SESSION TRANSCRIPT · THE MISSING PIECES OF PERIMENOPAUSE

Your Body Is Not Betraying You: How to Listen to the Clues During Perimenopause

with Nadia Hines · Day 5 · Friday, October 30 · The Polite One

Hello, love. I'm Nadia, the founder of Wellbeing with Nadia. I'm a holistic health coach and an energetic support practitioner, and I work with women who are tired of guessing what their body needs, especially when they're looking after everyone else and finding it hard to feel like themselves.

I'm also a hashtag boy mom, a plant-based foodie, and I love reformer Pilates. And if you're into astrology, I'm a Taurus sun and a Libra rising. So yes, I can appreciate a little bit of comfort and things that look pretty. But something else I care about deeply is helping women trust themselves enough to ask questions and have a voice in their own care. Something I like to call medical sovereignty.

So picture this. Have you ever had one of those days where you think, why does everything feel harder than it used to? You're doing the things. You're showing up. You're looking after everyone. But underneath all of it, something just feels different. Maybe you're lying awake when you deeply want to sleep. Maybe your patience feels a little shorter. Maybe you walk into a room and completely forget why you went in there in the first place.

And then comes that little voice: what's wrong with me?

That's the conversation I want to gently interrupt today. Because feeling different doesn't make you difficult. Needing support doesn't make you weak. And a changing body doesn't make you a woman who has somehow failed to take care of herself.

Today we're talking about how to notice what you're experiencing without it immediately turning into a criticism of yourself. How to describe what's changing, how to make room for your own experience, and how to bring that information into the conversations where you need support.

What I'm sharing today is education and reflection, rather than medical advice or a way to diagnose what's happening. Your own observations can be useful alongside appropriate health care. They don't have to compete with each other in any way. And you don't need a notebook full of perfect answers to be part of the conversation. You can simply listen and see what feels familiar.

So, what feels different for you?

Perimenopause is the transition leading up to menopause, and during that time, many women experience very different changes in their periods, sleep, mood, and other aspects of how they feel. Experiences vary. Someone else's story may sound very different from yours, and that's why I want to make space for the question: what has changed for me?

We can spend so much time comparing ourselves with other people that we miss the difference between our own usual experience and what's happening now. You might hear somebody talking about hot flashes and think, well, that's not what I've noticed. Perhaps your own concern is sleep, or feeling more irritable, or having a harder time concentrating. Those experiences deserve a conversation as well, not just the hot flashes.

It's also important to remember that a symptom doesn't tell us its cause all by itself. We can't assume every new experience is perimenopause. There may be other explanations that need to be considered with a health care professional, and you don't have to figure it all out on your own. Your part can begin with simply saying, this is different for me, and I want to understand it.

Notice how different that feels from "I'm just coping." One opens a conversation. The other can shut the conversation down before you've even had a chance to ask for help.

So how do you talk to yourself?

Let's talk about the story that gets added to the experience. There's what happened: I was awake for part of the night. And then there's what we tell ourselves: I'm going to be useless tomorrow. I can't get anything right. I should have sorted this out by now.

Or there's the experience of feeling overwhelmed when everyone needed something from me, and the story becomes: I'm a terrible mom. Everyone else manages. Why am I so sensitive?

That second layer can be so heavy. You're already having a difficult moment, and now you're also being asked to defend your character to yourself.

What if we gave ourselves a little more room than that? Instead of "I'm impossible to be around," perhaps the more accurate sentence is, "I've been feeling more irritable lately, and I'd like support understanding why." Instead of "I'm lazy," perhaps it's, "My energy feels different from usual, and it's affecting my day."

That doesn't make the concern disappear. But it does give you something clearer to work with. You can describe an experience, you can ask questions about it, and you can explain its impact. It's much harder to get useful support for the sentence "I'm just a mess." And love, you deserve better language than that for yourself.

Your body cues. When I use the phrase "body cues," I mean the things you can actually notice about your experience. Perhaps it's a change in sleep, a change in how you feel during the day, something that keeps coming up, something that feels different from your usual. I'm not suggesting that every sensation has a hidden message, or that you can work out a medical explanation by intuition on its own. Sometimes you don't know why something is happening, and that's allowed.

Think about how you might describe a problem to somebody who genuinely wants to help. "I haven't felt like myself" is real and valid. Then, if you can, you might add a little more detail. I'm finding it harder to fall asleep. Or, I'm waking up tired even though I've had time in bed. Or, I'm feeling overwhelmed by things I used to be able to manage. This has been affecting my work, or my relationships. Or, I'm not enjoying my days as much as I used to.

You're giving your experience a shape that can make it easier to talk about, whether you're talking with a partner, a friend, or a health care professional. You don't need to exaggerate to be taken seriously. You don't need to minimize it either. You can just say what is true for you.

So let's make this personal for a moment. You don't need to close your eyes or do anything special. Don't worry, I'm not going to ask you to do that. I just want you to consider the question: what have I been noticing lately that I keep brushing aside?

That's it. Maybe something comes to mind straight away. Maybe it's something you've said out loud and then immediately followed with, "but it's probably nothing." Maybe it's something you haven't said, because you feel like you should just be able to deal with it, and everybody else just deals with it. Or maybe nothing comes to mind right now. That's fine. There's no right answer here.

Now consider another question: how would I describe that experience without being unkind to myself?

That might sound like, I'm tired, and I've been struggling. Or, I need more support than I'm getting. Or simply, something feels different, and I'd like to ask more about it.

You don't have to turn this into some big assignment. The point is to hear your own experience without immediately arguing with it. Sometimes we're very quick to offer compassion to a friend and very slow to allow it for ourselves. If someone you loved told you what she'd been noticing, would you tell her to stop being dramatic? Or would you want to understand exactly what she's been going through? Just so you know, you're allowed to have that same consideration.

Your voice in your care.

For me, self-trust includes trusting yourself enough to ask a question. Enough to say, I'm not comfortable with this. Enough to say, could you explain that again? Enough to say, what else could be contributing to this, and what are my options?

That's part of what I mean when I talk about medical sovereignty: having a voice in your care, understanding the information you're given, and being involved in the decisions about your body. It doesn't require you to have all the answers before you walk into the room. You can bring your own questions, your own uncertainty, and your notes, in case your mind goes blank when someone asks how you're feeling. That definitely happens, and it doesn't make your experience any less real.

And you don't have to wait until everything becomes unbearable to ask for support. If something is new, persistent, worrying, or affecting your everyday life, it's worth discussing with a qualified health care professional. For example, changes in bleeding deserve a conversation, especially heavy bleeding, bleeding between periods, or bleeding after menopause. Listening to your body can include getting it checked. You're allowed to take yourself seriously.

There's something else I want to say to the woman who keeps getting everything done. The fact that you're functioning doesn't tell the whole story of what it takes to get you through your day. You might still be answering emails, making dinner, helping everyone, and keeping your calendar moving. And you might also be thinking, I don't know how much longer I can keep going this way.

You don't have to earn support by reaching a breaking point. The whole point of this is not getting to the breaking point. Sometimes the most honest thing you can say is, "I'm managing, but it's taking a lot out of me." There's room for that sentence. There's room for you to be grateful for your life and still find parts of it difficult. There's room for you to love your people and still need space. There's room for you to be a capable woman whose needs are changing. You aren't required to keep proving that you can do it all before you're allowed to say what would help.

Your free journal. If this conversation has brought something up for you, I've put together a free gift called Between the Flashes: A Perimenopause Journal. It gives you space for guided reflection about what you're experiencing and how this stage of life feels for you.

You don't need to write anything beautifully in there. You don't need to fill out every single page, and you certainly don't need to turn it into another thing you're behind on. You can begin whenever a question speaks to you. Write the first, honest thing that comes to mind, without judging it or trying to make it sound perfect or better.

This journal is basically a place to reflect. It isn't a diagnostic tool, and it doesn't need to produce a perfect explanation for everything that's happening. Sometimes it's enough just to put words around something you've been carrying quietly. You'll find the link to claim your free copy alongside this presentation.

So before we finish, I want to bring us back to the title. Your body is not betraying you. That doesn't mean every change feels comfortable, and it doesn't mean symptoms should be ignored. And it doesn't mean you need to put a positive spin on a difficult experience. It means you don't have to turn what you're experiencing into evidence that something's wrong with who you are.

Your experience deserves attention. Your needs deserve a place in the conversation. And you can begin with one honest sentence: this is what I've been noticing.

That's a powerful sentence when you're starting to speak with anybody who provides you support, whether that's a health care professional, your partner, or your friend. You start the conversation with "this is what I've been noticing," and you can let that be enough to start asking for the understanding and support you need.

So thank you for spending this time with me. I really appreciate you. Take care, and until next time.