



Radiant Women. Natural healing for the three stages of woman

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Reviewed by Stephen Clarke

This is a book designed to guide women in the crucial project of achieving for themselves their highest possible states of health, from their first menstrual period to life after the menopause: 'My aim is to help you on your journey to experiencing optimum health and wellbeing by encouraging you to become you own 'witness' and 'observer' by putting in place some simple and effective strategies that assist you on your own unique healing journey'. Wendy is recommending that her readers take the path of self-analysis and self-empowerment: one of the guiding principles of contemporary healing.

This is a very accessible workbook that addresses many of the common complaints associated with the reproductive cycle. Working from symptom checklists to action plans, it isolates a range of lifestyle factors that could be contributing to those complaints, such as diet, food and environmental intolerances and allergies, emotional and work stress, relationships, and exercise. The reader can complete the checklist/s that apply to her and then build an action plan to address the issues raised by them, guided by Wendy's comprehensive

and clearly expressed naturopathic recommendations: a strong framework for self-discovery and self-healing.

In Chapter One Wendy discusses the three archetypal stages of womanhood: the maiden, the mother and the matriarch menopause, with a clarifying nod to the Jungian concept of archetypes. Chapters Two and Three deal respectively with menstruation and menopause, particularly with the signs and symptoms of 'disharmony' in the menstrual cycle and in the onset of menopause. Chapter Four is about charting your cycle. Here there are two sections, one about charting temperature, the other about signs and symptoms (the latter takes into account that it's quite common to experience "both menstruating and menopausal type symptoms around the years when lots of hormonal changes are occurring before the cessation of menstruation.")

Chapters Five and Six offer dietary and lifestyle prescriptions. Chapter Five deals with food sensitivities, allergies and intolerances. There are both general dietary tips and more specific plans to address high energy and hormonal balancing and inflammation, and sample menus. There is also a concise guide to relevant nutritional and herbal supplements.

In Chapter Six Wendy outlines the harmful effects of common stressors – poor nutrition, chemical exposure, physical stress and work- and relationship-related stress. She has a comprehensive catalogue of preventatives for stress: maintaining the natural rhythms of life, such as sleeping and waking cycles, the healing power of music, exercise and movement (including dance and movement therapy), deeper immersion in the natural world than is common in contemporary life, and finding personal healing spaces.

Chapters Seven and Eight deal with the specific conditions of skin and vaginal complaints that beset women at the various stages of the woman's journey,

and Chapter Nine is Q & A, covering many aspects of the issues raised in the preceding chapters. A great feature of this book is the interweaving through it of case studies, called Women's Stories: personal accounts of individual women's issues and remedies used to address them.

This book is recommended to both the general public and to practitioners who have patients dealing with reproductive health issues. It contains a great deal of specialised information, clearly and sympathetically presented, on a topic of deep importance.