



Your Body's Natural Course Correction

Written by CRISMARIE CAMPBELL

The scene is a business boardroom. I'm in front presenting to a business audience when all of a sudden, rising from the depths of my body, comes a wave of intense heat like a boiling hot inferno. It takes over my entire body, sweat immediately glistens the outer layer of my skin.

I quickly, and as nonchalantly as I can, take off my jacket and pick up my water and take a drink. I walk around a bit to get some air moving around my skin, hoping no one notices. Thank goodness Susan is there. She jumps in to take over as I'm preoccupied and wondering what is happening to my body!

Lo and behold, I'm having a hot flash. Ever had one? If not, and you're a woman, you likely will at some point.

Back when I worked for a corporation, the VP of HR would have hot flashes in the middle of business meetings. I would think, "Wow, Thank God that's not me!" Of course, I didn't say a word. No one did. You just didn't talk about our "female issues" in business whether it was premenstrual symptoms or hot flashes.

As women, we tend to view our monthly cycles and hormone changes as a problem. What if it's your greatest gift? It's time we stop pretending we're like men. Instead, we should start honoring and talking about who we are and what's happening.

Whether it's your monthly cycle, or your greater transition from menstruating to perimenopause to menopause, what's happening is a normal and natural part of who you are and how you operate.

Opportunity for Course Correction

I once heard Christiane Northrup, author of *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*, speak about women's cycles and menopause. It really clicked with me.

She said that each month, your body gives you two weeks before your period to review your life and to feel and notice where you're out of alignment with your heart. For those two weeks, it's like the water is let out of the pond and you're able to see all the jagged rocks that you're not happy with, which is why you're often more emotional before your period.

Then the next two weeks, during and after your period, you have the opportunity to take action and make changes that will bring you back into alignment. If you ignore these signals month after month, when you get to menopause you'll be like an erupting volcano. You won't be able to ignore what you want and the changes that occur may explode your life.

Most of us have considered our period and related issues as a problem, but imagine if our society honored the wisdom of our cycles. I've heard in some native communities when the women are menstruating they can't be around the men ... *because they're too powerful*. Wow. What a different way to look at hormonal changes!

No matter if you're having regular periods, skipping periods, or are in full menopause, your emotions are there for some good reason. Rather than making them wrong, imagine that your body is giving you an opportunity for course correction in your life. I want to help you honor and work *with* your body, emotions and hormones through these monthly or evolutionary changes so you can access its gift. Here are some ways to make changes:

One: Honor Your Dreams

When I first start coaching a client, I begin by helping her identify where she's unhappy in her life. Then we discover what she'd really want, such as: going back to school, starting her own business, staying home to have kids, attending a workshop, or ending a relationship.

Almost always, the very next thing that pops out of her mouth is, "I can't do that!" I ask, "Why not?" What follows is usually one of the three big dream killers:

- I don't have enough time.
- I don't have enough money.
- My partner will be upset with me.

Time, money and the need for approval are the three unconscious ways of stalling, stopping or killing your dreams.

I see so many women get clarity about their dreams, but then fall victim to one of these limiting beliefs

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and, resigned, shove those dreams back into the closet as they climb back on the hamster wheel of life.

If you're coaching with me, I won't let that happen to you!

I work with you to break free of these dream killers so you can make the changes that will help you fall in love with your life again. There's no need to wait until you get to menopause to course correct your life. Your feelings are telling you something. When will you listen?

Two: Trust Your Body

So many people search for the next magic pill that will solve their problems, be it weight loss or physical problems, relationship issues or career challenges. It's so easy to fall into the trap that someone outside yourself has the answer and knows best.

Sure, experts are helpful, but even if you're working with one, check in with your own body to see if the solution fits for you. We each have different bodies and sensitivities. What works for one woman may not work for you even if you're best friends or related.

As part of navigating course correction I always help my clients discover and connect to her own body compass. Too often people make decisions using their head, focusing on the "shoulds." Instead, your body compass is your inner gauge that tells you what's best and right for you and what isn't. Your body lets you know what fits for you by how it feels.

We treat our mind like it's our CEO. It's not. Our mind is a good manager and helps us implement our plans. Our soul is our true CEO, and how we access our soul's inner wisdom is through our bodies and emotions. Your body compass helps you do just that.

When you use your body compass to start making decisions, your work and your life turn around. You feel so much better because your decisions are aligned with your heart, for example signing up for that dance class you always wanted to take, getting a pedicure or going to bed an hour earlier.

Three: Look at and Adjust Your Diet

What we eat affects our bodies, especially in our 40's when our bodies begin fluctuating in hormone production, which causes a whole host of symptoms: insomnia, fatigue, weight gain, and eventually hot flashes. What may make these natural changes worse and confounds your ability to accurately read your body compass and trust what your body is telling you—is your diet.

In Sara Gottfried's book, *The Hormone Cure*, she talks about a host of foods that upset our hormones. The top three are: red meat, alcohol and sugar. I know, all foods I adore!

Red meat is a problem because of all the added hormones which, when ingested, amplifies our own hormones, making symptoms worse. She suggests shifting to organic chicken or wild caught fish for a period of three weeks. Then if you do want red meat, make it organic.

I've discovered that as I age that a certain type of alcohol, which for me is red wine, makes sleeping soundly an issue. Today, I'm aware if I drink too much of *any* wine I get more intense hot flashes at night.

The third food is sugar, which I'm addicted to. Apparently, no matter what I read, sugar is bad whether you're dealing with cancer or simply hormone changes. She suggests eliminating sugar or going to low sugar options.

Now, cutting these foods out "for good" doesn't work for me. It creates a scarcity reaction, meaning I'll be good, then feel deprived, and eventually binge. Instead, what I suggest you do is think in terms of choice and trade-offs. Knowing the impact to your sleep, do you still want to have a glass of wine with your gal pals? Sometimes it's yes. Other times no. Either way you're in charge.

Summary

Your body, your hormones and your emotions are not the enemy. In fact, they're always trying to point you in the right direction. Are you listening? Always trust your own inner sense of what's right for you even if some expert is giving you conflicting advice. You are the only one who can tell what's right for you. You're in charge.

As women, our body, emotions, and yes hormones are here to give us loud ongoing feedback on whether or not we're going in the right direction both at work and at home. You can listen now or listen later. I sure hope you learn to listen this month.

If you're struggling feel free to reach out to me, CrisMarie, and we'll see if we can't help you access your inner wisdom and start feeling better.



CrisMarie Campbell and Susan Clarke are Life Coaches and Business Consultants. They work with professional women, leaders and teams and couples in business. Their focus is on helping you access your Mojo to transform your life, relationship and business! Check out their programs *FIND YOUR MOJO*, *BUILD YOUR MOJO* and *IGNITE YOUR RELATIONSHIP MOJO* at www.thriveinc.com/programs. Watch their *TEDx Talk: Conflict – Use It, Don't Defuse It!* on YouTube. Contact them to coach with you, consult with your business or speak at your next event at thrive@thriveinc.com or 406.730.2710.



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