

The Future is Cyclic Episode 6

Transcript

Sarah: [00:00:00] Welcome to the Future is cyclic, the podcast for parents with periods. This is the place to be if you're a parent who's exhausted, overwhelmed, and totally done with a burnout cycle that modern parenting seems to force you into if you're yearning for another way. A way of life based in ease, connection, and joy, a way of life that actually fills you up so that you can enjoy your life and parent in the peaceful, grounded way you desire.

Then welcome. I'm so happy to have you here. I'm your host, Sarah Stars. An accredited cycle coach and I work with parents who have periods and are feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, and like There's never enough time through one-to-one coaching workshops and online courses, I help you feel more energetic, intuitive, and confident that the work you're doing in the world matters.

On this show, I share cyclic intel and powerful [00:01:00] practices for feeling more energetic, more joyful, more connected to yourself and your family using the powers of your menstrual cycles. Yes, they're real. And the other pillars in my proven cyclic parenting framework. I also speak to incredible experts in their fields, ranging from cooking and gardening to sexuality and relationships.

So that we can take a holistic approach to creating a whole new paradigm of parenting together. Let's dive in. Hello and welcome to episode six of The Future is Cyclic, and I'm really excited for this one because it is actually a mini workshop that is usually only available to my one-to-one and group coaching clients.

I've edited and tweaked it, especially for the show so that I can present you with. Cycle charting 1 0 1. So whether you're brand new menstrual cycle awareness and want to set up this life-changing practice in your life, or are a seasoned charter wanting to breathe new life into your charting, I think you'll get a lot from this [00:02:00] episode.

And as a special bonus, you can head to [sarah stars.com/podcast](http://sarahstars.com/podcast). Slash episode six to get a bundle of free cycle charting principles to enhance your practice. So this episode is really designed to get you started. It's the why and how, and you can look forward to a future episode where I'll walk you through mining for the gold in your chart so that you can find the intel from your body.

See the patterns that are emerging and slowly and sustainably create the small tweaks and lifestyle changes that will bring more ease and flow to your life. This is a practice that will enhance your intuition, your self-compassion, and your self-awareness. It can help boost your energy and bolster your overall sense of wellbeing and vitality.

I'm so excited to share this with you. Let's dive in. So we are gonna be diving deep into cycle charting today so that you can set up this foundational cyclic parenting practice if you haven't already, or to really get a bit deeper and more intentional if [00:03:00] you are already charting your cycle. And yes, this can absolutely apply if you don't have a menstrual cycle, whether that is because you've never had one, or whether you're pregnant, breastfeeding, or have something else going on.

That means you are not cycling right now. But first, I assume since you're watching this video, that you already have a desire to do this work and to learn this information about yourself. But let's talk for a few minutes about why we wanna chart our cycle. So often people learn about menstrual cycle awareness and it just feels completely eye-opening, right?

You understand the physiological processes that are going on throughout the menstrual month, as well as the kind of. Emotional, mental, physical, spiritual changes that you might be experiencing throughout the four phases of the menstrual cycle, and that alone can change so much. Just having that awareness and knowing that it's not just you.

There's nothing broken or wrong, [00:04:00] and in fact it's incredibly beautiful and there are a lot of gifts and challenges alongside the fact that. We are cyclic beings. It can be tricky to be a cyclic being in a largely masculine, dominant linear world, but there are so many gifts as well. But whether you first learned about the inner seasons framework or another kind of framework for understanding the menstrual cycle, you're ultimately going to have been taught an archetypal cycle, right?

Usually based on the idea of a 28 day cycle, a cycle that is very, um, consistent and regular, a cycle that each of the four phases isn't equal in length, which is to my mind, almost never true and. A cycle that is very imbalance and kind of typical and for most of us living in, like I said, this kind of linear, a world that's structured in a very linear way, not a cyclic way.

That means that almost all of us [00:05:00] are living with some forms of imbalances and that is not anything wrong with us. Many of them can be quite.

Simply with some dedication and commitment be brought into balance, but most of us are living with some forms of imbalance, and so that could be things like, Physical imbalances related to our hormones and nutrients.

But it can also be things like mental, emotional, spiritual imbalances, right? Like creative blocks or things like, you know, those of us who are overgiving, who maybe don't have the boundaries we need in place, who have been, um, you know, really in the trenches of early parenting and have really lost sight of our own desires and.

The greater vision for our life, or maybe those things just feel completely out of touch and even meeting your basic needs, feel out of touch, um, because of how intense life is right now. Right? And so in those cases where some or many forms or single form of [00:06:00] imbalance exist, our cycles are likely to look a little bit different than what we've learned about.

And also because each of our cycles is unique and our cycles will change. Throughout the seasons of life, you know, they, um, those changes can point to normal and natural developments in our menstrual cycle as we age and move towards the next season of life. Or they can represent that something has gone out of balance and perhaps they're calling towards calling us towards some simple changes and sometimes not so simple changes to make, to come back into balance.

So charting your cycle is the foundational practice of my cyclic parenting framework. It's basically the practice on which everything else grows out of it is, I promise, very simple. There are lots of different options of how you can chart your cycle. So today we'll be looking at some of them so that you can really make a decision about what [00:07:00] cycle charting method is ultimately best for you.

And we are going to be getting so much information outta this practice that really can be done in about two minutes a day. You can absolutely pour more into it if you're not like a, you're an avid long form journaler, but you don't have to to really get the benefits. So this is such an important practice for.

Really coming into tune with the messages our bodies are sending to us, understanding our wants and needs, getting really clear information about what is and isn't working in our life and what is within our control to change. And all of this comes out of the practice of cycle charting as well as so much more as you'll see as you really dive into it.

So I am an accredited cycle coach through Cycle Coach school, which is part of the red school lineage, which is Alexandra Pope and Shawn Hugo Wurlitzer is, that's where my mentor and teacher, Claire Baker, um, that's who she trained with. And they define menstrual [00:08:00] cycle as paying attention to where you are in your cycle each day.

What you are experiencing and how to care for your changing cyclical needs, and I think that just really encapsulates how profound and simple this practice really is. So I just wanna talk about some different options for charting your cycle. Now, to back up a little bit, if you are not sure. What the kind of landscape of the cycle is.

You can download my cyclic Parenting 1 0 1 ebook and just read a little bit about when the menstrual cycle starts, what the phases are. And how to start tuning into that cycle. Day one is always the first day of your period. So that is when you have bright red or dark red blood, not like a little bit of spotting.

It's when you're into that full flow of bleeding that is cycle day one. And then you are counting forward from there until the last day before [00:09:00] bleeding starts again. Right? So sometimes you might be on day 29 and then you get your bleed, and that becomes. Cycle day one. You might be on day 22, you might be on day 36.

But that, and when that blighting starts, that will become cycle day one. And what we're doing through charting is paying attention to the physical, mental, and emotional, and I would say spiritual as well. Even if you don't consider yourself a particularly spiritual person, this could include things like creative flow, um, Connection to yourself and others.

We'll talk about that a little bit more, but so we're paying attention to all of these changes on a day-to-day basis. And for right now, we're simply documenting. I don't want you to feel like anything that you write down has to be super profound or that you need to kind of get anything out of it. Yet you are going to be guided through that process of mining for the gold and learning to interpret your findings.

But we need a few months under our belt, and when we're starting any new habit, I [00:10:00] can feel a bit awkward. The inner critic can come out and be like, you're doing this wrong. That doesn't make any sense. Why would that matter? To write down just as much as you can. Put that voice aside, trust yourself. If you're making note of something, that it matters.

If you're noticing it, it matters, and we don't need to know yet why it matters, and there's really no way to do this wrong and there's no way to do it perfectly. Allow it to adapt and evolve. Just commit to showing up to the practice each and every day. So another question that will often come up is when you should chart your cycle, and that's really up to you.

The key I would say is to being really consistent is like today you will take the time to decide on the best method for you, knowing that after a cycle or two, and it's not really working quite how you want it or you're kind of struggling with that method that we can always change and adapt. Which is choosing something that you're gonna stick with today and commit to it [00:11:00] for at least one cycle before reevaluating.

And the other key I would say is to anchor it to something that you're already doing. So for some people, They like to chart while they're eating breakfast every morning or as soon as they wake up, you know, pulling out their journal and doing a little bit of charting about how they feel, what their energy is like first thing in the morning.

Um, for me, I have generally liked most to chart in the evening. I anchored it. For a long time to as soon as I was done putting my son to bed, I would sit down and do my charting for the day cuz it was a really a good way to get kind of a full picture of my energy throughout the day. Cause obviously it can change a lot throughout the day as well.

It's most obvious to me what my energy is like once I've kind of responded to a difficult situation or seen how it feels to be working on a work project that day. So that worked really well for me. Now my husband puts my son to bed, so I kind of anchor it to saying goodnight to them and um, and sitting down.

To do a bit of charting, so just thinking about where it would fit in most naturally to your [00:12:00] day. And I would really recommend putting either a timer on your phone or a post-it. Like if it's gonna, for example, be at the breakfast table, putting a post-it beside, um, your chair at the table. So there's a little bit of a reminder until this becomes an ingrained habit and really anchoring it to something that you already do each and every day is gonna be the easiest way to make it super consistent.

So there are a lot of options that you can use for charting your cycle. We're gonna talk about three today, which I would say are the main ones. So I actually use a combination of these methods. I've been charting my cycle for nearly

eight years now, and so I have kind of a combination of these methods that I use for gathering different types of data about my cycle.

I would say that if you're just starting out, Choosing one that you feel most drawn to is the best place to start. So apps can be a great option. Some of the popular ones are Clue K Flow Avia. There are a lot out there. The one I use is called Read My [00:13:00] Body. I really like it. It syncs with the temp drop that I use for charting ovulation.

And it's great because you can journal in there if you want. You can use different tags to track different kind of. Characteristics, qualities, emotions, energy, symptoms throughout the month. I mostly just use it for charting ovulation, and then I like to use a pen and paper approach for longer form charting.

Apps are great because they're quick, they're really easy, they're great for seeing patterns over time. Um, and they make it easier to interpret your data for if you're using fertility awareness method, depending on the app. Um, for example, read My Body is really good for that. Kendra is really good for that.

It's not as good for me personally, at least diving deep into the inner landscape. I don't wanna be sitting there like tapping out my deep, my deepest feelings. I would be really. Careful about never using a app's predictions of your fertile window. Well, it doesn't have the right, the right data for that.

And of course there are places where [00:14:00] you need to be careful about using period apps because of data mining and privacy concerns read. My body is great because the data is all kept. On your phone. It's not, um, available to them. It's not saved on their servers or in the cloud. They couldn't access your data even if they wanted to.

Okay. So a second option. That is great. And for those other, um, stationary efficient autos out there, it could give you the excuse to buy a new journal. So a pen and paper. The classic. Right. Great for deep diving into what comes up for you physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, creatively each day, or if we're just taking a few notes about the things that really stand out, so it's super adaptable to whatever you feel like putting on the paper that day.

It can take a little bit more time to go through and pull out patterns that emerge cycle to cycle, but I do find that sometimes when I, when I put the time into doing that with pen and paper, I could get kind of like a deeper intel. There's a bit more there to work with. If you want [00:15:00] something to offer you a bit

of structure, there is the red journal that my friendly solicitor has created as a guided cycle charting journal.

I am working on the cyclic parenting journal. And then a third option, which is really great, is a cycle tracking mandala. People use these in different ways. The most efficient way to use them is just you're capturing like one to three words about your moods and energy for the day. There's space to write the date, the day of your cycle.

You can look at the lunar calendar. And then the space to write a few words. So it might be that you are wanting to track something really specific, like your energy levels, your sex drive, how many parenting kind of tricky moments you have in a day. You could use it to just write a little bit about something very specific like that.

I tend to use it for just really tuning in and thinking about, so you can see on day. 27, I was feeling flowy, fun and get her done. Or another day I was feeling anxious and stuck. Right. Just finding those days that kind of encapsulate [00:16:00] the overall vibe of the day. It's quick and easy, right? That's not gonna take you very much time at all.

Great for easily seeing patterns related to the specific days and phases of your cycle. It's very visual and you can very easily compare, for example, days of 27 over the course of several cycles. Obviously the, the drawback being you're not getting as much depth there. It's also like less adaptable to varied length of cycles.

So if I, when I was having longer cycles, I would just start a list of days on the side, 29 30. You know, sometimes up to like 36, not as visually cohesive, but that worked absolutely fine for me with all of these charting methods. I think an app would be less applicable to this, although maybe like you could download a more generic journaling app.

Definitely the. The mandala and the long form journaling are both well suited to charting when you don't have a menstrual cycle or you aren't cycling right now. So there are a couple of different options that you could use that you could chart alongside the calendar [00:17:00] month. So the first of the month.

Being day one, you can chart alongside the lunar cycle. So day one being the new moon. You could also chart the trimesters of pregnancy or postpartum. So using day one of the first trimester, for example, as day one or the day of your child's birth is day one. There's lots of options there. And then it's still allowing

you to develop that self-awareness and see patterns of how you're feeling over time.

Certainly when I was in those first few months postpartum, I think I got my period. For the first time when I was seven months postpartum and for about three months previously, I could feel that energy fluctuations, ebbs and flows happening before my cycle actually came back. So what charting method is best?

Just whatever one you will actually use consistently. So to start seeing patterns emerge, it's important to chart every day or as close to as possible for at least three months. And I really would encourage [00:18:00] you to be diligent with doing this every day, wherever you can. And if you miss a day, maybe just thinking about, okay, well what was yesterday like?

And jotting a few things down. I think if you get away from it for too many days, it gets a bit blurry and hard to remember. And similarly, there's no perfect time to chart, right? You just do it whenever you're most likely to do it, anchoring it to something you'll do every day, and being as consistent to showing up at that same time as usual.

But if you're charting in the morning and then you have like something unexpected happen, just getting back to it when you can. And it's also important to consider what your goals are for charting and whether the method you choose is going to give you the information you need. We'll talk a bit in just a moment about what we're going to chart or some options of what to chart, but you might know, for example, that you are really wanting to get a better understanding of how your mood fluctuates throughout the cycle, or maybe it's your energy levels, your appetite, or a particular health symptom.

So just. Keeping that in mind when you're charting every day to check in on [00:19:00] that particular thing and to make sure that you're charting in a way that's gonna give you that information. So what are you gonna chart? So we've talked about the fact that the first day of your cycle is the first day of your bleed when there's bright or dark red blood, rather than just spotting.

And in essence, charting is just making a note of your cycle day and reflecting on your cyclic experience from that day. I also tend to write down the calendar date. I'm a witchy woman, so I put down the the lunar phase. As well, and you may have other things that you're wanting to note down. You know, if you're really into astrology, some people will put down different astrological elements as well.

But really, the cycle day is the most important. I think it's helpful to have the calendar date there as well. And in essence, you're just making a note of your cycle day and then reflecting on your cyclic experience from that day. So I think the key here is really not to overthink it and trust yourself to think of the most relevant.

Aspects of your day to record. So, you know, there might be a day when it just really stands out to me that my blood sugar is, was super imbalanced. It didn't seem to matter how I [00:20:00] ate, or you know, what frequency I ate that I just felt kind of shaky and off all day. And then other days, like my appetite and those kind of physical things might not stand out at all.

Most of us aren't in the habit of tuning into our emotions and naming feelings or the sensations of our body. So if this feels clunky at work first, or if you feel like you're not necessarily accessing the deeper layers and levels that you want to try not to worry. I know it's really hard to beat up on ourselves, but just trust that this is a skill, it's a practice.

It's when we're gonna be using for a long, long time, hopefully. So allow yourself. To get acquainted with it and allow it to grow and evolve with you. You are absolutely gonna be able to kind of fine tune your charting practice over time. But there are absolutely no wrong answers when it comes to what you to chart.

So the framework that I like to use that gives me kind of enough structure. That I'm not just totally like, what am I gonna, what am I gonna write? Um, but is flexible enough that a lot of things can fit inside it, depending on the day [00:21:00] is the for body check-in which I learned from my teacher at Friend and mentor Claire Baker.

And it's just a process of checking in with how you are feeling physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. So, Just to get you started, and these are mostly in my sick like Parenting 1 0 1 ebook as well, so that you've got APL easy place to reference to. So things physically might be like, what are your energy levels?

What was your appetite like? What kinds of foods did you want to eat or not eat? How did you want to move your body? How would you describe your libido? What kind of sexual activities did you feel drawn to? Did you notice any cervical mucus? Did your body feel strong? Were there any notable sensations in your body today?

Mentally you might wanna think about things like how easy or difficult was it to focus? Did you feel clearheaded or scattered? What kind of things was your inner critic saying and how noisy were they today? You know? Was it like one of those days where the inner critic was up to here and it was hard to even think?

Or was it kind of like [00:22:00] these lower level whisperings that you could kind of tune out? What kind of things did you feel yourself drawn to reading or watching emotionally you might want to consider? What were the dominant emotions you experienced today? Did your emotions feel volatile or stable? How did it feel to be around other people today?

How patient were you today, spiritually? And again, I know you may not identify as a spiritual person, but I think some of these aspects will be relevant to most people. So you might wanna think about how connected to yourself did you feel today. How connected to other people did you feel? How about to nature the planet life, right?

Those big questions. What was your creativity like? Did you feel playful today? And I don't answer all of these questions each day. I simply think of each body and note down anything relevant that jumps at me about that aspect of my experience. So, for example, I was insatiably hungry, or that I was creative and brimming with ideas.

Um, like I said earlier, you may be [00:23:00] experiencing a particular symptom or want to explore a particular characteristic in relation to your cycle, such as a tendency to lose your temper and, um, identifying what triggers you in different phases of the cycle. So if that's the case, be sure to make a note of how this showed up for you for each day when you're charting for at least a few months to really get an idea of the patterns over time.

And you'll notice on this diagram that I've got the four bodies and then the place where they intersect in the middle. It's a bit hard to see. I've put a star there. But if you're doing the four body check-in, you may then also wanna think about, okay, are there any three? Or four words that would kind of describe the overall energy, the overall vibe today that relate to all four of these bodies, right?

So something like upbeat, playful, creative, strong, whatever. It's, you might wanna make a note of those two and then what, right? I can promise that just doing this charting work alone is a really powerful process of self-connection and self-awareness. [00:24:00] A lot of my clients report feeling a great deal of.

Self-compassion, the way they talk to themselves really shifts from this practice of cycle charting. And that also they develop more self-awareness really quickly and they get in tune with their intuition really quickly. But don't worry, don't worry about the, and then what you're gonna be guided through a process that once you've learned it, you'll be able to apply again and again throughout your cyclic years and even beyond potentially.

So we're really just setting up this foundational practice first. And from there, There's lots of magic to come. Really make a commitment today to sitting down, spending a few minutes reflecting on what cycle charting practice you're gonna use and get started. Just allow it to be messy and imperfect and jump right in.

I can't wait to see the magic this creates for you.

Thank you so much for listening. You can find show notes and a transcript of this episode on my website, sarah [00:25:00] stars.com. I would love for you to subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast app and leave a review. This is such a helpful way to support this work and help more parents find the world of cyclic parenting, and I'd love to chat.

If you have any thoughts or questions about this episode, please send me an email. I'd love to hear from you and I'll speak to you in the next episode.