the grass and watch the stars
- Luxuriate in a hot bubble bath, or oil your skin from head to toe with aromatic elixirs and royal concoctions.
- Do anything that really indulges your senses and pleasures your body.

Think about what we do for our kids when they are sick? We cocoon and caress them, we keep them safe and make sure they are tucked in and warm. We need to do the same for ourselves as well! This is no ones job, but ours. This is how wise women move through the world, this is how we take care of ourselves.

This is especially important for busy moms like you and I who are looking for more sustainability, ease and flow in our lives. This is how we have more by doing less.

I know this concept of rest and "do nothing" might sound strange and even challenging because our culture doesn't value it. Productivity and busyness is king and doing little is synonymous with being lazy, weak and unproductive.

But, rest is not only essential but also necessary. All human beings need rest and menstruation is a natural moment for it. Don't ignore it, or numb it down. If you don't rest, you rapidly become unmotivated, exhausted and possibly ill.

"Your body's ability to de-stress depends on downtime, and downtime at menstruation is one of the most effective and efficient ways to soothe and repair your nervous system."

Time and time again women tell me that by following the MCA and pacing themselves through their menstrual cycle, they were able to liberate themselves from chronic stress and other health challenges, and made them more effective and productive when it was the right time during ovulation.

Are you numbing down menstruation or menstrual pain?

Are you using pills, Mirena IUD or other hormonal contraceptives to stop menstruation?

When you do that, you numb out and disconnect a huge potential power source. But nature (our bodies in this instance), always has the last laugh. Only our bodies aren't laughing, they're crying out with illness and exhaustion.

"When menstruation is ignored, not only do you slowly erode your vitality, you lose the ground to your life. It's as if the anchor that roots you into who you are comes adrift."

Before you know it you will find yourself overwhelmed by the demands and imperatives of others. You can lose the connection to what matters to you and may find yourself living out other people's agendas.

Many women also complain that for some strange reason they feel restless, distracted and empty.

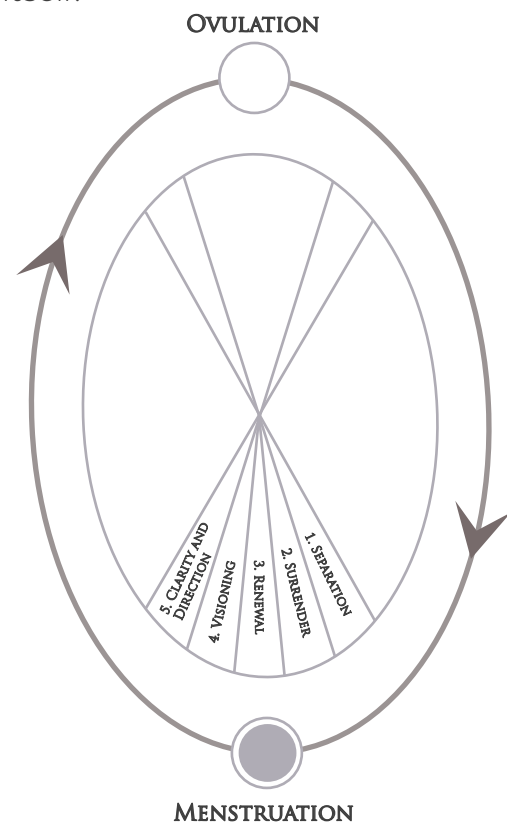
The Five Chambers of Menstruation

Now that you know about the two forces/energies that are activated inside of each one of us throughout each month (feminine and masculine) also known as the two vias, it's time to dive even deeper into the holy of holies, menstruation itself.

Your bleed is a holy moment which is the peak moment of your initiation. You go through rupturing, a time of unknowing, a time of remembering, recovering and revelation of who you truly are.

Finally, you're reconstituted into a more integrated and embodied expression of yourself.

- Chamber 1: Separation
- Chamber 2: Surrender
- Chamber 3: Renewal
- Chamber 4: Visioning
- Chamber 5: Clarity & Direction



MAP OF THE FIVE CHAMBERS OF MENSTRUATION

Chamber 1: Separation (day 27-28, spotting)

It's the 'death' of your ego - this is the most spiritually powerful place in the whole cycle.

Sometimes, separation or detachment can feel like hell - eliciting feelings of abandonment, despair, even terror. For others, it can elicit feelings of bliss, love and union.

The dark side of 'Separation'

"This chamber can be hard for those women who are coping with and recovering from childhood abuse, neglect or early life trauma. Some experience extreme despair or even suicidal thoughts at this point." Wild Power, p. 124

It is important to remember, though, that the cycle doesn't create the depression or suicidal feelings, instead, it exposes the wounding.

The remedy is tender, professional support combined with MCA to release and heal from the trauma.

If you suffer from any kind of addiction (to food, alcohol, drugs, etc), at separation you could potentially fall off the wagon. Especially if you're also dealing with emotional trauma.

The pain could be so great that the addiction may feel like a coping mechanism, so don't blame yourself. But take care of yourself by surrounding yourself with loving people, wise coaches and healers who can help you get through this with compassion and kindness.

Chamber 2: Surrender (day 1-2)

The arrival of the bleed. The power of this chamber is letting go of control, being in the unknown and doing nothing. This is where you rest and release a lot of the accumulated tension you've acquired this month. It's as though you're being unplugged from source energy just for a short period of time to help you reset and reboot. Much like a computer. The emptying out and release leads you right into the 3rd chamber.

Chamber 3: Renewal

Here you're plugged back into the Source. You can experience a womb-like state in which you feel washed by the forces of love. This is where the new cycle begins, at this sign of new life. Your new life.

Chamber 4: Visioning

Many women get the power of a visionary during this time, you become an Oracle, visioning both for yourself and your community.

Chamber 5: Clarity and Direction

If you've been following and allowing your body to do what it was designed to do, this is where you get the downloads from the Source and directions, how to continue, where to go, what to keep doing and where to pivot.

An important note about the five chambers of menstruation. I've indicated the days they occur for chambers 1-3, but none for the rest of the process because of an important reason. The sense of The Five Chambers is unique to you, your own nature and your needs as a human being and a woman.

Remember the Big Red Rule? This is not about charting or locating these on a calendar. It is a much deeper process than that. This is about practicing attunement, intuition and self-care.

This is your opportunity to befriend yourself. To really be with yourself, as uncomfortable as it may feel. It will be ok, you will survive this!

Your Feminine Current is your most sacred form of spiritual practice, and unlike structured religions, your body governs and leads the way.

Your ability to 'read' or feel that inner clock depends on your ability to recognize the following signals sent by your body:

- You might suddenly feel empty, lost, dislodged, distracted, disconnected, distant from others, ungrounded, anxious, panicky, and bored. You may just want to abandon everything and you don't care what happens.
- You may feel extremely tired and a strong need to cry or scream!
- You may feel needy and want comfort or to be held. Or, the opposite, you may now want to be touched or even looked at.
- You may also feel very dreamy, overexposed and self-conscious.
- Some women experience nights of insomnia, ecstasy and having tons of creative ideas.
- You may feel super horny and feel like you just want redemption at any cost. You you know what I mean.

The more pressured and rushed you are in your life, the more disturbance you feel in menstruation.

It is super important to educate your partner about this as it will help you to create space for rest and full recovery. Many women would suddenly feel like they just have to get out and remove themselves from a family situation.

You should be able to say something like 'You take over, I'm out of here'. And he should know it's coming and support you in that, because when he does he actually gets more of you later on.

Teach your husband to ask you something like: 'honey, you don't look like yourself. What do you need?'

I often just tell my husband that I feel 'the need to separate' and need to be alone in my room. He totally gets it and takes over when needed.

It's not always perfect, but it feels good to know that he's totally enrolled into my self-care mission that eventually serves all of us.

Best Practices During A Menstrual Cycle:

- Abstain from anything cold during your menstruation. According to TCM, blocage, or absence of flow, is the nature of all disease and pain.
- Abstain from using tampons as they obstruct flow, and you want to open flow both energetically and physically to allow the "life force" aka chi flow freely.

Physical manifestations of stagnation (meaning, blood is not flowing freely):

- Menstrual pain
 - Heavy bleeding
 - Clots
 - Endometriosis
 - Fibroids
 - Cysts
 - Irregular periods
 - Headaches
 - And even PMS
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- Avoid cold foods, cold water and anything that is not warmed up while menstruating
 - Avoid sitting or lying in cold places
 - Avoid swimming (water is usually cooler than body's temperature)
 - Do not walk around with wet hair on that day! This cools the body and will cause stagnation of blood flow and energy.
 - This time of the month is considered to be yin (as opposed to yang) and therefore you should practice more kindness, gentleness, and nurturing towards yourself while menstruating.

Clothing

- Avoid midriff tops, instead wear something that covers your shoulders
- Avoid low cut jeans that leave the belly exposed (even if it's under a top that is not tight to the body)
- Avoid exposing your legs, instead wear a business attire or a long skirt with leggings under (depending on weather of course)
- If it's cold outside be sure to wear a hat to cover your head and a scarf to cover your throat
- Keep your feet warm!!! I would wear extra socks if needed.
- Wear red colours, this will help you connect more to the root chakra and embody even more the energy of this time.

Food

- Don't eat ice cream, frozen smoothies, ice water and even raw foods
- Instead sip on hot water or soothing herbal teas
- Eat warm foods such as stews, soups, meat broths.
- Include warming spices such as: cinnamon, black pepper, cardamom, cayenne, garlic and ginger.
- No dairy during this time! Think energetically what milk is, it represents the food that a

mother mammal feeds her baby, and while menstruating you are “grieving the potential of a life”. Energetically this causes a lot of problems.

- Abstain from red meat and eggs. These foods can increase cellular inflammation and uterine cramps in some people.
- Stick to low-fat cuts of meat, as well as bones. Bone broths during this time of month are wonderful, nourishing and very soothing.
- Eliminate partially hydrogenated fats {margarine, vegetable shortening, packaged snacks, baked goods (especially premade versions), ready-to-use dough, fried foods, coffee creamers (both dairy and non-dairy)}
- Avoid coffee and caffeine in general (so coke and pepsi as well)
- Avoid alcohol! This stimulates the production of estrogen and testosterone which you don't need at this time. This also makes you more jiddy and irritable which interferes with the energy of discharge.
- In general, eat lightly. Do not overeat during menstruation, as this might cause cramping and inconvenience.
- No junk food (high in unhealthy fats)
- No fried foods

Exercise

- Abstain from hard core exercises
- Stick to walking in nature or if you can't walk in nature but feel like you want to move your body stick to walking on the treadmill

Energy

- Since your body is working hard to expel blood out of the body, to renew and replenish you and prep you for a new cycle, keep in mind that you will feel more tired and more fatigued than usual. This is normal! Many women feel ashamed or guilty that they can't be productive during this time, however, this is your body's way of slowing you down and helping you to be in alignment with your natural flow and cyclicity.
- Since your energy is minimal, value it and understand that it is sacred and scarce during menstruation. So avoid mundane activities that waste your precious energy, instead plan way ahead and prepare for this day.

Mindset

- According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, women view menstruating as a sacred thing, as opposed to seeing it as a “curse”. There is so much power in this, we just don't fully understand it and own it. Bleeding doesn't mean you are dirty or filthy in any way! The contrary is true, you are renewing, rejuvenating and cleansing.

Socializing

- You can definitely expect to be more fatigued, irritable, unease, wanting to be alone, to sleep more, etc. Therefore, I advice you to abstain from too much socializing, too much networking (if that's even possible). If that is not realistic, then at the very least, don't feel bad about yourself for feeling negative or like you don't like certain people. This is happening because during this time of the month you are more wired for downtime, and not socializing. Again, no point in feeling guilty or blaming yourself, just observe how you

- feel and the thought patterns and then let it go.
- For first three days of menstrual flow avoid all exchange of bodily fluids. This includes: no kissing, exchanging of saliva or sweat, and no sexual intercourse. Exchange of these bodily fluids can be disturbing to your womb energy and pass to others the negativity you are discharging. One major result of that is that it can ruin relationships by causing all sorts of emotional ups and down, and conflicts between partners.
 - Avoid negative and excessive talk,
 - Take time to meditate or sit in nature,
 - Avoid parties and social gatherings
 - Choose solitary and uplifting tasks
 - Listen to beautiful music with positive lyrics or themes
 - Remember to: stop rushing, breath deeply, and laugh
 - Practicing staying calm and happy

Charge Your Womb With Divine Power

- Meditate
- Be silent
- Pray
- Chant
- Go into Nature
- Fill your senses with beauty in all it forms (music, art, food, smells, nature...)

Mantras and affirmations to recite:

"I accept that this is a productive time even though nothing can be seen yet"

"I am an embodiment of my wild, sacred self. I willingly let go to all that I'm holding onto to allow my full radiance to Shine Forth Now. I lovingly embrace the Flow of Life and all it's beautiful blessings. I am Whole, I am Loved, I am a Vibrant Goddess. I am fully connected with my purpose and creativity as I follow clear messages and intuition, and my blood, as a humble offering affirms this as true. I give thanks for.... and for all that I am, and all that I have."