

Natural Healing for Women NEWS

September 2011



Greetings, to the wonderful women of the *Natural Healing for Women* community. I'm so excited to be sending you my very first newsletter in order to share ideas and information that will assist in your quest for health, vitality and fulfillment.

In this edition of *Natural Healing for Women News*, I discuss the very important principle of **Balance**, and the role that it plays in our health and wellbeing. In particular, we will look at how our overall state of balance directly affects the hormonal system, and the ever more prevalent problem of **Hormonal Imbalance**.

I've always been inspired by the Taoist Philosophy of living in harmony with the rhythms of nature. It teaches us so much about how the body/mind/spirit functions as an extension and integral part of the natural world. I hope to bring some of this spirit and wisdom to the following pages.

Grab a cup of tea, sit back and enjoy!

PERFECT BALANCE

I just got back from a family vacation in Truro, Massachusetts. This is where my husband, son and I return to year after year; drawn to the sun-baked beaches, rolling dunes and native flora of beach rose, barberry and shrubby evergreens.



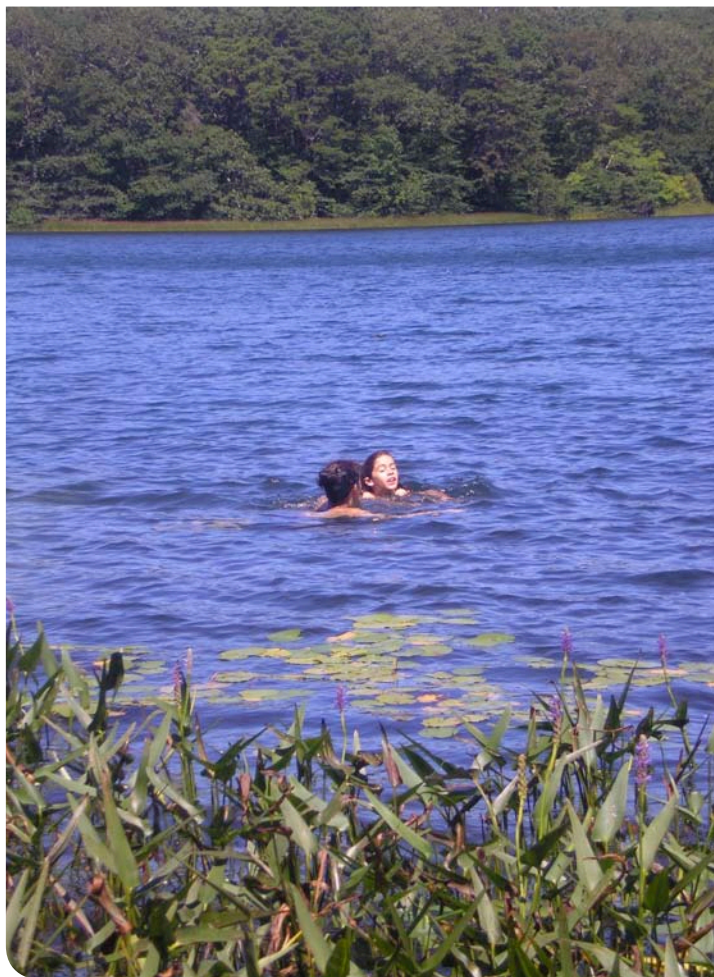
I love the intensity of the ocean's waves as well as the abundant marine life and shells of the bay. However, the bodies of water that compel me most deeply are the naturally-occurring kettle ponds scattered throughout the area.

Years ago, some friends introduced us to an isolated pond deep within the woods and difficult to access. Rarely will you find other people there. Because of this, unique wildlife can be found, like large iridescent blue dragonflies that enjoy resting on a shoulder or thigh. This is where I experience a vibrant stillness and peace that allows me to hold the mental image of an **ecosystem** in a state of perfect harmony and **balance**.



A WOMAN'S HORMONAL BALANCE

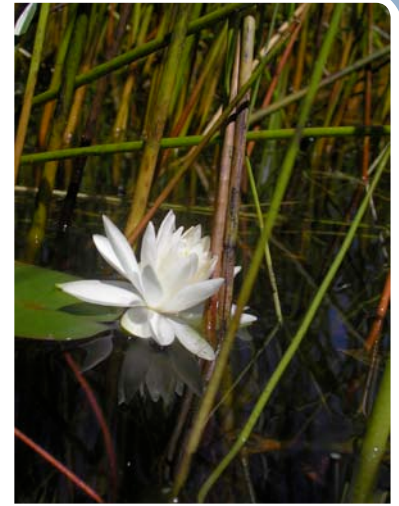
A woman's hormonal system – like any ecosystem – is an intricate and complex organization that is dependent upon the same rhythms and patterns that have been part of the female experience since ancient times. Just as the 28-day lunar cycle orbiting the earth, a woman's monthly cycle rises and falls in a timed and consistent manner. In her compelling book, "Sex, Lies and Menopause", T.S. Wiley explains:



"We adapted to the rhythm of the planet and internalized it in our hormonal rhythms. Our hormones designed the rhythms of our sleep, our appetite for sex and food, and our menstrual, birth and nursing cycles in tandem with the weather and food supply. In order to survive, all things alive had to integrate life-sustaining activities in rhythm with the planet's offerings."

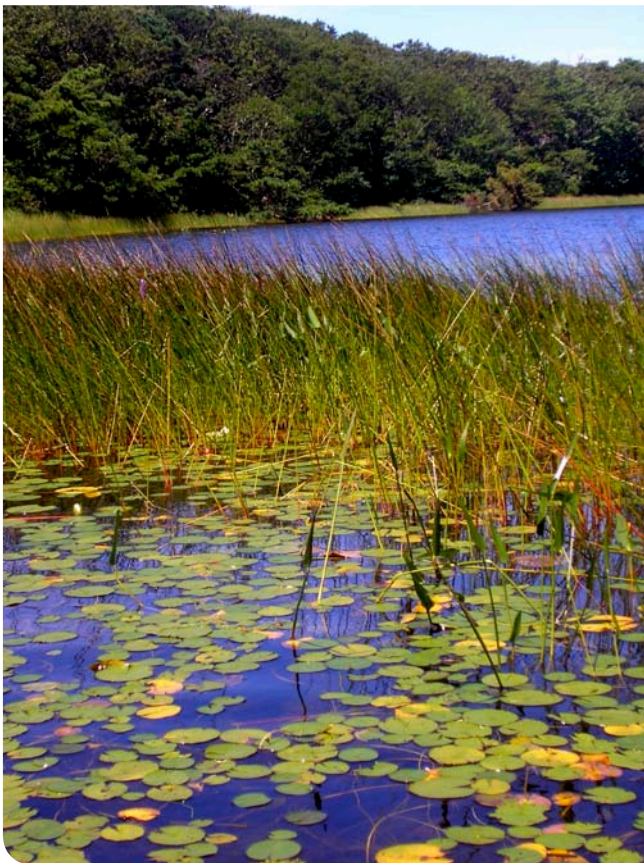
Isn't this amazing? Our connection to the natural world is not by way of nostalgia for a time gone by, or something poetic. Rather, the planetary laws dictating the rising and setting of the sun, the moon and the seasons are coursing through our bloodstream in every instant! We are thoroughly interconnected with Nature in every cell of our body, quite literally. And that's why it makes perfect sense that if we fall out of touch with the rhythms of the natural world, our internal rhythms (aka hormonal system) will likewise be disturbed.

I often describe the hormonal system as a complex and intricate symphony, with all of the hormones playing off of the others with inextricable precision and elegance. Medical science has a long way to go in terms of understanding this process. But guess what life form has an innate understanding of this system better than all of the scientists? You guessed it...Plants! Yes, certain plants contain the intelligence to work with our bodies to achieve hormonal balance. Why? Because plants are living, breathing life forms that are subject to the same universal rhythms that we are. We have been co-evolving alongside plants for millions of years. During this time, we have been using plants as medicine and nutrition. And because of this co-evolution, there is an intelligence (shared by the plant and animal world) that plants help our bodies to remember. That is why specific plants can be so effective at bringing balance to a particular bodily system; for instance, the endocrine (hormonal) system.



WHAT IS HORMONAL IMBALANCE?

What does it mean to have hormonal imbalance? After 16 years of working in obstetrics and gynecology, I have to admit that it's hard to say! It can be subtle and difficult to detect. Women walk into my office all the time complaining of the sense that their hormones are out of balance, and want a blood test to validate these feelings. However, blood (and even saliva) tests are generally not subtle enough to give much insight into those cases that aren't quite severe enough to warrant a diagnosis. Most imbalances are of a more subtle nature, and therefore are more difficult to detect with lab tests. Yet, a woman's wellbeing is so deeply interconnected with her hormonal state that she will intuitively know if something is "off".



Hormonal imbalance is implicated when the period is absent, irregular, abnormally heavy or light, or when spotting occurs between menses. Cyclical mood shifts or mood swings can signal that the hormones are off kilter. We see it in syndromes such as amenorrhea, irregular menses, polycystic ovarian syndrome, endometriosis, PMS and the symptoms of perimenopause including flooding, arthritis, memory problems, hot flashes and decreased libido.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

Our female hormones operate cyclically; meaning that under ordinary circumstances, they will rise and fall in a predictable pattern throughout the month. In the most basic of terms, these risings and fallings are what allow for and control ovulation, menstruation and the potential for a healthy pregnancy.



Hormonal imbalance is an outgrowth of a larger pattern within our modern society, out of sync with the natural world and rhythms of the planet (eg. cycles of light and dark, and seasonal cycles of temperature and food.) Poor diet high in processed food and sugar, high stress, being in parasympathetic (fight or flight) nervous system too much of the time, frequent travel through time zones, artificial stimulants, chemicals in the environment, artificial light, prescription medication and poor sleeping habits are among the many culprits. For those of us in the city, consider how far we live from the rhythms of nature. It is definitely a challenge to stay in touch with the Earth, but it's not impossible! If you live in New York City, there are quite a few fabulous parks that still have some pretty wild areas: Prospect Park, Central Park, Fort Tryon Park and

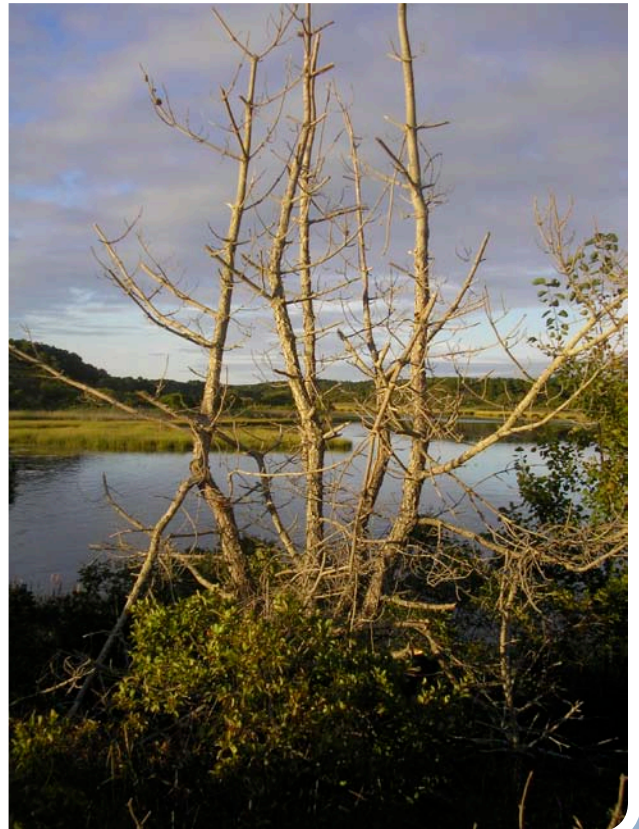
Governor's Island are places that I go to walk on the dirt and spend time amongst the trees and abundantly growing weeds and wildflowers.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Here are some quick tips to consider:

Balanced meals: This means sitting down for meals at regular intervals, including protein, carbohydrates and healthy fats with each meal. It also means overcoming blood sugar imbalances by cutting processed sugar and refined carbohydrates out, while cooking and eating seasonally-available, whole foods as frequently as possible.

Healthy Sleeping habits: This means putting yourself to bed at a designated time, in order to get at least 7 hours of sleep nightly. It means making sure that you sleep in complete darkness, without letting artificial light from the street or elsewhere seep into your room. For my clients that have trouble sleeping, I often recommend bathing or showering before bed, to cleanse the energy field after a busy day of interaction with literally hundreds of people (think about your time on the subway!) It may also involve using herbal or homeopathic remedies if falling or staying asleep remains a challenge.



Air Travel: This is one of the main reasons that I see for hormonal imbalance and menstrual irregularities. The female hormones are easily thrown off balance by frequent air travel, especially when traveling through time zones. Again, consider how much this confuses the inner rhythms that conform to the sun's cycle of light/dark, day/night. If you travel often for work or otherwise, take extra care to bring grounding techniques into your routine. This can mean anything from yoga or tai chi, to cooking soups, stews and root vegetables. Herbal adaptogens like eleutherococcus, schisandra and rhodiola are fabulous when it comes to helping the body to adjust to this type of external stress. I also like to recommend the Alaskan Essences flower essence combination, "Travel Ease", which helps with these transitions.

HERBAL *gem*

The #1 herb that I use in helping women to overcome hormonal imbalance is undoubtedly **Chaste Tree Berry (Vitex agnus-castus)**. When I was first introduced to the actual plant in the wild some years ago on an herbal walk in North Carolina., it sent tears of gratitude streaming down my cheeks. I thought of all the women that I was able to help over the years with a simple bottle of the tincture. This gentle yet powerful remedy works over time to balance and regulate the menstrual cycle through the synchronization of the pituitary hormones with the ovarian hormones. I would recommend using it in tincture form; 30 drops in water, once or twice daily.

FLOWER ESSENCE *gem*

We often lose our balance when feeling excessively stressed out and anxious over the rapid pace of our lives, full of responsibilities. One of my favorite flower essences is **Blue Vervain**, which helps the entire nervous system to unwind and relax. Originally discovered by Dr. Edward Bach – who prescribed it for leaders, zealots and those with a type A personality - I find that it is a perfect remedy for so many of my clients trying to balance work and family life with the hectic lifestyle of New York City. It also works beautifully before bed to help fall into deep sleep.

WHAT DOES BALANCE MEAN FOR YOU?

What does balance mean for you in your life? One thing I've learned over the years is that balance is not something that can be achieved or attained, because it's not static. Rather, it's a dynamic state that involves the ability to bend and flow with the constant change that is life. Even for the most zen amongst us, it's important to have tools handy that can be accessed within the midst of chaos. I've found it helpful to make a list of those things that bring a sense of calm and balance, and make sure to carve out time for them every week. Also, this list can be called upon during those extra stressful moments.



HERE IS MY TOP 10 LIST

Being in nature, taking a yoga class, meditation, working out at the gym, sharing a meal with good friends and family, flower essences, regular sleep, singing, listening to music, self-care treatments like acupuncture or massage.

What are the things that help bring a sense of balance to your life? When you make that list, take notice if these activities are scheduled into your weekly routine. If not, try to find space in your calendar for them. I'm always amazed by how one small change in my routine can make a huge difference in terms of quality of life. Make a commitment to yourself to make that one small change that you've been meaning to. I guarantee that it will change your life for the better.

Wishing you Peace and Balance,

Carla



YOUR HEALING

If you sense that learning more about healing naturally from the symptoms of hormonal imbalance or other gynecological issues is what you have been seeking, I recommend scheduling an appointment at *Natural Healing for Women*. Together, we will review the challenges of your unique situation and create a healing protocol including customized herbal formulations, dietary counseling and lifestyle modifications, as well as Flower Essence Therapy and Maya Abdominal Therapy. Feel free to contact me at www.naturalhealingforwomen.com or 646-218-1201 to schedule an appointment.

WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING

“Carla is an amazing healer. She is attuned to both body and soul. Her knowledge of western and alternative medicines makes her a wonderful resource for the many issues women face today. Her powerful practice of mayan uterine massage has been pivotal in my transitioning from fertility to menopause. Her knowledge and use of flower essences and other herbal formulas has proved tremendously supportive and healing. Working with Carla has been rich, deep and transformational. I love how real she is and how sensitive she has been to the challenges of life’s journey. I am so happy to have found her. A bed of warm roses to wrap myself in.” —*Valerie C., Psychotherapist*

“I am a client of Carla’s for 2 years now. She has successfully helped me overcome hormonal and menstrual issues naturally. As a woman in my late 30’s she has helped to prepare my body for childbirth. We also started working with flower essences, which I feel is helping to balance my life. I am thrilled to have found Carla. She is a caring and nurturing woman who is very knowledgeable with woman’s health issues. And I am thrilled to say that after all of our work together that I was able to have a wonderful pregnancy, and recently gave birth to a beautiful baby girl.” —*Melanie H., Townhouse Manager*

ABOUT CARLA

Carla created *Natural Healing for Women* in Park Slope, Brooklyn in 2004 to provide a safe and nurturing environment for women to heal from their gynecological issues using natural remedies. She has been a registered physician assistant in the field of obstetrics and gynecology for the past 16 years. Carla started her career delivering babies on the busy labor and delivery floor of New York Hospital Queens. More recently she has practiced holistic gynecology at the Continuum Center for Health and Healing in Manhattan. Currently, she has a practice in holistic gynecology at Arcadia Ob/Gyn in mid-town Manhattan. Carla has studied herbalism with some of the most renowned western herbalists including Kate Gilday, Matthew Wood and William LeSassier. She has been certified in the Arivgo techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy by Rosita Arvigo, and has been practicing this form of bodywork since 2000. Further, she has been studying Flower Essences since 1998, with David Dalton, Jane Bell and Steve Johnson among other leaders in the field.

Carla has sat on the board of directors of the Fertility Awareness Center. She has lectured extensively about women's health issues and natural healing, and has been heard on the Sirius Radio show, "At the Center" as well as on the Pacifica Radio show, "Healthstyles". She has made several appearances on television, including PBS's, "Healing Quest" and "Get Fresh with Sara Snow." Carla lives in Brooklyn with her husband and son.



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