

Transcript: The Future is Cyclic Episode 5

Hello, hello, hello!

Welcome to season 5 of The Future is Cyclic!

We've been dealing with colds in our house so I've been feeling a real mix of exhaustion but also that heady spring energy. We contain multitudes, right? Now that we're all feeling better, we spent the weekend building planters and prepping our garden so that we can plant lots of things in a couple weeks' time once the risk of frost has past. Our kitchen is currently packed with little seedling pots, with things growing on every surface that the cats can't get on to to eat them.

Today I want to talk to you about pre-menstrual nesting energy...what it is, why it happens, and some simple tips that can allow you to use it intentionally so that there's so much more flow and ease throughout the entirety of your cycle.

The pre-menstruum is a phase that many people struggle with. There can be gnarly PMS symptoms here, including physical pain and also A LOT coming up mentally and emotionally. So it can be really helpful to discover the really beautiful gifts that also exist in this phase of the cycle.

What I've found is that through menstrual cycle awareness and cycle coaching, this actually becomes many people's favourite of their inner seasons. It's definitely one of mine.

Although just like I am with the outer seasons, I'm constantly declaring each phase my favourite. The energies blend so beautifully one into the next like the dynamic, wonderful cycle they are. Living only in one of these energies would create stagnation and probably boredom. Bringing acceptance and even joy to whatever phase we're in is such a life-giving way to life. Rather than constantly fighting against them, trying so hard to be consistent, and ultimately wasting so much energy.

But back to the pre-menstruum and this often hidden gift it has to offer.

In episode 3 we did our whistle stop tour of the basic hormonal fluctuations that we move through during a menstrual month. You can go back and check out that episode if you missed it; it's very short. But if you haven't listened to it, I'll catch you up here...

We often associate the pre-menstrual as a real hormonal low point in the cycle and in a way it is. After we ovulate, we experience a steep drop off in oestrogen and testosterone which can lead to a steep decline in our energy levels and may leave us feeling tender, with our emotions very raw and close to the surface.

From that point forward we experience a rise in progesterone for the next week or so, which is a hormone that can encourage feelings of coziness and a tendency towards wanting to stay at home and turn our attentions to our inner landscape. This is because our body wants to protect a pregnancy, if conception has occurred.

However, our society is obviously not generally built for spending long, cozy days of self-reflection at home. So we can experience a lot of discomfort and dis-ease when our daily life seemingly forces us to act out of alignment with what our bodies are asking of us.

But as we begin practicing menstrual cycle awareness and start to notice the more subtle nuances and textures of our cycle, we can also tune into another element of the pre-menstrual phase. It's almost like a phase within a phase. Perhaps you've noticed it already.

I call it "pre-menstrual nesting energy" because it's very similar to the "nesting phase" that many pregnant people experience during their third trimester as their bodies get ready to give birth.

It's a preparatory energy as we prepare our spaces, we tick things off our to-do lists, we make physical and mental space to rest, to let go, to just be. We can see how beneficial this is for the postpartum, when we need complete space to be with our small body and heal from giving birth.

And the same is true during menstruation. The ease and flow of the entire rest of the cycle is enhanced by having space to rest and reflect while we bleed.

This pre-menstrual nesting energy comes about because shortly before our period arrives, we get a little bump in oestrogen. You might feel the impacts of this for one or several days. For myself and for many clients I work with, this can be one of the most productive times of the entire cycle.

The most niggly items on my to-do list, that have been languishing there for months and months often get done during this time. That productive surge meets with the no-tolerance for bullshit pre-menstrual energy and I just can't tolerate those things being undone anymore, and so I do them.

My capacity increases here and so does my motivation and the two meet in this beautiful crescendo. I feel the urge to cook, to organise, to tidy my space, and to get those niggly things off my to-do list.

But I think it's really important to note that, *of course*, this energy is finite. And if we're not careful, we can really let it sweep us away so that by the time our bleed comes, we're still trying to finish a million things and we feel more scattered and frantic, rather than accomplished and prepared to dial things back for a little bit.

So I really want to encourage you to be as intentional as possible with this energy.

Charting your cycle is really helpful for noticing when this particular phase of your cycle is starting and how it generally shows up for you.

Try to hone in on a few priorities that you can really funnel this pre-menstrual nesting energy into. You might want to ask yourself:

What can I do now that will allow me to do less while I have my period?

What feels undone from this cycle and how can I help bring it to completion?

Are there niggly, undone tasks on my to-do list that I would appreciate having completed? (Or would I prefer to let these go once and for all?)

And then it's important to notice when this energy starts to dwindle. In future episodes we'll talk about the different phases that exist within menstruation itself. But for many of us there's a dropping away of energy, even a feeling that we've got one foot in some other world.

It's important not to push through these signals that our bodies are preparing to bleed. Although not all of life can wait for a few days, it's so helpful to be clear on what we can let go of or scale down

and not to get fixated on certain things that we were working on with the pre-menstrual nesting energy.

An affirmation can be helpful here, something like “What I’ve done is enough and I’m taking the space I need to rest now.” Or “I’ve moved into my inner winter and this can wait.” Something to remind you that there’s a season for everything and your bleed is a season, as much as possible, for rest.

So that is really what I wanted to tell you about the beautiful gift of pre-menstrual nesting energy. Short and sweet but I’m always here if you have any questions or want to share your own experiences, please reach out to me via email. I’d love to hear from you! If you’d like to get more real-life cyclic parenting stories and tips for aligning your life with your menstrual cycle, sign up for my newsletter at SarahStarrs.com