

Hi! Welcome to first ever episode of The Cyclic Parenting Show! I'm so glad you're here and I'm so excited to be creating this new podcast for you.

I had a podcast ...what feels like many years ago now, before I became a parent. I really loved it and am so looking forward to sharing and creating in his medium again.

This first episode is really a chance to introduce myself and this podcast, to give you an overview of what this Cyclic Parenting thing is all about and what you can expect from this show moving forward.

So, here I am. I'm Sarah Starrs. I'm a home educating mama. I'm an avid home cook. I'm a witchy woman. I'm a passionate advocate for justice. And I come here with all of those hats on but perhaps most particularly with my cycle coaching hat on.

Wait, I hear you saying it: What the heck is a cycle coach, right?

To explain that, let me back up and tell you a story.

My son, our one and only child, was born in the summer of 2017. It was the middle of heat wave. I was two and a half weeks overdue...I know you can't see me but I'm putting overdue in air quotes. When my waters broke, things quickly devolved from the home water birth I'd planned into a 3-day, intervention-heavy birth experience that I found incredibly traumatic.

This wasn't the introduction to motherhood that I had expected.

And as we were processing that experience and living through the heady, sink or swim early days of parenting. And then, two weeks after he was born, our son got incredibly sick with strep-b meningitis. We spent a week living in the hospital, where he luckily got better.

I can now see that those early years of parenting held two almost parallel experiences.

On the one hand, becoming a mother was a kind of homecoming. It felt so natural and right, and don't get me wrong: incredibly hard, too. I'll be honest, I hadn't thought through what being a parent meant too much more than wanting a baby. And I spent my pregnancy much more fixated on learning about giving birth rather than exploring the type of parent I wanted to be.

But giving birth to my son and experiencing the love I felt for him, I found myself intuitively drawn to attachment parenting practices like co-sleeping, breastfeeding, and babywearing. And as my son grew, learning about different respectful parenting philosophies, like gentle parenting, and the Montessori and Waldorf styles of education. Being able to raise our son in these ways felt really life-affirming and empowering.

On the other hand, at the same time, I was processing these two major traumas and trying to be the kind of parent I wanted to be in a society that really does not support families. And Peter barely slept for the first two years of his life.

Not surprisingly, I crashed head first into burnout. By the time our son was 18-months old, I was having regular visual hallucinations, was getting sick all of the time, feeling intensely anxious, and could feel myself sliding into depression.

It feels important to note that this was a pattern for me. I had spent the entirety of my adolescence and adult life going through these cycles of burnout and mental health crises.

I'm very driven. I'm very passionate. I throw myself into mind, body, and soul into everything I do and I always had a bunch of projects on the go. I'd be going going going for a few years before crashing completely and being really unwell for an extended period of time.

It was actually on my last podcast, in an interview with Nicole Antoinette, that this pattern was really put into perspective for me. She was talking about a pattern she saw in herself and others, where we can almost push ourselves to any extent for up to three years and the body then just gives out. It's not designed to live at that pace for so long, but modern life tries to demand that we do so consistently.

So back to the story: Things shifted significantly for me in 2015 when I discovered Menstrual Cycle Awareness.

I am Canadian but I was living in London in the UK at the time. I was completely enmeshed in the kind of new age spirituality, self-help world and during that time, a friend of mine organized a weekend workshop where she brought in a practitioner from the States named Madeline Giles who teaches a modality called Angelic Breathwork. Angels aren't really a part of my worldview or belief system, but it was actually a really powerful experience.

But even more powerfully, it was at this workshop in the summer of 2015 that I met my now long-time friend, Lisa Lister.

Lisa had just written and self-published her book, *Code Red* and I had just started my podcast. I had developed a bit of a reputation for being something of a brash, outspoken North American who liked to talk about those topics that British people in particular like to sweep under the rug.

My friend Jayne introduced me to Lisa, suggesting that she'd be a great guest on my new podcast.

She was a great guest *and* she completely changed my life.

Lisa's book *Code Red* is a deep dive into the psycho-spiritual, as well as the physiological, aspects of the menstrual cycle.

Yes, I'd been all about bringing the realities of periods out into the open but I actually had no idea what my cycle was all about.

Knowing how and why my energy, moods, sexual appetites, physical food-based appetites...arguably every aspect of my being, knowing how and why they were ebbing and flowing each and every month changed everything for me.

I began to live with a deep understanding of my cycle...I aligned my life with its four phases, harnessing the superpowers each offered, learning to tend to my changing needs, and work to mitigate some of the challenges they could bring up.

This felt like the antidote to the burn out cycle I'd been in. Gone were the days of pushing, pushing, pushing... I know understood how to honour my body's needs and work with my natural energy levels, while still creating and accomplishing amazing things.

And now, a word from our sponsors. Which is, well ...it's me! Hello again!

If you're here listening to this I believe it's because you want to be that parent who stays grounded and centered through all of the emotional storms your child experiences. You yearn deeply to create a beautiful, unconditionally loving family life.

But you're being pulled in so many directions, your to-do list has been neverending for so long, and there never seems to be a chance to meaningfully recharge. You're understandably burnt out and holding a firm, loving boundary turns into yelling more often than you'd like to admit. Creating those moments of delight and wonder feel like another nagging thing on your to-do list, rather than a true source of joy and connection.

I've been there and want to reassure you: it doesn't have to be like this.

You're hearing in this episode how I ran head first into burn out (again!) as a new parent. I was so damn tired all the time. I was even hallucinating. It was a bad scene.

My understanding of the menstrual cycle helped me create a sustainable rhythm in our family life and develop a new parenting paradigm that supports parents to live in alignment with their unique flow. Enter: The Cyclic Parenting Framework. Our menstrual cycles are naturally regenerative and can guide us to lives based on ease, joy, connection, and spaciousness.

The Cyclic Parenting Framework acts as a compass, helping you find your unique path to a totally different way of living and parenting.

It took years of experimentation and training to find the right combination of ingredients to build a family life that's supportive, nourishing, and has space for me to be ME...not some cookie cutter version of the mothers I was seeing on Instagram.

Because this is a framework, not a one-size-fits-all solution. The practices and principles adapt to your unique values and circumstances.

I want to save you the years of frustration I went through. So I created The Cyclic Parenting Immersion.

In this affordable group coaching program, I'm teaching you everything I know. And when you work with me, you've got me in your back pocket. I'm there to share encouragement, accountability, support, and answer all of your questions. You'll have access to my magical bags of cyclic tips and tricks and be part of a tight-knit community of likeminded parents doing this work together.

I know we want to get back to this episode so be sure to write down this URL:

sarahstarrs.com/groupcoaching

Head there to get all of the details. Let's work together so that you can move out of the burn out cycle, into a life of flow and ease, once and for all.

But once my son was born, everything I learned about my cycle felt like it didn't quite fit anymore. Common advice in the menstrual cycle awareness world is to take some time off during your bleed to really fully rest. How was that remotely possible when I couldn't remember the last time I'd had a full night's sleep? How could I possibly honour the changing needs I experienced throughout my cycle, when it was rare to even go pee or eat a full meal before needing to meet my baby's needs again?

I was frustrated that parents seemed to be left out of this conversation. I mean, procreation is the ultimate goal of the cycle, from a biological perspective at least, surely this work should apply to us too, right?

Experiencing the intense burn out and consistent feelings of being unwell, I knew I needed a way to approach parenting with my needs at its centre while still maintaining a respectful, joyful, peaceful relationship with my son.

Enter months of experimentation in applying Menstrual Cycle Awareness to the realities of family and a full year of training, becoming an accredited Cycle Coach with Cycle Coach School. Through a lot of research, trial and error, and playful experimentation... The Cyclic Parenting Framework was born.

Modern parenting is leading to burn out and exhaustion. We're expected to do it all and it's just not possible. I believe in the regenerative powers of the menstrual cycle to create vitality, connection, self-compassion, fulfillment, and joy. When we are operating from this place we strongly understand our own needs and what we have to offer the world so that we can parent from a place that feels grounded and centered.

Menstrual cycle awareness has the ability to transform every aspect of our lives (because it's already impacting every aspect of our lives, whether we're aware of it or not).

I believe Menstrual Cycle Awareness is an incredibly powerful practice that has positive ripple effects. Here are a few benefits we can share with our families:

When my son was a baby I used to say that we lived many, many lifetimes within one year. He was changing and growing so quickly that our family dynamics, rituals, routines, rhythms all had to change quickly to keep up. It was quite a creative feat, really. And it still is, although the change isn't quite so rapid.

Menstrual cycle awareness gives us really important intel on what is and isn't working in our lives, as well as intuitive wisdom about what changes might be helpful. Oftentimes there will be something that was really working for our family, like giving my son a bath before bed. And as my son grows and we all evolve as a family, it's not really working anymore. But within the fullness of daily life, we don't necessarily reflect on this straight away and make a change. It's with the clarity and fierceness of my premenstruum that I just can't take it anymore. So many positive shifts and beautiful new family rhythms have come out of this life editing, premenstrual energy.

We model the importance of rest, self-reflection, and our own creative power to our children when we live in alignment with our cycles.

It's become a cliché that we can only give from the overflow but through menstrual cycle awareness we really do have the opportunity to stay in tune with our own needs and be consistently responsive to them so that we have more to give ourselves and our families.

Most of the time, there's no "right" answer in parenting. Whether it's around food or education or boundaries or anything else that comes up in family life, we need to be deeply in tune with ourselves and our partners, if we have them, and our children in order to sense what will work best for our families, in this season of life. Menstrual cycle awareness tunes us into that inner knowing in a very accessible way.

There is so much about the future that is uncertain. I'll admit that wondering about the world my son will face is something that keeps me up at night. Learning to tune into the natural rhythms of the body and the planet, listen to our body's wisdom, and adapt to the changing inner and outer landscape can only serve them well to face whatever the world looks like as they grow.

Normalising periods within our homes through how we talk about our periods, being open about buying and storing period products, and not hiding or shaming our blood can be incredibly healing and also helps avoid passing on menstrual stigma.

With Menstrual Cycle Awareness as its foundation, The Cyclic Parenting Framework relies on the pillars of seasonal living, family rhythms, self-care, inner work, and community to honour our cycles and seasons in all their forms.

I work with parents who have periods and are feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, and like there's never enough time. Through 1:1 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, we're going to be diving deep into each of these pillars and how you can adapt them to your unique family life in order to feel good, to increase your energy, and to really create the life that feels right for you.

We'll be alternating solo episodes with me, where I'll be sharing all kinds of cyclic wisdom and easy to implement practices, with interviews where I'll be speaking to guest experts in a whole range of areas so that we can really take a holistic approach to creating lives we love.

If you're looking for a place to get started with all of this, head to my website SarahStarrs.com. You can download my free ebook, *Cyclic Parenting 101*, and begin implementing the foundational practice that will give you the information you need to finally have more time for yourself and focus on the things that matter most to you.

I'd love to know if you resonate with any part of my journey. Please send me an e-mail at hello@sarahstarrs.com ...I'd love to hear from you.