

Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

PWE64: Fix your Period with Nicole Jardim

Aubree: Hi, love. This is episode 64 of the *Peace with Endo Podcast*. I'm your host, Aubree Deimler. I am an author, wellness coach and energy healer who helps women with endometriosis naturally manage pain, increase energy, and find Peace with Endo.

On the show today I chatted with Nicole Jardim, a Certified Women's Health Coach, writer, speaker, mentor and creator of Fix Your Period, a series of programs that empower women to reclaim their hormonal health using a method that combines evidence-based information with simplicity and sass. Her work has impacted the lives of tens of thousands of women around the world in effectively addressing a wide variety of period problems.

Nicole is the author of the new book, *Fix Your Period: Six weeks to banish bloating, conquer cramps, manage moodiness and ignite lasting hormone balance* and the co-author of *The Happy Balance*, a recipe book filled with over 80 hormone balancing recipes. She's also the co-host of The Period Party, a top-rated podcast on iTunes.

In today's episode Nicole shared a bit of her story and how she became known as "The Period Girl". We chatted about the impacts of hormonal birth control on our hormones and how we feel, and why we need to shift the paradigm and educate women from an early age about the menstrual cycle and how women's bodies actually work. We talked about why hormonal issues, especially for women, are worse than ever and what we can do to take personal responsibility to support our health.

Nicole shared more about her new book, *Fix Your Period*, and why there's no one-size-fits all diet for period health and how you can start to get to the root of period problems instead of just addressing symptoms.

I hope you enjoy our conversation, now on to the show...

Hi, Nicole. Thanks so much for being on the show today.

Nicole: Hi, Aubree. Thank you so much for having me during these very trying times.

Aubree: Yes. So, will you share a bit of your story and how you ended up as “The Period Girl”?

Nicole: Oh, I would love to, you know, I was definitely the most unlikely candidate for doing the work that I do. I never had any desire to do anything health related whatsoever. I sucked at all the sciences in high school. This was not something I had any interest in (laughs) and in fact I had discovered... and I was probably about 13 or 14 that there was a whole world of people who worked in film production as production assistants and doing all kinds of different cool things in film and TV and that for me was my dream. I was convinced that that’s what I was going to do with my life. It’s what I studied in college. It’s actually what I ended up doing for the first part of my 20’s but my health got in the way. Surprise!

And it was one of those things where I ignored my health for the most part or my health issues as a teenager I had horrible period problems. I mean the kind of cramps that make you see stars (laughs) and heavy periods to the point where I was sleeping on a bed with towels below me, so I wouldn’t leak through to my sheets onto the mattress, things like that. It was not fun, and I remember my mom telling me that she had had even worse periods and she would describe this... these horrific things that would happen to her every month and I was just like Ok, well I guess mine aren’t so bad.

And because it was so normalized by her I never went and saw a doctor. It just was what it was, and I remember talking to friends of mine and they... none of them seemed to have the issues, I mean they had some issues, but they never had anything like what I was experiencing with this crazy, heavy flow and the unbelievable pain that would keep me in bed for a couple of days every month and these insane mood swings and just the huge bloating and the horrible gut health issues that I had that seemed to just keep going after my period ended.

And that, you know, carried on for years and then finally I started to notice that my period would come every three or four months. I was definitely not tracking my cycle. I was certainly one of those girls who would go to the doctor and make up a date for my last period, because like who knew what those dates were? I certainly didn’t! And so in the end I finally saw my mom’s gynecologist and she immediately put me on the pill to, you know, quote, unquote, solve all of these issues that I had and I was thrilled. I mean, I finally found, or I felt like I had found my silver bullet, like my period... the answer to all of my period problems really.

And it wasn’t until a couple of years into using the pill that I started to notice this... this... a set of symptoms that really seemed unrelated to each other and I couldn’t figure it out, and I remember I was very much in the conventional medical realm in that time and I thought oh, you know, I... like the doctor’s going to help me figure

this out. They have all the solutions. I literally saw so many different doctors because my hair was falling out. I had melasma all over my face. I had chronic yeast and urinary tract infections, so my OBGYN's office was basically a revolving door. I had awful gut health issues, even worse than I had had when I was younger, before going on the pill. I was constantly sick, and that was the other thing, my immune system was just wrecked.

And yeah, I literally saw every doctor in all the different departments, you know, for a dermatologist and a gastroenterologist, and my gynecologist, and then, you know, someone else for, you know, like the... the chronic UTI's, I think I saw a urologist or something, you know? It just went on and on and the final straw for me was getting to... getting a medication for a UTI, probably like the 30th time or something (laughs) and ended up having... I ended up having an allergic reaction to it and I had to go to the E.R. I was bright red (laughs), I had a fever that was like 103 or something crazy, and finally I realized like I could not do this anymore, and that was sort of the beginning of this whole journey.

I remember speaking to a friend the next day or maybe the day after we were sitting in class and I'm telling her this whole thing and she's just like oh my God, you really need to go see my acupuncturist. This is crazy. You cannot keep depending on these doctors who are clearly not giving you any answers and that was a humongous light bulb for me, and so I made this appointment with her acupuncturist. I thought I had nothing to lose and again like he explained to me, within a very short period of time like what the pill was possibly doing to my body and how, you know, how I was being impacted.

And that completely blew the doors off of my life, to be completely honest. I had never... it had never occurred to me that the pill was causing all of these, you know, quote, unquote, seemingly unrelated issues, and as a result I... you know... I did more research. I started to see him more consistently. I ended up changing my whole life. I mean I completely changed careers. I changed where I lived. Everything completely... was completely altered. I mean this took many years and so it's definitely not something that happened over night, but it was something that I felt that I really needed to do.

And I became so passionate about figuring out my own problems that I decided that this was something I needed to tell everybody. I was like I'm going to shout this from the rooftops! I mean women need to know this information. They don't need to be, you know, stuck on a form of hormonal birth control that's reeking havoc on their health just to solve, you know, heavy periods or painful periods, and not that that even solves that anyways, but that's really the message that we've been given.

So, really it... it sort of ballooned from there and like I said I started learning more, and then I did more training and got into women's health training and just further honed my knowledge in every way I possibly could and The Period Girl thing is hilarious, because honestly I did not give that to myself that... that nickname to

myself. It was more just people saying things along the lines of, oh she's that period girl or she's the girl who talks about the periods, or whatever, and so that's kind of how it came about. It was... it was one of those things that, again fell into my lap, just like this career did, and that's kind of the story. I mean it's one of those things where it was so unexpected that my life would turn out this way, but here I am trying to help as many women as I can figure out why their periods suck so much and actually helping them find solutions.

Aubree: That's great, because I've had a similar experience and of course I'm sure many people who are listening have as well that when you have the issue (laughs), you go to the doctor and they give you the pill. It's the first thing on tap always, so let's talk a little bit more about the pill and how that can affect hormones and how we feel.

Nicole: Oh yeah, I think that... I think we've been lied to, I really do and I don't think, I know we have, and I'm really frustrated by it continually and again and also emboldened by it too, because I keep speaking about it. The fact that, first of all, for the most part when we're kids we go to the doctor, we have these health issues, whatever, we have a cold, we have the flu, we have some other virus, usually the doctor's able to give us something and it will solve the issues, and then we'll go on our way, and that is the belief system we take from childhood into adulthood about how doctors can help us.

And that's... it's fine. It's... that's what they're there for. They're there to help us with acute situations, but when we have a long-term problem, or we have a chronic issue, like chronic, debilitating heavy periods or chronic, debilitating painful periods or what other... ever other symptom we have that is linked to our hormones and our menstrual cycles... this approach obviously does not work, and that to me is what the birth control approach is centered in, right?

It's centered in this one-size-fits-all approach to women's health and their hormones, not at all taking into account our unique biology and our genetics and our psychology as well and our lifestyles and environment, and as a result we're basically completely uneducated about how our menstrual cycles work and then of course we're given a pill that is going to solve all our of our problems, and don't get me wrong, that pill was a lifesaver for me when I was a teenager and I don't know... I don't know what I would have done otherwise, and I obviously needed to take that path.

However, there's a lot more information now about how detrimental the pill is and, you know, to our health, our overall health, and not only just our hormones and how it can be really problematic if taken for long periods of time, and again, not everyone is going to experience these symptoms, but it's... for me it's really important because I did and obviously the women who come to me have, for the most part, been on the pill and had... had life disrupting problems, and so I think that that's why, you know, we have to consider that.

So, when we think about the birth control pill or really any other form of hormonal birth control, so anything that's going to stop ovulation is a problem, and so when we're talking about those things, we're talking about the... like the depo provera shot or the injection, depending on where you are in the world. We're talking about the birth control patch, the ring, I mean... the IUD doesn't stop ovulation in every single instance, but it does for a significant amount of people and then of course we have the implant in the arm as well and so we... you know... there are multiple ways that we have... you know... or multiple forms of... of birth control that stop... you know... stop ovulation and ultimately stop your hormone production.

And so we can... we can just talk about that alone as being a huge problem, because we've been fed the... the story that our... you know... that basically our hormones... we don't need those (laughs). We don't really need to ovulate, like we don't need hormones to be... being produced by our bodies on a regular basis, and that to me is a complete myth and something that needs to be completely reversed, because it is so dangerous. I... you know... when I...

When I was writing the... my book, *Fix Your Period*, I... the amount of research I came across that was referencing ovulation as being a sign of health, ovulation as being good for our health were amazing. I was actually really impressed, because again, we've been fed this story that you can just take this pill and you'll be fine, right? All those problems will go away. It'll... you know... get rid of your heavy periods, your period pain. It'll regulate your cycles. Your acne will be gone. It'll fix... you know... it'll fix pretty much every... every hormonal or period related problem.

The issue there is that when you stop ovulating, you're stopping all of your sex hormone production, for the most part. You're stopping estrogen. You're stopping testosterone, for the most part, because testosterone rises alongside estrogen with ovulation and then of course you're stopping progesterone production, and it's all well and good, you know, if these hormones are just responsible for your fertility, but they're not. They are actually... they actually play key roles in lots of other areas in your body.

I mean estrogen plays a role in your skin health. It plays a role in your breast health, and it also plays a role in your brain health. It's intricately tied to serotonin production. Testosterone similarly, your mood, your sex drive, also your brain health, your ability to just get up and go and live life and feel confident. That's all tied back to testosterone, and progesterone as well, same thing, breast health, your brain health, your bones, I mean I could go on and on. These are critical functions for overall health, and yet we are essentially, just like that with snap of a finger, turning all of that off, and trusting that whatever is in this pill is going to give us what our bodies need, but that's not necessarily the case.

Aubree: Right, and it's so easily given out I think, so... so young now too. I've seen... you hear...

Nicole: Right?

Aubree: Girls that are so young getting on the pill and it's just the first answer, and it's an easy solution, granted for the doctor (laughs).

Nicole: Totally.

Aubree: Because it fixes all of those things, like here you go. This is this one thing and you're going to be good.

Nicole: Totally. (laughs) I know, right? Yeah, and it makes complete sense, especially if you're a teenager, or you know, someone who's 12, I mean it's really scary. I agree with you, that this belief that this is going to be the solution, and I hear from moms a lot, and I bet you have as well, especially with the line of work that you've done in that we are... moms are just like I don't know what else to do, like this is what I'm being told to do. I'm told to put my daughter on the pill and you know, I don't know what else, what other solution to have... give her, because she's in so much pain. It's disrupting her whole life, and I get it.

And I think that what we have to recognize is that with your endocrine system, it's basically in its infancy at the time puberty begins and starts to progress, and as a result, because your endocrine system is just sort of getting its bearings, it's trying to figure out... I mean when I say endocrine system, it's not your entire endocrine system, more of your reproductive organs and the hormones that they're producing, and their communication with the hypothalamus and the pituitary in your brain, so it's not so much your entire endocrine system, because that's been going for awhile (laughs).

But, it's more that we don't... we don't realize that it takes time for all of those pieces to start working together and as a result we're so quick to medicate that away, right? The irregular periods are happening because teenagers... they actually don't have as big of a follicle as an adult woman might have meaning that they might not... they either don't produce the egg or the egg doesn't actually get released, and so they have... they have more anovulatory cycles or the follicle's not as... as developed or mature, so they don't produce enough... enough progesterone, so maybe they have shorter luteal phases and heavier periods and longer periods.

So all of these... these factors need to be taken into account, because you know... you can't... a baby doesn't learn to walk before it learns to crawl, so we have to think about that with the endocrine system too, and the same goes for perimenopause as well, like your endocrine system is slowly shutting down. It's definitely a learning curve. There's a process, and so as a result now we end up in a situation where we're putting women in perimenopause on the pill as well, just like we are with teenagers and so I think that whole paradigm needs to shift.

Aubree: Absolutely. So, one thing you talked about of course was ovulation and I know for me (laughs) as a teenager especially when I started getting on the pill, I didn't even know what ovulation was, like I think I missed that whole lesson, or maybe it was skipped over? (laughs)

Nicole: (laughs)

Aubree: I don't know, but all I knew was like my period sucks, like the period was always the main focus, and I didn't even know... it's funny because I took the pill for ten years. I still didn't know what ovulation was, and I remember when I got off of it and started ovulating again, and I was thinking I was getting like infections and like what is all this creamy stuff in my panties? Like...

Nicole: Me too! (laughs) Oh my God, it was traumatizing. Nobody ever told me any of this stuff (laughs). I agree.

Aubree: I even went... I went to the... the guy, the surgeon who did my surgery after I was diagnosed with endo, and told him like I'm having this cream. It's only certain times of the month, like I think I have this infection and he didn't even tell me about ovulation, or like oh you're probably just ovulating, it was oh we're going to need to check that out (laughs) like you're going to need to get up and... I was like it's not right now. It only happens for like a few days (laughs).

Nicole: Exactly. This is... oh my gosh you are seriously blowing my mind, Aubree, because I cannot tell you how many women have said this to me over the years that I just actually had a girl, she must have been 12 or 13, reach out to me on Instagram the other day, saying the same thing. I'm completely freaking out Nicole. Please tell me that this is normal. I don't know what to do and it was... I went through the same thing every single month I'm like why is it every single month around this time that I feel like I have a yeast infection or I don't even know what a yeast infection is supposed to be like but this seems like it might be that.

And our lack of body literacy, of period literacy is so shocking, right? We really need to... to change how we educate girls and women and anyone who has a period about this... this really critical aspect of our health, because we are literally feeling around in the dark.

Aubree: Mhmm. So, why do you think so many of us don't understand our own menstrual cycles and the effects of things like hormones in our bodies?

Nicole: Oh, girl. Where do I even begin? (laughs) I mean it's one of those things where I... you know... there are multiple facets, I think to it, and I think that the first thing is that, like I was saying, our medical system is just not set up for that kind of education, right? We're really not geared towards that. We're geared towards finding quick one-size-fits-all solutions to problems. That's really the protocol that most of... most doctors in conventional medicine will follow, which I get, of course.

And so, there's that issue and then I think that the other thing is that we... we live in a very patriarchal society that is highly disempowering to women in general, and as a result, we are just... we're not... all of this information is left out. I mean when you think about the fact that, you know, for... I think it's what... I don't even know like the numbers on sex education, I know that they're abysmal in the US, in particular, and the fact that female pleasure is completely left out of that. Girls are not allowed to enjoy sex (laughs) or we're... we're given that message from a really young age.

We're told to get on birth control pretty much immediately. We're the ones who have to take responsibility for that. Boys are not really given that message it's... it's there to a degree, but the birth control avenue is pushed and it still is, even as you move into adulthood, it's still... I mean far more women do... have the procedure where they'll tie their tubes, or clamp their tubes, then men would have a vasectomy, even though our surgery is way more complicated and a lot more serious than having a vasectomy is.

So, there are multiple issues at play here and I think that ultimately we've been given the message that our bodies are... are kind of scary. They're these sort of deep, dark holes that you don't want to go down, because it's very confusing and overwhelming and that's generally what I hear. That's the... that's the message I hear continually from women and from girls that they have... they've never been given this message that their bodies are sacred, that their menstrual cycles are truly a gift, so we have not been given the information that I think we desperately need about how our bodies actually work, and so we feel as though that our bodies are these mysterious beings that... that require a great deal of medical intervention just to work properly.

I mean how many times have we heard oh well I've just been given the pill to regulate my cycle, otherwise I can't have regular periods. That alone tells me... right... and all of us... that we don't inherently believe that our bodies can function optimally without some kind of medical intervention. I know that's not the case for everyone and this is a generalization, but again this is the work that I do, and I see it over and over again, so I think it requires a completely... like a fundamental shift in how we view our bodies and it would start with parents having open conversations with their kids and then it would start with... and that are not emotionally charged at all, because kids don't care.

I mean all of my friends tell me the funny stories that they... of their conversations with their small children about periods and where babies come from, and tampons and things like that and their kids say things like eww that's gross and then they move on or they're like hmm Ok, and they contemplate it for a second and they're like alright that makes sense and they move on, because they have no attachment to this... this icky stuff whatsoever it's our... it's all of our stuff that we're putting on to them.

And then when it comes to girls getting their periods or we... we are in a situation where, in our society in particular, where there is no a ritual. There is nothing happy about getting periods at all. It's completely mortifying. There's a lot of shame involved. Women or girl's self esteem plummets at puberty, not surprising, because the cultural narrative is that periods are gross. Periods are inconvenient. They're a pain in the ass. They're not something that we need to talk openly about or do anything about and you know they're just problematic in general.

I mean the statistics on girls and teenagers in general who have periods, stopping their periods completely with continuous birth control use or you know getting on a hormonal IUD that stops their period are startling. I mean it's shocking how many of us are doing these things and it's because we've not been taught how our bodies work and how incredibly important it is to have... have hormonal fluctuations every single month, have ovulation cycles continually and how... how detrimental that can be to us later on, because ultimately our... our hormonal health in our teens and twenties is definitely going to affect us in our 30's, 40's, and beyond.

And it's a continuum and that's what the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology says, I mean it's pretty much what the research supports and yet we're still of the belief that these... that we don't... we can just turn it all off and ignore it and that's... I just think that that's not Ok.

Aubree: Right. Agreed. So, it's a bigger issue at hand, and I know I too felt a lot of shame and ickiness with my period and it's taken a long time I think for me to get over that so I think the more...

Nicole: Same.

Aubree: The more that we talk about it, hopefully it will start to shift. I feel like it has a little bit more so than when I was younger, but maybe it's just the space I'm in now, but.

Nicole: (laughs).

Aubree: There are more people at least talking about it, and I think that's the way we bring normalcy to it.

Nicole: Certainly. I think so too. I kind of laughed that you know in 2015 they... that NPR dubbed 2015 the year of the period and I really feel like periods did have a bit of a coming out party during that year, because there was a lot of talk about it in the mainstream media and what not and it really has been that way since. I think that the awareness is growing tremendously.

But yet I... you know... I'm super positive and at the same time I saw an article on Facebook the other day it was written in The Guardian and it was about women just being over their periods and wanting to just not have them any more and there were

probably thousands of comments and they were all basically saying the same thing. I hate my period. This all sucks. All of these symptoms are terrible and we have just been programmed to believe that periods have to be terrible, that they have to suck, or that they just inevitably will suck and they come with all of these debilitating symptoms that ruin your life and that's... I mean, that's the narrative that we have to change.

Aubree: Totally. Yeah unfortunately that's true, especially for those of us with endo.

Nicole: Definitely.

Aubree: Why do you think hormonal issues, especially for women, are worse than ever before?

Nicole: Oh my goodness. I... and you know I think that there are multiple... there are multiple factors, as is always the case, right? There's definitely never one reason as we all know and so when you think about the fact that... I mean there's so many things and some are really obvious, others are not, but if you think about our... just the environment in general that we're living in right now and I'm so curious to see how things might change based on what is currently happening in our world, and I think that if we really stopped and took a look at the amount of endocrine disrupting chemicals in our environment we would probably be stunned.

If we really paid attention to how much we're exposed to just before we even leave the house in the morning I think that it might really change our perspective on the products that we're using because it's in... they're in everything and they're... from the dish soap that you used to wash your breakfast plate, to the makeup that you're putting on your face, the soap that you use in the bathroom, the mattress that you're laying on, I mean I could go on, the carpet, all of it.

So we...I think that we live in an environment now that is so chemical heavy that we and... industrial chemicals heavy... that we don't even realize what an impact they're having on us, because it's insidious, right? We don't see it, so we don't think it's happening, but we do see it, that's the thing, right? Like we actually do see what's happening because it's showing in early puberty, and you know girls as young as seven are getting their periods now. That is not Ok, and they're also... and at that age too there's also breast development. There is a lot of precocious puberty.

And then of course there are so many conditions that we are seeing that are on the rise: endometriosis, adenomyosis, uterine fibroids, I mean like we could go on and on and all the symptoms that come with them, right? The heavy, painful periods, the long periods of bleeding, the spotting, the bleeding that just lasts for months at a time and we don't know why. I mean, all of those, and not all of them can be... can be linked back to you know something like bisphenol A or any of these xenoestrogens or estrogen mimicking chemicals in our environment, but they play a really big role.

And then add on top of that the burden on our bodies. So, this is a huge burden on our bodies and our bodies are no longer... I can't say no longer, but they're not... no longer as well equipped to handle... you know these... these chemicals that we're... they're exposed to so our detoxification systems are generally overburdened for the most part and that's not to say that's the case for everyone. The problem lies in the fact that some of us have genetic snips or mutations or you know genetic... underlying genetic issues that don't... that don't allow our bodies to, for instance, as detox as well as they might.

I'm definitely one of those people. I have major... I have a large amount of genetic snips on a lot of my genes that are... that will... are responsible for detoxification processes in my body, and as a result I... you know... have to be really careful, so I think that it's... it's a combination of the environment, the... our body's bodies' burden, our bodies' ability to... to remove... to break down and remove these... these environmental chemicals, because if you think about your liver being overburdened it's going to... it's not going to prioritize the things that it really needs to be doing. It's going to just prioritize the... the biggest fires. It's going to try and put those out as quickly as it possibly can, and so it can't really do its job properly.

So, we end up in a situation where we're just... we're chronically overburdened. This puts a huge stress on our immune systems. It puts a huge stress on the rest of our endocrine glands, and as a result we end up with hormonal issues, and then of course we've got the food component as well. I mean we all know this. Our diets have drastically changed in the last hundred years, and as a result we have seen a concurrent rise in all of the... all of the chronic conditions that are so prevalent today, whether that's obesity or high blood pressure or heart disease or cancer.

We now find ourselves in a very interesting predicament where everything is sort of coming to at us at once and it's... I don't... I just believe that we are all at the point where we have to take responsibility for what we're exposed to because there are definitely not enough regulations in place to prevent the exposure to what it is that we are... we're just so overexposed to now and that's why I think we have to figure out what we, you know... we have control over, because our food, our environment, the water that we're drinking and all of the... all of the chemicals that are in our homes and workplaces are not going away, and so we have to just start making better choices.

It really comes down to what it is we choose to do for our own health.

Aubree: Exactly, and you can only control your own environment really and I think at least from my perspective and what I've done in my own health journey is once I got over the overwhelm of the state of the world.

Nicole: Yes!

Aubree: Because you can't change that really besides making choices with, you know, the products that you buy and the things that you use in your home, but really getting back to supporting your liver and allowing your body to be able to handle some of this stuff.

Nicole: Right? I mean it's so huge, and I think that like you said the overwhelm is a really key component to all of this. It's so scary at first, I mean most women are like wait Nicole, what are you telling me? What is all of this? Like this is too much for me to handle. I can't even handle my own life, and I think that that's... you know... that's another perpetual problem that women tend to have is that we... we are over givers and over providers and over doers by nature, it's just how we roll.

But I think that **it's a wake up call when you start to have these problems because your menstrual cycle is information. It is telling you that something is not right. Men do not have this alert system, but we do.** I mean this is a built in system in our bodies that will tell you when something is up. Your body is not just randomly rebelling against you, and you know, telling you that... you know... yeah you have heavy periods and you're stuck with this for life and you... this is it.

It's... you have heavy periods for a reason, whether that is because you have endometriosis or you have another condition or... you know... you have painful periods and that's caused by whatever it's caused by, whether again it's because of a condition like endo or it's just generally that your body is very inflamed that is all... those are all signs that something's up, so it... I... I can't stress enough for us that we have to be looking a little bit deeper and not taking things at surface value.

Aubree: Absolutely, so let's chat about your new then, *Fix Your Period*, because we need this (laughs).

Nicole: (laughs) I kind of think we do. I mean, like I think that you know when we're talking about the overwhelm that we were just describing a second ago, this is... this is how I felt too. I remember thinking Ok, I have no idea how I'm going to do this, but I'm going to take this one day at a time and figure this out and back then I was in college. I was doing two internships at once. I had a full course load. I... you know... I had a boyfriend. I mean, you know, it's like I all of the things, right?

And at that age you think, Ok this is the max that I can handle. It's a lot right now and yet I somehow figured out and I had very little information. I mean the Internet wasn't even... there was just not a lot on the Internet. There were no smart phones. I'm totally dating myself, but it's just what it was, and I remember thinking Ok this feels very overwhelming. I just need to go like one step at a time. I'm just going to make sure I'm going to acupuncture once a week, and I'm going to take the... the herbs that he recommends and maybe I'm going to take this out of my diet, or maybe I'm just going to go to one or two exercise classes a week, or whatever it was that I felt I could fit in to my life at the time.

And I always encourage anyone who has these issues to try and figure out what they can do reasonably, because part of our problem is that we are perpetually overwhelmed. We are just in a chronic state of overstimulation and that is clearly not doing our hormones or endocrine systems any favors whatsoever. So, that was why when I was thinking about how to write this book and how reach as many women as I possibly can, and girls as well, and anyone who has a period, is that we needed to...

We need to figure out like a step-by-step process for this and I'm a total Virgo and very linear in my thinking and I thought well Ok if we do a week by week thing so maybe you can do this, this week, and then maybe the next week... or maybe you need two more weeks to... to implement the first thing and then do the next thing, but with books... you know... they're like we need to do something that's a program, so it's six weeks or it's 28 days or something, and so that's why I came up with this six week program and we're really tackling every aspect of your endocrine system throughout this.

And this is based on my actual real Fix Your Period program that I've been doing with clients gosh for ten years now and it's the same thing, right? We're... we're really trying to bring food that is going to support your hormones into your diet, and I want everyone to understand the why. Why I'm doing that, because that was my biggest problem in the beginning. Nobody had answers for me! It was so frustrating, and I bet you can relate to this Aubree.

The... just the going to multiple doctors and being told oh everything seems fine or maybe, you know, maybe you just need this medication, or you should just be on the pill, or whatever, and feeling so dissatisfied and completely unfulfilled by those answers (laughs) and knowing that I needed to... I needed to get the explanation in order to make these changes because it's... I think it's very difficult to make changes of this magnitude, because these can be life-altering changes, I mean I've... I said it earlier.

I literally left where I lived and moved somewhere else and... and to pursue the work that I wanted to do, but also so that I could... you know... so that I could feel happier in my life. I mean my marriage ended as well like life really blew up for me, so I recognize that we need a bit of a bridge to get to that point. It took me many years to get there, and so sometimes some of us just need to spend a couple of months bringing more leafy greens, you know, cruciferous leafy greens into our diet.

I mean for others of us we're ready to just jump right in and start literally pricking our finger and testing our blood sugar and figuring out what's going on with our blood sugar, because blood sugar is regulated by insulin, which is a super powerful hormone, and so I really wanted everyone to have a foundational approach to how to actually fix their period problems, and again I say fix and I know that that's... tends to be a bit of a controversial word these days, but when I created the program it wasn't (laughs).

And so now I want to reiterate for everyone, when I say that what I mean is... you know... actively work on the problems that you're having and not all of them can be fixed a hundred percent, but you can have marked improvement in them to the point where you feel happy with your life and that's all that matters ultimately is that you are making a concerted effort to... to follow the steps and... and you will see change and the amount of change you want to see is obviously dependant on... you know... what all you implement, but ultimately, like I said I really just wanted everyone to have a foundational approach to addressing their hormonal health issues and the explanation to go with it, which I feel like is all contained in all 400 pages. (laughs)

Aubree: Yes and it's an awesome book.

Nicole: Thanks.

Aubree: Which does really give you that step-by-step and some ideas that you can do, so you don't feel overwhelmed, right? Because it can be a lot at first.

Nicole: It really can.

Aubree: If you think about all of the things, but one of the things you mentioned of course was diet.

Nicole: Mhmm.

Aubree: So, why do you think that there's not like a one-size-fits-all diet for period problems?

Nicole: Yeah, oh man, it's the same reason why I think that there's no one size fits all approach to period problems to begin with. You can't just slap a birth control band-aid on the issues and then just send people on their way. I mean you can, but it's certainly not ideal, and a big part of that is because what that does is it gives women the message that they don't have to pay attention to their bodies, that their bodies' responses to underlying hormonal issues or other problems, other conditions is not valid.

And that's the same with your diet. We all have different lifestyles. We have different genetics. Our gut health, which is so crucial to your hormonal health and I laid that all out in the gut health chapter, but your gut health is... everyone's gut health is different, our microbiomes are different, depending on where we live, our... the climate that we live in is different, our relationships... everything is... is... is variable, and as a result we need to vary our food as well.

And while I think that there is a quote, unquote, formula for... for people to follow for the most part, especially in the beginning, especially when we're establishing a

foundation for hormone resilience and hormone health. That makes sense to me, but sometimes we have to... we have to make some edits and for some of us... you know... some of us are fine. For instance let's take soy, because it's the most controversial thing, so I'll talk about that.

So, some of us are fine eating soy. Some of us do Ok on eating some fermented soy, even if we ate it a few times a week, we're Ok and we don't experience any kind of... you know... estrogen dominance, which tends to be the case with... with soy, is what I've seen mostly. We... we are fine.

On the flip side, there are many of us, me included, like if I were to eat soy three times a week I would definitely go into a state of estrogen dominance. My boobs would start killing me right before my period. I know this, because I've experimented multiple times, and I... you know... my period would get heavier, things like that and that just does not work for me.

So, what I'm saying is that we have to be perpetual experimenters and you will find what works for you generally speaking and then they're be another food that comes along that you say Ok well maybe I'll try that, but ultimately if we are not... if we're not turned onto what it is that works and doesn't work for our bodies based on the symptoms that we're experiencing, for instance... you know... some of us are more insulin sensitive than others. Some of us have a tendency towards insulin resistance and that's... that is likely a genetic... there's a genetic underpinning there.

And so as a result some women might be able to have... you know... a half a bar of chocolate and it might not impact their blood sugar in the way it might impact mine. My grandmother had diabetes and she died of complications of it, so likely there's... there's a genetic component to that, however as we all know, or you might not know, but now you do, our genetics are subject to change and... or not change, but we can... we can change the way our genes express themselves in the way that we live our lives.

And so coming back to all of this all I want to say is that there is a foundational approach you can take and so much of that involves bringing more nutrient dense foods into your diet and taking away the foods that are going to trigger that inflammatory response, that are going to get your... get your gut in a twist and also have... you know... be a burden on your liver and your entire detoxification system, so there's... you know... like I said I think that the foundation in the book makes a lot of sense for most people.

And then from there if you are still experiencing symptoms then you have to start to take additional action, but for the most part like there is a basic plan and then after that... you know... you have to get more nuanced in your approach.

Aubree: Right so it's paying attention to how your body reacts and I think that's part of the process too is coming back in tune with your body, as your getting in

tune with your cycle, and starting to see that as that marker of health and your report card, I've heard it described, I guess... of each month and how... how you're doing, so I think yeah that's part of the process.

Nicole: Exactly.

Aubree: Figuring it out and tuning in.

Nicole: It really is. Yeah. Yeah. It really is and it's... it can actually be fun. I feel like we've... like I said before, we're so scared of how our body's going to respond every month... and/or how it's going to act, and I want to give you back control over that and you can now start to see when you read the book or you go on my blog or whatever... you know... you do a program that's it very clear that your body is sending you signals pretty much every single day, and if we can start to track those symptoms and pay attention to how they shift based on the dietary changes we make, or the lifestyle changes we make or whatever.

We will start to see... we'll see incremental changes. For some women it's almost immediate, and then for others it takes a few months and I... I want to encourage everyone to just to have patience with your body. This, for lack of a better term, Rome wasn't built in a day. I mean we really need to... we need to be patient, because if you've been on the pill for 15 years and you've come off and you don't have a period for six months then those 15 years played a role in that and so you're going to have to... you know...

I suggest giving everyone, or everyone giving themselves like one to two months for every year that they've had hormonal issues or been on the pill or something like that and that way you... you have a general timeline of how long you might take to start to feel better or feel normal again or your period might take to come back. It just really is so dependant on your current life circumstances.

Aubree: Right, and I love that you're really getting more to the root cause of these hormonal problems rather than just addressing the symptoms, like what happens in conventional medicine, so where do you usually start with women?

Nicole: You know I, like I was saying before, I really think that it's important for us to start in the place that we feel the most control in and... so that's what I ask usually. I ask first of all for their top three most problematic symptoms, so I ask everyone to just make a note of that. Start to think through like what your biggest issues are, maybe it's a top five. It depends, but those would be the ones that are most disruptive to your life and to the way that you're just living, going about things.

So, I say make a note of that and then from there we will determine, you know, where to start and in the book, you know, I... this... again, it's applicable to everyone so I had to do it a little bit differently to how I might do it in a group program or in a private program with someone, but ultimately like if you have these

symptoms you want to start with the basics and the book outlines how to make your plate, for instance, right? And so we're talking about how do you put food on your plate that is going to be... that is going to maximize your hormonal health.

It's going to be the most beneficial for it, and for pretty much everyone, a general rule is half your plate is carbohydrates, complex carbohydrates actually, in the form of vegetables, particularly cruciferous vegetables. We want to include as many of those in our... our daily diet as we can, so that we can support our... first of our liver needs the compounds in those cruciferous vegetables in order for phase one and phase two of detoxification to work smoothly, and secondly, you know, they are full of just a million different nutrients that are going to be supportive of our health generally. So lots of leafy green vegetables and green vegetables in general, and then of course cruciferous veggies, so that's half your plate.

The quarter of your plate would be some kind of protein and then another quarter would be some kind of fat and of course this is a generalized way of looking at your diet, and some of us might need some... some variations on that, but ultimately if we are just doing that alone, and then in addition to that being observant of how we chew our food and then the environment in which we eat our food in. I mean that can be a complete game-changer for so many of us that we... you know... we really need to think about.

So, ultimately like yeah, I think that that's where we should all start, and then take it from there. We need to then start to think about what that food is doing to our blood sugar. Is it impacting us in a negative way? Is it impacting our... our insulin, our blood sugar and then our insulin. Are they rising and falling in a way that is causing major mood swings and hangry-ness and all of those fun things that come with dysregulated blood sugar, and then ultimately going down the line and causing, you know, period-related problems, because it disrupts your other hormones in your endocrine system.

So, we... we really start with the food and we then start to look at the blood sugar side of things and to me if I were to think back on numbers of women who... who feel a difference just from implementing those two parts of the protocol, I would say probably about 80% of women see a vast improvement in their health in general and their mood stability and ultimately like their period problems.

Aubree: Yeah, food's a great place to start.

Nicole: Yep, I mean it's... it's what we have the most control of... over, for the most part, and for some women it might just be that they need to get their stress under control and the... you know... we have... like I said, we live in the age of chronic overstimulation, in fact that's the name of the chapter because it's so applicable to our lives right now.

When you think back, you know, ten thousand years ago women were... we stayed at home. Men went out. They... they hunted, they took all the risk, for the most part and we... we stayed home and looked after children and elders and looked after our... you know... community and we... but there was always the potential for danger and as a result we became highly attuned to danger. I mean we developed a keen sensitivity and so we would... and I think we've carried that to this day, right? Because it's a protection mechanism, it makes a lot of sense. Unfortunately we are so over... chronically over stimulated by everything: the 24-hour news cycle, the latest pandemic, you know, I'm kind of joking, but not joking.

That we are now... I think that highly attuned sensitivity to stress is in just in chronic overdrive and as a result we are... we are not doing well hormonally because of it. When you think about stress it's... cortisol that stress hormone is very similar to insulin in that I call those the boss lady hormones, because they really have a trickle down effect on our reproductive function and when you think about being chronically stressed or your perception of what stress is for you and how your body internalizes that, you might... I, for me, for instance... I might lose my period if I'm in a state of chronic stress, whereas another person may just like bleed perpetually. They might bleed for a month straight.

So, it really just depends on, you know, your unique genetic makeup and how you respond, but we all respond in some way or another, and it's... you know... usually you see the signs in the... in the menstrual cycle and what's happening with your symptoms.

Aubree: This is all coming into play right now with the current environment we're living in that is... it's easy to fall into the energy of fear and overwhelm and all of those things, so it's really a reminder, I think for everyone who's listening to take some time out and (laughs) you know really... create that space for you to step away from all of the noise and really turn inward.

I think with the whole stress conversation definitely impacts ovulation, which we talked about earlier, so it all... it all plays into each other.

Nicole: Yes. Doesn't it ever? I know, right. I think that's the other thing. We need to remind ourselves of the fact that everything in our bodies... it's a whole interconnected system and you can't do one thing without it affecting pretty much everything else, and so we definitely have to reeducate ourselves around that point in particular, and like you said, this is a very trying time for a lot of us. It's very stressful on so many levels.

I mean like it's one thing if you're having a stressful moment in your life. It's a whole other when the entire world feels like it's crumbling around you, and how do you stay sane amidst that? And it's really up to us to try and figure out the... the tactics or the techniques that are going to help us feel safer in our environment for the sake of our hormones, and our periods, and our fertility.

Aubree: Exactly. Just remember your breath. Yeah, that's the one thing we can control I think is just breathing and using that to calm us down.

Nicole: Oh yes. Agreed.

Aubree: Well Nicole I appreciate you coming on and sharing with us today. Do you have final words of inspiration for our listeners?

Nicole: Thank you so much for having me. I think the final words would just be to really start to pay attention to what's going on with your body. Your body is definitely not just trying to make your life suck (laughs). It is really doing the best that it can with what it's being given, and you know, it's responding to external and internal stimuli in a way that it sees fit. It's... it's always a protective mechanism, and so it's up to us to try and learn... or learn to decipher your body's signals.

So, just trust that your body is doing the best it can and there is internal wisdom there that we all need to tap into.

Aubree: Absolutely, so how can women find out more about your work? How can they get the new book, *Fix Your Period*?

Nicole: So, everyone can find all of... everything that I have ever done, it's all housed on my website nicolejardim.com and the book is at fixyourperiod.com. I made that easy for everybody (laughs), so you can go to fixyourperiod.com. You can purchase through any of the booksellers that I have listed there and then just come back, enter your receipt number. You'll get an amazing array of bonuses if you purchase before the book is out on April 28th.

Aubree: Excellent. Well, thanks again for coming on and sharing some of your wisdom with us today. I appreciate it.

Nicole: Thank you so much, Aubree. It was a real pleasure. Thank you so much.

Aubree: If you enjoyed this episode, I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey. Please leave us a positive review and share with your friends so more endo sisters can find the show and get on track to finding peace with endo. I've included links to Nicole's new book, *Fix your Period*, in the show notes. Check it out and let us know how things go for you.

If you want to connect with me further and see how we can work together head on over to peacewithendo.com or you can find me on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo. Pop on over and share your thoughts on the show or simply say hello. Thanks so much for tuning in. I hope you find some peace in your day today. Sending you lots of love. Bye for now.

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