



THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALING THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

Today I did an interview on zoom, with [Vajra Ma](#), a co-contributor in the book [Foremothers of the Women's Spirituality Movement](#), edited by [Vicki Noble](#) and [Myriam Dexter](#).

Vajra is talking to some of the women who shared their stories in the book, and others, about their work and particularly about how that started in the context of Second Wave Feminism. She asked me 'if there was one thing I could recommend to women, what would that be?'

I am often asked this question and I am very clear about my answer: **heal the menstrual cycle.**

And what I mean by that is for women and men, and our culture as a whole, to deal with and heal the wounding (and re-wounding over and over) of the **dominant perspective of menstrual shame.**

In my opinion, this is one of the core issues that keeps us in the mess we are in. And healing menstrual shame forms the basis of my work, because as a midwife (now former) I saw, and continue to see, the impact menstrual shame has on a woman's relationship with her body and this affects her births, as well as, of course, her menstrual cycle and then her experience of menopause!

Recently I had the delight and honour to give a [Becoming a Woman](#) circle to six mothers and daughters to help prepare them for menstruation. The girls were 10 and 11 years old and were in the same class at school.

Their mothers, as I told the girls, were **so awesome**, for bringing them to the circle! We shared an afternoon exploring what we already know about cycles in general and seeing how the menstrual cycle is the same cycle. And then realising what that can teach us about our bodies and in the process to demystify our cyclical nature.

Before we started, one of the Mums asked me why I do this work and as a midwife (now former), what got me into it? I explained how, not long ago, this was a midwife's role in her community, that **a midwife's role was from 'womb to tomb.'**

Interesting how that has changed, quite quickly really, as childbirth has been more and more medicalised, and specialisation has taken over most aspects of our lives. And I said, as a midwife (now former) I had learned about the connection between our experience of our menstrual cycle and our menarche (first period) and how we give birth.

One of my favourite parts of the Becoming a Woman Circle is when the mothers speak. Quite early on in the circle we pass the talking bowl and the mothers answer three questions that they have had the chance to think about and prepare for:

What were you told before you started?

What have you learned from your menstrual cycle over the years?

What do you wish you were told?

And I see this very special thing happen, the girls see their mothers in the context of them as women who

have been menstruating for decades, who have learned all this **powerful stuff about their body** and the cycle and how that fits in to everything else!

I love this part so much because each mother 'has the floor', so to speak, to share her wisdom and show her daughter the reason why she brought her to the circle.

Most of the mothers had been prepared as young girls with the science lesson side of things, but not with the **transformational magic** inherent in our cycle. And this is usually the thing that say they wish they were told.

And this is the info I wish the girls to have to begin their journey of the next 40 or so years of cycling.

These mothers are shifting the paradigm, from the cross-cultural, millenniums-long menstrual taboo, to embracing the power, magic and transformation of our menstrual cycle!

In the closing circle, the questions for everyone to answer are:

How are you feeling? And how has the afternoon been for you?

The girls said words like calm, relaxed, peaceful, safe ... ahhh, how good is that! The perfect space to be in to learn and take in new ideas!

This work of preparing our daughters for menstruation and welcoming them to womanhood in conscious, honouring ways and giving them the information they need, is critical.

I know that's obvious but actually it's not what usually happens, despite it being so necessary. This is part of how we can heal and repair the mess we are in as a culture that seeks to mostly unconsciously **oppress, dominate and control the feminine**. And boys and men need this information too.

The research from the [Waratah Project](#) is soon to be released and it highlights the need for improved menstrual education and appreciation especially at work and school.

[Training Menstrual Educators](#) is another focus of mine and the next training is planned for [Amsterdam on 1-6 June](#).

I will also be offering other workshops in Europe around that time:

[Spain](#)

[Amsterdam](#)

[France](#)

Sending you love from the depths of [Samhain/Halloween](#) time in the Southern Hemisphere to [Beltane](#) in the Northern Hemisphere.

Best wishes and love,

xxx Jane Hardwicke Collings