SESSION TRANSCRIPT · THE MISSING PIECES OF PERIMENOPAUSE

Why Perimenopause Can Make You Resent Your Partner

with Michaela Bosquet Lambert · Day 3 · Wednesday, October 28 · The Difficult One

A few years into perimenopause, I found myself resenting the man with whom I had built the healthiest, most beautiful relationship of my life. I was exhausted. I was anxious. I was unable to work, and increasingly, I was unable to have penetrative sex. I barely recognised myself, and I began to wonder what was happening to us. Was perimenopause creating the resentment? Was it intensifying it? Or was it making something in the relationship harder to ignore?

I'm speaking from my lived experience and my work with relationship patterns, and I want to show you why resentment really deserves your attention, but also why its presence alone can't tell you what's wrong with your relationship.

I'm going to start by taking you back to when I was widowed at 37. I had been in a long-term relationship since the age of 22, and I'd become a mother quite young as well. I spent a year or so grieving, and then I spent three years deeply rediscovering myself. After that bereavement, I felt alive again. I felt sexually at my peak. And it was around that time, at the age of 42, that I met Steve.

He made me feel so seen, safe, and deeply loved. We connected emotionally, physically, and intellectually. It really was the healthiest and most mutual relationship I had ever experienced. We married three years later, and we created a blended household with my sons and his daughters.

This really matters, because for me, the resentment I felt didn't begin inside a relationship that had always felt unequal. Steve and I had already built a very strong, mutual foundation.

About a year after we were married, perimenopause and the pandemic arrived at roughly the same time. I was still teaching full time, alongside building up my coaching business on the side. Initially I was really grateful for the lockdown, because it meant I could spend more time with Steve, and I also had an opportunity to rest. But it made the return to school later that year even more stressful. My blood pressure became dangerously high, and I ended up taking extended sick leave to focus on my health and my recovery, and also to care for my very vulnerable father. That sick leave eventually became retirement from teaching.

Because it was the pandemic, I was really reluctant to seek any kind of medical help for the symptoms I was feeling, and those symptoms just intensified. The insomnia, the mood changes, the hot flushes, very heavy periods. I gained so much weight. I had severe vaginal dryness and atrophy, and all of that caused really painful sex. Three to four years earlier, I had felt like I was at my sexual peak. Now I barely recognised my body or my life.

I was dealing with more than a collection of symptoms. I was grieving my health. I was grieving my career, my sexuality, and the version of myself I had known. So I resented what was happening to my body and my life, and some of that resentment inevitably became directed towards Steve.

I expected him to take on much more while we were both at home, and I didn't explain what I needed very clearly. Sometimes I expected him to understand without being told. And I worried that my change in libido meant I'd stopped being attracted to him. I couldn't easily separate the physical symptoms, the grief and the lost identity, the exhaustion and the anxiety, from what was actually happening between us.

My resentment was real, but I didn't yet know what it was telling me. Was it coming from what was inside me, or from what was happening between us? Or was it coming from both?

But here's the really important thing. I want you to understand what Steve's response to all of this resentment showed me. Throughout all of it, Steve continued to express his love and his attraction for me. What I really appreciated was that, through all of his support, he never treated my changing body as a problem I had to solve. Our relationship evolved with us.

What told me most about my relationship wasn't the fact that I felt resentful. It was how Steve responded when my changing needs and limitations became impossible to hide. He didn't require me to remain the woman I'd been when we met. He simply adapted with me.

Now, my story is just one version of what can happen. In my work with women and my conversations with them, I see three broad ways perimenopause can play out inside a relationship.

First, it can create a new strain within a relationship that is fundamentally mutual. This can be down to exhaustion, anxiety, and disrupted sleep, which can affect how both people relate. It could be down to physical discomfort and changing desire, which alter sexual intimacy. The woman is going to need much more rest and much more practical support, and both partners may feel rejected or confused, which can cause anxiety too. The relationship has to adjust to this new reality. So the question is whether both partners can talk honestly and adapt together. This was largely what happened between Steve and me. The relationship itself was strong, but

the circumstances in which we were learning to relate had completely and dramatically changed.

The second way is that perimenopause can intensify pre-existing strains on the relationship. Those existing difficulties might be around responsibility in the home, emotional availability, or unequal decision-making. The woman might previously have had the capacity to manage around them. But her reduced capacity during perimenopause can make those fault lines much harder to avoid, so the resentment grows stronger. The relationship might still become more mutual if both people are willing to face up to the situation. The point I'm making in this scenario is that perimenopause doesn't necessarily create the fault line, but it can place much more pressure on it.

And then we come to the third scenario. She might have spent years organising, initiating, and anticipating everybody's needs, managing her partner's emotions, smoothing over conflict, explaining away what troubles her, and suppressing her own needs to keep the relationship functional. Then perimenopause comes along and reduces her capacity to keep going in that manner. She can't regulate everyone else. Her own needs become much harder to suppress, and she stops automatically filling every gap. Her partner may resent the loss of her labour, and she discovers whether he's going to step forward, or whether he's just going to expect her to carry the relationship. When her capacity disappears, the arrangement underneath the relationship becomes so much easier to see.

So the presence of resentment alone doesn't tell you which of these three situations you are living. One of the clearest sources of information is what happens when your changed capacity, your changed needs, and your limits become visible. Does your partner become resentful that you can no longer carry the same load? Or do they recognise what's happening and adapt with you?

Relational sovereignty means taking your own feelings seriously without assuming they tell the whole story. It means looking objectively at the facts, observing your partner's reaction, and asking: can this relationship meet us where we are?

Resentment deserves to be understood rather than written off as hormones. But it's not an automatic verdict on the relationship. Perimenopause may remove your ability to keep participating in the same way.

So if you're feeling resentful towards your partner, here are the three questions I would invite you to consider.

What have I been carrying or compensating for, and has it become harder to sustain?

What happens when I make my needs, my limits, and my changing capacity visible to my partner?

And does my partner respond with care, responsibility, and a willingness to adapt? Or am I still expected to keep this relationship going alone?

These questions are not designed to push you towards staying or leaving. They're designed to help you see what's actually happening before you decide what it means. Mutuality doesn't mean two people never struggle or never resent each other. It means neither person is left to face reality, or carry the relationship, alone.

If this conversation has left you wondering how you respond when your relationship feels strained or unequal, I have created a free Perimenopause Relationship Clarity Bundle. It includes the Love Loop Decoder, which helps you recognise whether you tend to manage, carry, explain, or withdraw inside a relationship. It also contains the Savvy Lens, which helps you look clearly at one situation in your own relationship.

And if you have the VIP pass, you'll also receive my Savvy Love Starter Kit. It takes this work further with the extended Love Loop Decoder, some private audios, an integration guide, and a 1:1 Clarity Session with me to help you apply what you discover to your own relationship.

Whatever you discover, the aim is not to tell you what to do. It's to help you see clearly, trust yourself, and recognise whether you are facing reality together. Thank you.
