

Attune to your Personal Moon

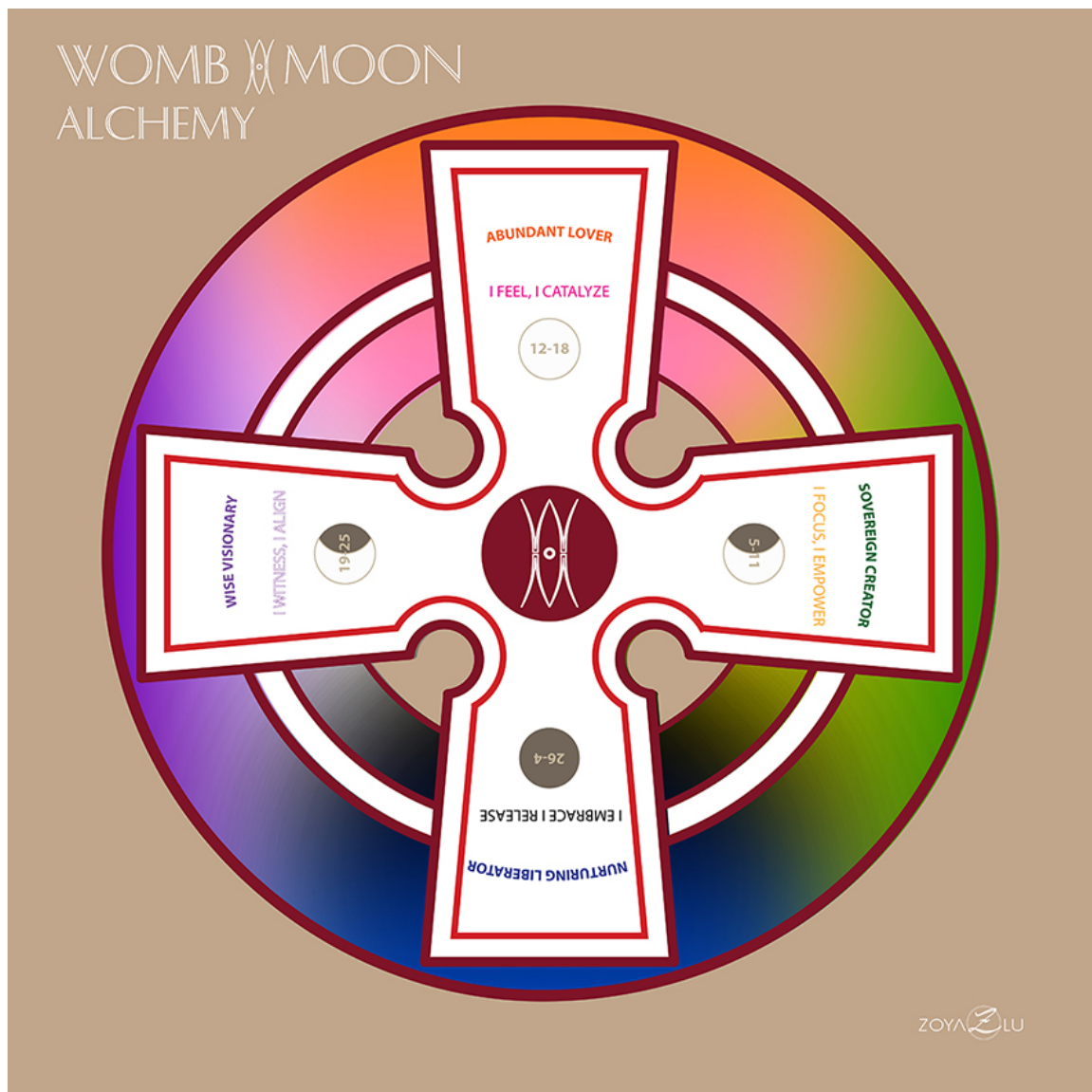
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“Women’s natural spirituality differs from men’s spirituality,
and yet we expect it to be the same.

The key to our perception of and relationship with the Divine is
our menstrual cycle.

The Divine means different things to us in each phase of our
menstrual cycle, and our relationship to Her, our spiritual needs and
our spiritual expression change with each phase.”

Miranda Gray



4 Phases of Menstrual Cycle

Each menstrual cycle of a woman has four distinct phases which are characterized by different hormonal changes. Let's call them: pre-ovulatory, ovulatory, pre-menstrual, and menstrual phases. A woman, therefore, has four very different bodies and faces so to say. We could even talk about more than four but let's keep it simple. Each phase is characterized by different energy levels, emotions, physical sensations; we think, feel, behave differently; we desire different experiences, foods, relationships, etc. In each cycle, a woman goes through the changes that correlate to four seasons of the year, four moon phases, and even four phases of human life. We die and get re-born each month!

Not being aware of this natural flow of changes or not using this knowledge can bring lots of dissatisfaction, unease, and even health problems. It is vitally important to align your energy and time management to your menstrual cycle and nurture your health, home, family and work in a rhythm attuned to your personal moon. You don't have to do it all at once, because there is literally a season for everything. When we own this knowledge, we are able to live our lives accordingly using the strength of each phase to enhance our wellbeing.

Pre-ovulatory (follicular) phase

The pre-ovulatory phase (also known as the follicular phase) is the time between menses and ovulation.

Our monthly changes could be compared to human life, and this phase of pre-ovulation corresponds to childhood and adolescence. Just as a baby grows into a girl and then a young woman, this stage on the strictly physical level is all about growth. About 15 to 20 eggs grow and develop in each ovary, the uterine lining is thickening in preparation to receive an egg from the most dominant follicle, and hormone levels start at a very low point after menstruation and keep rising, with estrogen reaching its peak right before ovulation.

Just like during a waxing moon (the time between the New Moon and Full Moon) we are ascending from the darkness. We are growing quite strong mentally with sharp thinking and great analytical capabilities. It's the ideal time to use improved concentration and mental clarity to identify what we need to do, prioritize, and then

get started and take action. Our constantly expanding energy naturally assists us in creating changes - initiating new projects or accelerating progress in areas where energy got previously stuck.

During this time we easily leave our comfort zone and respond well to new things, new people and new relationships, new foods, and new places. Sounds like the best time to go out and party, doesn't it? Just be aware that this outgoing, somewhat yang, "male-like" energy can come with shadows of self-absorption, the need for control, and a lack of empathy, so do your best to pay attention to other people's feelings and give yourself some time and space to center yourself when you feel triggered.



Our energies continue to increase, and we get more physical stamina, confidence, and determination with each day. If you like to push your limits and take on strong, high-impact workouts, go for it during this phase. However, have in mind an increased tendency for competition and always stay in tune with your body. By the end of the phase, we are at our best for multitasking and getting it all done. It's a work hard, play hard time.

The energies of this phase could be compared to spring - dynamic, trusting, and fun-loving. We enjoy enthusiasm, a positive outlook, as well as the feeling of being self-contained, independent, and carefree. A "code name" I gave this expression of our feminine side is Sovereign Creator.

Ovulatory phase

Though ovulation as a time of an egg release can be pinpointed to a particular day at mid-cycle (commonly, day 14), we want to look not just into one day we ovulate but also into a couple of days before and some days after we ovulate which correspond to the first part of the luteal phase that follows ovulation.

As we reach the highest levels of estrogen, there is a rise in the left-hemisphere activity which heightens our verbal fluency. Simultaneously, testosterone takes a quick surge which enhances the visual-spatial ability of the right hemisphere of the brain (such as the ability to draw an image or read a map). As we enjoy both mental and emotional creativity at its peak, we want to use this precious time for creating meaningful connections to others and strengthening our emotional wellbeing and relationships.

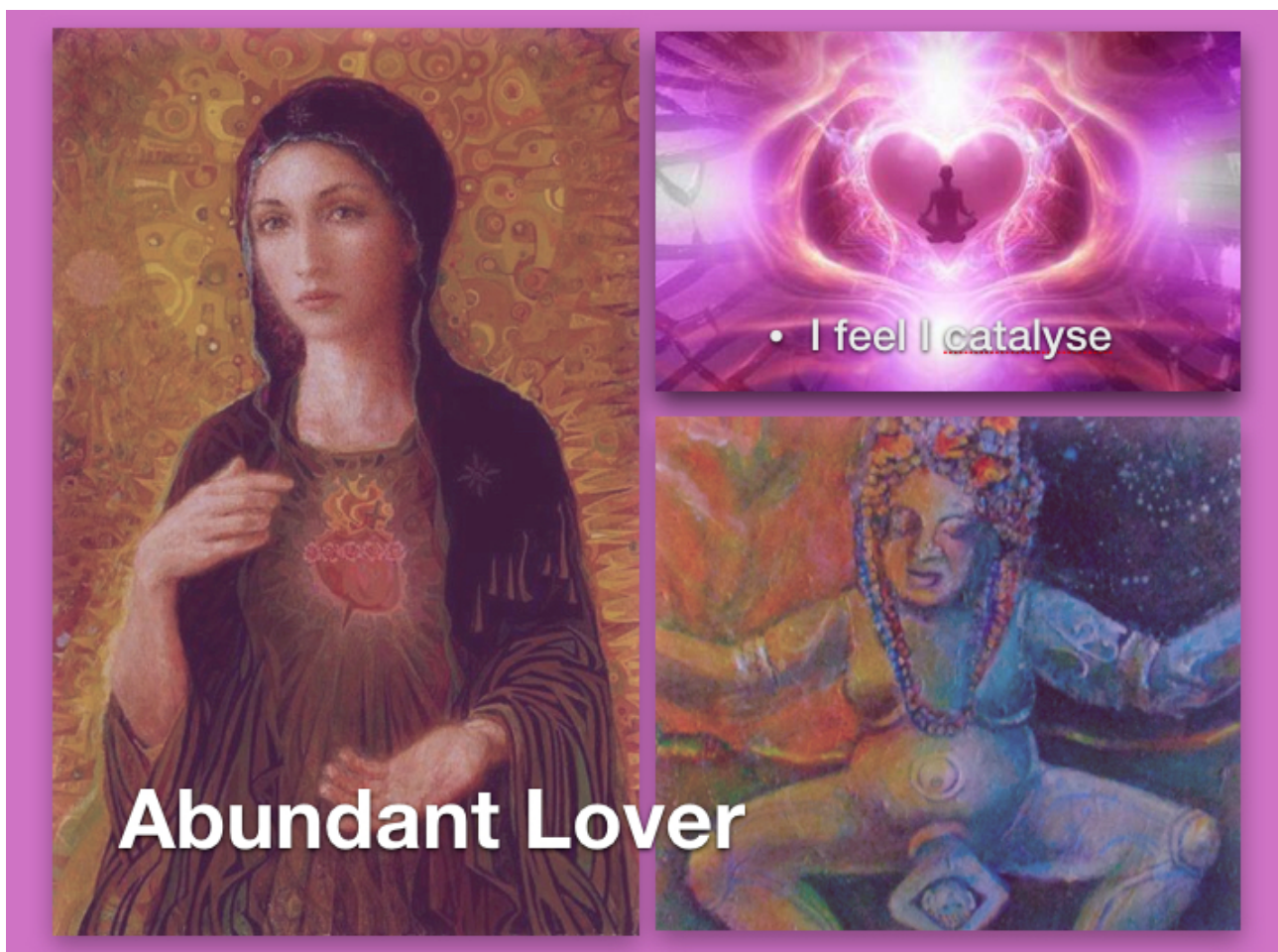
It's the best time for communicating our needs and understanding others' viewpoints, so we want to plan any important teamwork, business meetings, and presentations as well as heart-to-heart conversations with our family and friends around our ovulation.

Increased libido and unconscious effort to attract a mate makes this phase ideal for dating and romantic encounters. A strong sexual drive, inner confidence, and readiness to give selflessly makes lovemaking a satisfying and desirable act of pleasure and spiritual connection.

Ovulation corresponds to summer and the Full Moon - think of the brightest light, flower blossoms, and the longest days. We don't even need as much sleep as usual. Our energy is at its peak and this is when we want to use this expressive phase to satisfy our needs for both inner and outer expression. Just as our sexual energies get strong, our creative energies grow in abundance, too, and we have a strong emotional focus. Ovulation is the only time when we can get pregnant with a child, and it's a great time to be pregnant with possibilities and creative projects.

We get plenty of energy but it's not that selfish and action-oriented anymore. Thanks to progesterone rising after ovulation, our energy gets more nurturing, caring, empathetic, and loving. We are most receptive to others' feelings and needs, and we feel connected to our family, community, nature, and the earth.

The energy is still out-going - it's a lot about socializing and networking. However, it's more passive than in the pre-ovulatory phase - we don't push hard to make things happen but get more accepting of situations as they are. It can be compared to the energetic field that a woman enters when she is about to conceive. It's not about "doing" but rather about "being", being present, ripe, and open. This state can help us lose our sense of self and bring about spiritual experiences of inner strength, self-worth, deep contentment, and inner harmony.



Think of this phase as a woman of child-bearing age, the most desired age in our society, both by males and females. Imagine a gentle yet strong, nurturing woman radiating compassion and reaching out to her loved ones. It's an archetype that is often supposed to show what a "real woman" means. The archetype for the ovulatory phase is Abundant Lover.

Premenstrual (luteal) phase

The premenstruum is a phase of the menstrual cycle that people talk most about. Usually, it has a negative connotation and is viewed as an unpleasant and often painful time due to the famous PMS (pre-menstrual syndrome). We are looking now at the second half of the luteal phase when if no fertilized egg arrives, the corpus luteum degenerates and both our progesterone and estrogen levels begin to decrease.

The premenstrual phase is a transition from the brightness of the ovulatory phase (full moon) into the darkness of the menstrual phase (new moon). Just as the waning moon gets darker with each day, we experience an overall gradual decline in physical energy and stamina, as well as the mental ability to rationalize and concentrate. We can also compare this stage with the autumn / fall energy of fading, drying and wilting.

This descending journey from the light into the darkness often comes with tension, restlessness, mood swings and destructive behaviors. But instead of judging our premenstrual energy and mood as "bad" and "unproductive", we want to offer our total presence and awareness to what is. Premenstrually, we are quite naturally more inward-oriented, and it's the best time to analyze what must be changed in our lives. Anything that doesn't serve us anymore will bring out impatience, anxiety, frustration and even aggressiveness. However, we can turn these "negative" emotions into a blessing by clearing any emotional baggage and finding what really matters to us. It's in this phase that we really know what we don't want and what doesn't work. It brings clarity into the areas in our lives that need transformation. We are able to recognize our problems, and maybe even see an out-of-the box solution. We want to use this special time to help us create the life we want to have. When our life is harmonious, our hormones are balanced, and we will not experience the physical and emotional pains of the premenstrual phase. Premenstrual time is an accurate reflection of our inner (dis-)harmony.

The name given to the archetype of this phase is Wise Visionary. The extreme sensitivity of this phase comes with heightened intuition and creativity as we have easier access to our subconscious. No other phase offers us such powerful imagination, inspired ideas and stunning art-work. But they can only come out of this phase

when we listen to our deepest self and allow ourselves to respond to our subconscious needs.

As our levels of concentration and thought process decline, inward-oriented energy of this phase gets even stronger. Depending on our ability to harness and channel it, we can either get very creative or very destructive, being overwhelmed by the need for mental activity and inability to meet this need. We are irrational and illogical yet we are able get the most accurate answers to the most important questions through our emotions, vivid dreams, and flashes of brilliant insight.



The premenstrual phase corresponds to the fall of our lives - perimenopausal and postmenopausal years. Imagine a mature woman with rich life experience behind her. She could possess a wealth of self-awareness and enjoy inner peace and abundant creativity that comes with her accumulated wisdom. Just as we can enjoy a pain-free creative premenstrual phase. Or she could feel hurt, unwanted and broken by her life experiences if she had not learned to listen to her inner self and use her dark sides to bring more light into her life: Just as we premenstrually can experience PMS and destructive tendencies. Every month, we have the opportunity to

rehearse one whole life, and we can train ourselves to make better choices and move towards health and creativity.

Menstrual phase

The most obvious phase of a menstrual cycle is the menstrual phase. It's surely the one we cannot miss, we know exactly when it starts and finishes. For many of us, it's the phase we anticipate for many years if we are afraid to get pregnant. Then one day we want to conceive and each menstruation brings us disappointment and a sense of failure... Or we might just dislike this phase for the pain, inconvenience, and low energy it brings with it.

Unfortunately most women I know don't regard menstruation as an important cleansing and renewing period and don't celebrate their feminine nature each month when they are bleeding. For many of us, even the blood itself is somewhat unpleasant, dirty, or even scary. Actually, menstrual blood is life-giving and life-sustaining. It also has great healing properties which are now being re-discovered by modern scientists. And our monthly bleeding is a perfect time for a sacred connection to our feminine cyclic nature and rhythms of the earth.

The archetype of this phase is called Nurturing Liberator. Menstruation is an invitation to slow our life down, isolate ourselves from mundane petty distractions, and instead focus inward. It correlates to New Moon, or Dark Moon, Hidden Moon, the time when the nights are the darkest. It is also the time of inner winter when all of Nature is hibernating. Naturally, women need lots of rest and sleep right before menstruation and when bleeding. Our bodies are going through an important purification process - our womb lining breaks down and gets released from the uterus, and we want to facilitate cleansing and letting go on all levels of our being.

The two days before actual bleeding and the first three days of menstruation should be just about recuperating, meditating, and being aware of anything that comes up during the process. We might find that our mental processes slow down while emotional sensitivity goes up. We might feel the desire to be alone, still, quiet, and a sense of loss and emptiness. Menstruation is the death of the old; it's time to grieve for the old life and let it go. Descending into ourselves, we normally get thoughts, visions, and dreams that allow us to reflect on the past, reevaluate the present, and envision the future. Our right and left brain hemispheres communicate well to marry both intuitive and analytical reasoning so it's a great time for life course correction and planting seeds of new ideas.



Nurturing Liberator

Our hormones are at their lowest level, and so is our energy. We want to preserve our energies by avoiding socializing, exercising, doing household chores, etc. In an ideal world, we would be isolated from the family and community for a couple of days to retreat with other menstruating women in a Moon Lodge/Red Tent.

In our modern times, we must plan ahead and arrange our month in such a way as to have minimum responsibilities during this sacred time of the month. We want to do only what is essential and make it our downtime and time of enhanced self-care. We want to use this precious time of introspection to tune in deeply to our intuition, accumulate a greater store of energy, and heighten our spiritual connection.

Celebrating our menstruation is connecting to our feminine essence and honoring Nature and Life itself!



About Zoya

Zoya Lu is the creatrix of Womb-Moon Alchemy & Womb-Moon Yoga. She is passionate about helping women stay connected to their true essence of Love so that they can enjoy freedom and joy in their bodies and relationships. She's trained as a womb awakening facilitator, moon priestess, emotional freedom practitioner, energy healer, yoga therapist, and relationship coach. Offering her service as a spiritual mentor for 17 years, Zoya has been a catalyst for healing and self-realization to hundreds of people from all over the world.

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