Menstruation and the Moon Cycle

The Moondance

Although I began writing the following post with divine feminine energy in mind, I believe those of you embodying divine masculine energy might garner a thing or two as well…both for your partners as well as yourselves;)…

I don't recall being "regular" during the first several years of my cycle. It could have been just an initial bodily adjustment curve or that I dabbled in birth control off and on for many years. It wasn't entirely out of the norm for my body to skip periods altogether or for them to considerably vary in duration and/or intensity. It wasn't until I began the practice of grounding many years later that I began to notice a connection with our moon. At first it was simply a kindred awareness. There was an innate pull to focus on her, her divine feminine energy, and how it reflected and seemed to strengthen my own. I began charting my cycles and noticed that they often mirror the moon's rhythm. I am full as she is full…and I regularly bleed as she wanes.

The lunar cycle consists of 29 and a half days, shifting from the waxing moon of increasing light to the full moon of complete illumination, to the waning moon of decreasing light and beginning the cycle again with the waxing new moon of increasing light. It does not seem coincidental that the average length of a woman's cycle is 29 and a half days as well, parallel to the moon's cycle.

I have read that it was the norm for women to menstruate with the moon cycle before the addition of artificial light into our lives. Both the exposure to large amounts of artificial

light as well as minimal amounts of natural light (and I'm certain a slew of other factors including the amount of pharmaceuticals and food additives that make their way into our bodies and our environment every year) create an inability to tune into the subtle cues and energetic shifts of the earth and moon. In the process of becoming disconnected with these sacred and celestial bodies, we've also journeyed a bit further into a disconnect, of sorts, with ourselves. Our bodies are no longer in complete sync with the harmonic structure of our surrounding elements, the rhythms of our natural world, which in part translates into a disconnect from who we innately are; our variant and unified ambitions, and our formations and routines in the interminable interim.

I've also read that Native American women would separate themselves from the tribe during menstruation. They cycled together in a "moon lodge" while the men and grandparents temporarily took over caring for the children and other responsibilities. During this time, women were considered even more powerful and would focus their individual and collective energy upon meditation, transformation, reflection, decision-making, and, in general, deeper truth.

For me, it also serves as an energetic source of strengthening the bond between our collective divine feminine energy. I feel very close to my girlfriends during my cycle. And (maybe not so surprisingly) I would almost prefer to be around them during this time at the entire exclusion of masculine interplay.

There's definitely a profound energy that streams into these few days. For myself, as well as many others, it's the energy of creativity, of reflection, of letting go, and then, of nourishing and rebuilding.

Repeatedly, during this string of 5 days, I bring my A-game to the table. Close friends joke around with me about how I accomplish more during this stretch of time than I do during

all other remaining days of the month combined. It’s true. It’s almost as if I go through a mini-nesting phase each month, working overtime to get everything in order in preparation for the arrival of a both an unclear and uncertain “something.”

Side note: before nixing processed foods, I experienced cruel and compassionless cramps each month. I’ve always been conscientious regarding medications, but my drawer was reliably full with one exception to my typical “tough it out” protocol: Midol! …and lots of it. I cannot recount the times that I sent a friend or lover on Midol runs if I had even the faintest notion that I might run low mid-cycle. When I was much younger, I recall a couple of family members experiencing this variety of near-debilitating cramps, as well. Admittedly, I thought that they were over-exaggerating their experiences, that is until I spent several times, myself, curled up in the fetal position on my bed. After switching to a whole foods diet, however, all cramps- every hint of them- entirely vanished. A very welcomed outcome, and alone, worth the dietary change.

It’s not uncommon to hear women complaining about the inconvenience(s) of their cycles. However, if we shift our understanding of what menstruation is, what it symbolizes and the ways in which it connects us to others and the world around us, we can better understand and lean into this time for the gifts of growth and change that come through release, reflection, and renewal.

While I’m certain that the crone years will hold their own unique offerings and energy, I occasionally imagine that I will miss this current sacred stretch of {methodically} dancing alongside the majesty and mystery of our moon.