SESSION TRANSCRIPT · THE MISSING PIECES OF PERIMENOPAUSE

You're Not Being Dramatic: How to Have Your Own Back and Get the Answers You Need in Perimenopause

with Melissa Pearson · Day 5, Friday, October 30 · The Polite One

Hi, I'm Melissa. Maybe this sounds familiar. You're lying awake again at 3 a.m. You walk into a room and you forget why you're even there. Your body is doing things that it's never done before. And when you mention it, someone tells you, oh, it's just stress or it's just a part of getting older, so you stop mentioning it. And somewhere along the way, you start to wonder. Am I overreacting?

Well, I want you to know that you aren't. You're not overreacting. You're not being dramatic. What you're feeling is real, and it deserves to be taken seriously by the people around you. And most of all, by you. I know this place because I've lived it for years. I was there for anybody who needed anything, anybody except me. I struggled with one health issue after another for most of my life, and then perimenopause showed up and it felt like adding insult to injury.

And that is when I decided I was done downplaying what is happening to me in my body. In all honesty, though, I didn't fully believe that I could turn things around, but I held on to the belief that it was possible for me until I built the belief that it really was. Today, at 51 years old, I have released 156 pounds naturally, I have improved or eliminated many of the health issues I struggled with for years, including my perimenopause symptoms. The majority of them anyway, and I feel better than I have in years. And I tell you this not to impress you, but to impress upon you what is possible. It all started the day that I decided that I was worth getting answers for, and I chose to believe what was possible.

So if you've been the polite one, the one who doesn't want to make a fuss, the one who quietly slid to the bottom of her own to do list. The one who's suffering in silence. Today we are going to change that.

Before I dive in, I want to be clear about who I am. My name is Melissa Pearson. I'm a mindset and belief coach, not a doctor. And nothing I share here today replaces the advice from your own healthcare provider. I'm here to help you believe in yourself enough to speak up so you get the answers that you need.

In the next 15 minutes, I'm going to walk you through three things. Why so many of us stop trusting ourselves, how to become the CEO of your health, and how to ask for what you need at the doctor's office, at work, and at home. So, I would like you to think about the last time that something felt off in your body. What did you tell yourself? It's probably nothing. Everyone goes through this. I just need to be stronger. Suck it up.

I call that thought junk. It's the stuff our brains tell us that sounds really true, because we've heard it so often, maybe our whole lives. But it very rarely is true. And it's what keeps us stuck. And so many of us

were raised to be strong, to just handle it, to do everything, and usually do it all on our own. And somewhere along the way, we've decided that pushing through is like something to be proud of.

But here's what I had to learn the hard way. There's no badge of honor for making things harder on yourself. And getting help isn't a want. It's a need. A need that we deserve.

And here's something else. If these things that you're experiencing currently were nothing, they wouldn't be happening. Hot flashes. Sleep gone sideways. Brain fog so thick that you lose your words mid-sentence. And then there's the ones that nobody warns you about.

Women notice very different things, like itchy ears or frozen shoulder, and never think to compare them or connect them to perimenopause. Those aren't things you've always had. New is new, and new deserves to be looked at.

Now, I want you to know, too, that common doesn't mean normal, and it definitely doesn't mean that you have to put up with it. What you're feeling is real. So here's another question that I want you to sit with.

Is what you're feeling really unfixable, or are you buying into the narrative that perimenopause is just hard, impossible, something that you have to suffer through and just the worst time of life? If you're thinking that, I want to encourage you to look at your thoughts and beliefs around that, because that is not true. There is a way through.

Now, here's the first thing I'm going to offer you to try. The next time that that voice says it's probably nothing, I want you to ask yourself this question. Is that really true or is it just familiar? And if you think it's true, what evidence do you have to confirm it? Most of the time, there isn't any. It's just the same old story that we've been telling ourselves for years. And if that one doesn't work for you, then I want you to try this.

If someone important to you, let's just say your daughter, your sister, your best friend, your mom came to you with these exact symptoms. What would you tell them? You'd likely never tell them to suck it up. You'd likely tell them to get it checked, and you'd probably even drive them there yourself.

So I ask you this. Why do they deserve answers, and you don't? Now, when we ran our Midlife Momentum workshop this fall, I watched a room full of women realize that they weren't alone and that they had been putting themselves last for years. For some, it was pressure from the people around them. For others, being needed had become a part of who they were. There was a whole host of reasons, but either way, the sense of obligation for them was so strong that they'd never given themselves permission to be a priority. You can give yourself that permission today. You matter enough to take this seriously.

And I want you to know that. Now, let me paint you a picture that you might know. You finally booked the appointment. You've waited weeks to get in. You sit down and the doctor turns to you and says, so what brings you in today? And your mind goes blank. The brain fog kicks into overdrive. You've got about ten minutes.

And there's a list of things you meant to say, but you can't remember half of them. The pressure's on. So maybe you mention one thing. The least important one. And you downplay it because you know you're pressed for time, and then you walk out with no real answers. And of course, your brain does what brains do. It decides: see, this doesn't work. It's not worth it.

You shouldn't have even gone. That is not true. This process can work. We just weren't set up to make it work for us.

And here's what changed everything for me. I stopped walking in as the patient, waiting to be told what was wrong with me, and I started walking in as the CEO of my health. And I want you to think for a minute how a CEO works. She doesn't know everything. She doesn't have to. She has advisors, people with expertise that she can consult. And she's the one who makes the decision. She's the one who knows the whole picture.

So your doctor is an advisor. Your pharmacist, a menopause clinic, a naturopath, a dietitian: all advisors. And you are the CEO of your health. And you get to choose who's on your team.

I think we forget that a lot of times. And here's something that I've come to realize too. Not every advisor is right for every question. Many family doctors have very little training in perimenopause. That's not a failing on their part. It's just not their specialty. Sometimes your family doctor isn't the one with the answers. Sometimes they're just the one who gets you the referral to the person who actually has them.

And I want you to know that if you keep leaving offices being told it's just stress or it's part of getting older, that is information too. And you are allowed to find a different advisor any time you feel you need to. And if you've ever felt brushed off in the room, which I think a lot of us have, you can certainly ask, can you help me understand why we wouldn't look into this? I really like that question because I find it keeps the conversation open. It shows how serious you are, and it does usually garner a response.

So you're probably thinking, how do I walk in as a CEO? Well, you don't need a suit or anything like that. It's two simple things. First, you write it down before you go. We get prepared. CEOs are prepared people. When they have a meeting or what have you, they get prepared.

So we write down our symptoms. Every symptom you've noticed when it started, how often it happens and how it's affecting your life. When it's on paper, you can't talk yourself out of it and brain fog can't steal it from you.

The second thing you do is you lead with what matters most. Pick your top concerns and say the biggest one first. Not the easiest one. The biggest one. The one that is impacting you the most.

Now, these days I do my own research before I even go in, and I bring my notes. I ask much better questions, and as a result, I get better answers the majority of the time. And here's the thing. I know my body better than anyone, and you know yours too. And if something is wrong, I'm going to keep going until I get to the bottom of it. And so should you.

Now, having your own back doesn't stop at the doctor's office. You can and should advocate for yourself anywhere that you need to. When you're at work and you're already stretched thin and somebody hands

you one more thing and you say yes, because that's what you've always done. Or if you're at home, you're completely exhausted, running on empty, and you still say, I'm fine and make supper for everyone.

For a lot of us, asking for help feels harder than doing it ourselves. Some of it is people-pleasing tendencies. Some of it is conditioning and just things that we've always done, just the way we've always done it. But underneath it, for many of us, is a belief that we picked up a long time ago. And it's that we're only worthy when we're doing things for someone else. And I want you to know this. Those are learned patterns, and anything learned can be unlearned. That's the great news about this.

And your worth isn't something that you earn. It's already yours. And choosing yourself is not selfish.

So here's how we start. We just say it. No long explanation. No apology. Most of us, and I've been guilty of this too in the past, overexplain because we think we need to justify it. You don't. Hear me when I say that.

Now, when people ask me for things, they ask me for things all the time. And I just say, "Thanks for the ask, but I don't have capacity for that right now." That's it. Or my personal favorite: "Let me check my schedule and get back to you." What that does is buy you time to go back, think about whether you really want to do it, and then respond from a better place.

Now, I know some of you are thinking that sounds great, Melissa, but I just can't. I get it. For years, saying no was not easy for me either, and asking for help felt impossible. It still feels a little bit uncomfortable to me sometimes, I'm not going to lie, but I have gotten so much better. And I want you to do this. I want you to look at the "I can't" for a second, because here's where our brains get really tricky.

Usually the "I can't" isn't really "I can't." It's "I'm afraid." Hear me out. You're afraid of being a burden. You're afraid someone will be upset with you. You're afraid of what it means about you if you need help.

So I want you to ask yourself the same question we talked about earlier Is "I can't" really true? Or is it just familiar? Or is it fear?

And remember what I told you at the beginning. I didn't believe that I could turn my health around either. But what I did is I just held on to the possibility until I had enough proof to believe it. And you can do the same thing here.

You don't have to believe that you can do this yet. You don't have to believe that you can say no all the time. It's a process that you're going to work through. I just want you to believe that it's possible. And then pick one small ask this week. Write a sentence down. Say it or text it if that feels easier. And what happens is that one small ask is going to become your proof.

And after every one that you do, it gets a little easier. You start to build that muscle. And if you keep carrying it all on your own, nothing is going to change. Trust me when I tell you this. I did this for years, and I did not do myself any favors by doing it. And the other thing is that you were never meant to carry all of this by yourself.

Now, will everybody respond the way you hope? No, not always. And that's okay.

Because here's something I say a lot. It's a branded statement for me now. I even got a shirt made. And it's that you can't control the humans. You can only control whether you ask. And every time you do, you are teaching the people around you and yourself that your needs matter to you. And that is so important.

So I want to leave you with this. Think about the thing that you've been ignoring, the symptom you've been brushing off, the appointments you've been putting off, the help you keep not asking for, the things you keep writing off as just a part of perimenopause, or just the way life is now. Those things deserve your attention. You deserve your attention. You matter, and not just when you're useful to everyone else. You matter all on your own.

Now, if you've spoken up before and nobody listened, like a doctor, a friend, or someone in your own family, I want you to hear this. Just because someone doesn't acknowledge what you're experiencing doesn't mean it isn't real. Think of it like walking down a hallway full of doors. Some are locked. Some are open. If you tried a door and it was locked, that doesn't mean that every door is locked. It just means that the door you tried was locked. Keep opening doors until you find the ones that are open.

They're there. I promise you. Now, I know some of you are thinking this sounds exhausting or I don't have time for that. I hear you, but I'm going to challenge you. Because, you know what's more exhausting is spending months, maybe years feeling awful when you don't have to. And you know what really takes your time is getting through every day on empty. Missing out on your own life because you don't feel well enough to enjoy it. Every door that you try gets you closer to feeling like yourself again.

And that time is so worth it. And so are you. And when you start making yourself a priority, your life gets so much better. You get your energy back. You sleep better. You start to feel like your old self again. You stop second-guessing what your body is telling you and you start trusting yourself more. And then something else happens.

It ripples out into other areas. You have more patience. You're more present with the people that you love. And the women watching you, your daughters, friends, sisters, they learn that taking care of themselves is allowed too. But it starts with you.

And here's the piece that I want you to take with you the most. Belief. Your belief is the driver of all things.

Now, this week you're going to hear from so many incredible people with so many tools that can help you. But the information alone won't change anything if part of you doesn't believe that you're worth the effort, or believe that you can change. So when you feel stuck, stalled, or spinning, don't just look for the next answer out there. Look at what you believe first. And again ask yourself, is that actually true or just familiar? That's where the way forward starts.

So to help you take that first step, I made you a free planner called CEO of Your Health: Your Perimenopause Advisor Planner. It's going to help you track what you're noticing, build your team of advisors, and walk into your next appointment ready as the CEO. You're going to find that on the session page.

And before I let you go, I want you to remember this. You're not being dramatic. You never were. But this next part is up to you. And you get to decide to make yourself a priority. Nothing changes until you decide it will. And I want you to know that you are far more capable than you ever believe. And I want you to have your own back, starting today.

Thank you so much. This has been an absolute pleasure. I have all the belief in you. Take great care.