



# WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE

## Embrace Menopause

## Tuning into our Natural Rhythm: Self Discovery Prompts for exploring energy levels

These prompts are designed to engage you with your own beliefs around your energy level and your natural rhythm. I encourage you to journal through each prompt. You can also take the idea, sit, and meditate with it. You are free to move through them at your own pace and pick and choose which prompts sound right for your own personal exploration!

### Energy Levels and Beliefs:

1. How do you feel about your energy level currently? Do you feel satisfied with it, want it to increase, feel frustrated?
2. What does your energy level say about you as a person? What does it say about you and your roles (spouse/partner, parent, employee/employer, friend, etc.)?
3. What do you desire for your energy level right now?
4. What would be different if you had more energy? What would change? What would you have the ability to do?
5. Do you feel responsible for your energy level or does it feel like your energy is affected by factors outside of your control? How do these things make you feel? What do you wish you could change?

### On Energy Reserves:

1. How do you know you are at your 'capacity' for your energy? What signals do your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual self-provide you to let you know?
2. What are the signs that you are approaching your capacity?
3. What are some things you can offer yourself that could act as a buffer before your energy is drained?

### Natural Rhythm Exploration:

1. Spend time noticing your energy levels throughout the day/week.
  - a. Consider these areas to observe your energy levels: You can start with one section at a time.
    - i. Time of day (morning, mid, evening, night)
    - ii. Work (before, during, after)
    - iii. Social (specific groups, types of activities, topics of conversation)
    - iv. Foods (meal size, types of food, time of consumption)
2. Once you have collected data around your energy levels, consider what changes you can create.
  - a. Begin with simple/small changes.
  - b. Focus on what you can control. Not the pieces out of your control.

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- i. **Example:** Let's say that interacting with your employer leads you to feeling drained. Avoiding this interaction is probably not the most practical place to start. You could begin by grounding and centering yourself before interactions. Scheduling time after interactions to journal, meditate or decompress.
3. As you explore and discover your own natural rhythm, what comes up for you? Judgements, surprises, etc.?
  - a. What does this say about you?
  - b. Does your natural rhythm align with your current roles, goals and how you want to present yourself to the world?
4. How can you support your natural rhythm and energy reserves?
  - a. What sounds good to try?

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### Thoughts on Sensation Tracking: Energy Levels

Feeling and noticing sensation can feel very subtle but have powerful effects. Oftentimes, we do not allow ourselves to feel the sensations in our bodies. Consider the idea of excitement or anxiety. There are physical cues that let you know you are feeling those emotions. But everyone is going to feel excitement and anxiety a little differently. Maybe you feel the butterflies in your stomach, maybe your hands feel tingly, maybe your legs want to bounce, maybe your throat feels tight. There is not a singular way of experiencing an emotion through sensation. Your body stores so much information for us and we are feeling all day long. We take cues on how to act and react from feeling sensation. But we often tune those sensations out. Many times, when feelings are uncomfortable, we turn to distracting ourselves so we don't notice the sensations.

What if we gave them some space? What if we allowed ourselves to feel for a few moments. We can always go back to the distraction if we need to.

When our energy is depleted, we may have the inclination we need to ignore the tired feeling and power through. We may decide that there is not enough time to feel tired, that our low energy level can be ignored. What if we gave it some space? What if we tuned in, just for a moment, and listened to what our body was saying?

Maybe your feeling of 'I don't have any energy' is easily understood. You didn't sleep, you worked too much, etc. Maybe it is happening every day and interrupting your life. Maybe it comes on and you have no idea why, but of course you don't appreciate the sudden drop in energy levels!

When we offer ourselves a moment to feel, we can tune in to what our body is trying to tell us. Maybe there is an actual need to slow down right now. Maybe you only need to slow down for an hour, or just fifteen minutes.

Try sitting with it. How do you know you are tired or have low energy? Where do you feel it in your body? Ask yourself: What does my body need right now? What sounds good? Next, how can you give in? What kind of space and restorative practice can you offer yourself?

Giving in is not giving up. You can work to find the balance between allowing yourself to feel and productivity.

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**Follow this easy step guideline to offer yourself some curiosity into what you are feeling in the moment:**

- ★ Take in a breath, notice your breathing
- ★ Notice your body
  - Sitting, standing, lying down.
  - Where are your feet?
  - What parts of your body feel supported? (notice the weight of your body on the ground, chair, couch, etc.)
- ★ Begin to check in with each body part and notice what sensation is present there
  - You can start from your feet and work your way up, or start with your head and work your way down.
  - Take a moment with each area. What do you notice?
- ★ There are no right or wrong sensations. How can you be curious about what your body is physically experiencing?
- ★ For uncomfortable sensations, can you sit with it and breathe through them?
- ★ If things feel overwhelming remember:
  - Your body is the vessel that is holding this sensation and emotion. They are not bigger or more powerful than you
- ★ If you need to shift out of the discomfort, try this:
  - Feel the weight of your body. Ground your feet on the earth and feel the connection.
  - Try the three things technique: Notice three colors you see, three sounds you hear, move three different body parts (wiggle a finger, stick out your tongue, etc.)
- ★ Allow yourself to come back to center. What understanding have you gained? How can you support yourself and your energy level right now?
  - What do you really need?

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### Shift or Give in?

### A guide to exploring your own energy levels

As we explore our own energy levels, we can face the question of 'when do I power through and when do I relax?'

Consider that working to accomplish and produce with low energy ("Powering through") can create extra exertion on your energy levels. Work through the questions below, allow curiosity to be your guide!

**This exploration is designed to guide you through a low energy moment in time, it is not intended to treat or diagnose consistent issues with low energy levels or extreme fatigue. Please seek support from your doctor or trusted practitioner to guide you through how you can alleviate chronic fatigue and low energy.**

1. When your energy levels are low, start with exploration:
  - a. How do you know they are low? How do you experience low energy physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually?
2. Do you know the cause of your low energy level?
  - a. Known or unknown? Is it something that you can avoid or change in the future?
  - b. Even if you made a mistake, or have clarity on what could have worked better to support your energy, allow yourself to stay in the present moment to navigate forward.
3. Is there a particular task you are wanting to avoid or that feels particularly draining right now?
  - a. Why do you think that is? No judgment, just curiosity!
4. Can you reassess your task list? What is actually necessary and what can wait?
5. What kind of energetic shift can you offer yourself right now?
  - a. Process through journaling
  - b. Grounding with bare feet on the ground
  - c. Splashing cold water on your face
  - d. Getting up, moving around (take a short walk, play, dance)
  - e. What else sounds good to shift the energy?
6. How does your body respond to that shift? Do you feel more energized, the same, more tired?
7. What does your body need right now?
  - a. Go with your gut! If your initial response is REST, allow yourself to rest
8. How do you restore your energy? What feels supportive?
  - a. Are you distracting/avoiding or are you offering restoration time for your energy?
  - b. How do you know the difference?

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9. When you offer yourself true rest, what happens in your body? What do you notice physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually?

**This is your information to collect and you get to decide how to utilize it. Understanding the best ways to make necessary shifts starts with self discovery. You are doing great!**

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### Fuel the body - Move the body - Restore the body for balanced energy

The menopause transition: perimenopause, menopause and postmenopause, is a time for our endocrine system to find its new balance. Hormone shifts bring on symptoms that stress the body and use up our energy reserves. This transition creates symptoms that produce a natural strain on our metabolic energy channels and energy reserves for example:

- ★ Lower self-confidence = cortisol levels rise, limiting adrenal function for energy production.
- ★ Stress eating = creates more toxins for the liver to digest, which uses more of our energy reserves.
- ★ Mood swings = high cortisol levels and further our insulin hormone imbalance.
- ★ Night sweats = interrupts our natural sleep cycle and prohibits our body from its need of rest and restoration.
- ★ And others...

Below are some specific things to keep in mind when trying to support our energy balance during this shift.

- ★ Heart & Liver Health Support
  - Cholesterol is produced by the liver and supports the making of hormones throughout the endocrine system.
    - As we age, more LDL is created than HDL in the liver.
    - LDL, when not countered by HDL can lead to clogged, plaque riddled arteries that can strain the circulatory system needed for healthy nutrient distribution and energy production.
    - Minerals support the liver and other major organs to help restore energy.
      - Enjoy: root vegetables, seed & nuts, legumes, black, green & herbal teas, Trace mineral supplements, broccoli, avocado, leafy greens, and other whole vegetables.
    - Lower the intake of dairy, fried foods, processed & red meat, sugary drinks like energy drinks, excess caffeine, to benefit the liver.
- ★ Central Nervous System Support
  - Stress, lack of sleep, weight gain, mental strain can all cause more energy consumption by the central nervous system.
  - Take time to relax consistently every day, drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, and give yourself space to rest.
  - B-vitamins support our brain and digestive system.
    - Foods like all contain complex B-vitamins.
  - It is important to balance insulin.
    - Age affects the brain's ability to process glucose readily, so it asks for more when we are not balanced, depleting our energy reserves at a quicker pace.
    - Eat small meals throughout the day, best between 6am-8pm, eat whole foods (plant-based or Mediterranean diets are great), have balanced meals consisting of protein, fat, and carbohydrates.

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### Heart & Liver Health = Healthy Brain = Balanced Energy

- ★ Avocados, Olives, Walnuts
  - omega 3 & 6
  - magnesium
  - potassium
- ★ Spinach, Tofu, Green Peas, Avocado, Brown Rice, Nutritional Yeast (yellow/ green & yellow/orange)
  - B-complex vitamins
  - dietary fiber
- ★ Mint, Carrots, Apricots
  - A & C vitamins
- ★ Broccoli, Beets, Legumes, Seeds/Nuts
  - B & C vitamins
  - calcium for nervine support
  - dietary fiber
  - nitrates for circulation
- ★ Mushrooms
  - vitamin D
  - B-complex vitamins, folate
  - magnesium
  - potassium
- ★ Green Tea, Berries, Dark Chocolate
  - antioxidants
  - flavones or phytoestrogen rich
- ★ Omegas 3 & 6 (essential fatty acids)
  - Supports circulation and reduces brain cell inflammation.
- ★ Vitamin A
  - Boost learning skills and brain plasticity.
- ★ B-complex vitamins
  - Support red blood cell production and overall brain function and metabolic process.
- ★ Vitamin C
  - Protects against cognitive decline and boosts the immune system.
- ★ Vitamin D
  - Neuro-protective, regulates gene production for healthy brain function.
- ★ Flavones – Phytoestrogen
  - Fight free radicals and regulate cellular activity, also high in antioxidants.
- ★ Minerals
  - Support liver and other organ function and process foods into fuel.

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