

The Sacred Body

Embody Your Feminine Wholeness at Any Age to
Thrive by Reconnecting to Nature's Cycles

Monica Canducci

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This book is addressed to women but recommended to anybody who wants to embody Feminine Wholeness. The author is committed to communicating her experience, expertise, and point of view about the meaning of "feminine". The author apologizes if her language sometimes might be biased because of her life experience through a female body.

The author wishes to express that sometimes the words "feminine" and "masculine" are capitalized and sometimes they are not. This is related to shades of meaning and intonation that would be more noticeable in a conversation than in a reading.

Chapter 1

NATURE, THE FEMININE, AND WHOLENESS

Introduction

This book has had a long gestation.

I started leading workshops aimed at supporting women in their transformation processes when I was in my late 30s.

Since then, my life has been enormously enriched thanks to the experiences of the wonderful women who worked with me. These women have been dealing with so many different kinds of challenges, transitions, and wounds.

Divorce, miscarriage, heartbreaking losses (like the death of a child), sexual abuse, gaslighting, abortion, eating disorders, infertility, chronic pain...

Women overwhelmed because of family and work.

Women unacknowledged and discriminated against because of being women. Women discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. Women in the process of becoming the man they always felt they were, and women who were born into the body of a man.

Women in abusive relationships, women awakening from a life spent pleasing others, women subjected to social pressure of any kind, women feeling broken after the surgical removal of an organ, women dealing with their hormones - from PMS to post-partum depression, from perimenopause to menopause symptoms - women fighting to find a balance between mood swings and fatigue.

Women feeling cursed and blamed because they couldn't have children.

Women feeling guilty and blamed because they chose not to become mothers.

Women so devoted and committed to healing others they forget themselves.

Women supporting their families and their children's families until their bodies fell apart.

Women always ready to help others but never heard when they ask for help.

Women dreaming of liberating themselves and finally embracing their dreams.

And so on. I could continue and fill pages.

All these women, at a certain point in their lives, decided to take action and overcome the conditionings and challenges limiting them and the expression of their soul. They decided to heal their wounds and step into their power, starting to work on themselves to build a fulfilling life.

I'm honoured because these women chose me to embrace the transformation leading them to become the women they were meant to be. And I want to express my gratitude to these women because without them I would never have this book written.

All these women were dealing with stereotypes, ignorance, prejudice, conditioning, and discrimination. They were fighting to be accepted and acknowledged, and struggling simply to survive in a society that doesn't seem to be designed to support or even to understand women.

The inspiration for writing this book was already strong when I was in my late 40s, but I didn't feel qualified at the time. To be more specific, even if the women I was working with were already defining me as a guide for them, I didn't feel qualified to position myself as a guide yet.

I was aware that there was a piece of information missing.

It was about menopause.

I was wondering how menopause could change my perspective and my perception of myself as a woman, my perception of femininity, and my experience of the Divine Feminine.

And so I waited.

In the meantime, I myself overcame many life-changing challenges and transitions. From moving from Italy to Canada in 2012 - following my husband's relocation due to job opportunities - to surviving a couple of initiatory illnesses and a related dark night of the soul.

And finally, menopause.

The final initiation and enlightening turning point which brought me to embrace my wholeness.

And then other challenges. From completely redesigning my way of working because of the pandemic to moving again, this time from Quebec to Ontario.

Divorce, remarriage, questioning my gender identity, miscarriages, pregnancy, a NDE (*near death experience*), and the joy (read challenges) of motherhood were already on my list of accomplishments, beside many other tests life had offered me since my birth.

Thanks to the latest experiences I have been through since I have been living in Canada - above all menopause which happened when I was 51 years old - my understanding and embodiment of the so-called *Feminine Energy* has become clearer and stronger with every passing day. As well, the guidance I offer to those women who feel ready to embark in their journey of discovery, embodiment, and manifestation of their full potential - a journey to freedom, healing, wholeness, and fulfillment - has become clearer and stronger.

And finally, I am writing this book because I feel called to share my experience and expertise in order to make a difference. I truly believe that we can live fulfilling lives, make our dreams come true, and make this world a better place by reconnecting to our feminine energy and expressing our inner nature and true self.

Speaking of Women...

This book appears to be addressed to women, but is for all those who want to understand and embody the feminine energy fully, and unleash their inner Divine essence. It is often referred to as *the Goddess*.

Before continuing, I want to clarify a couple of things. I am - physically speaking - female. This is independent of my sexual orientation, which could be defined as a bit queer, despite the fact that I'm married to a man.

My physical structure, and my physiology, is that of a woman, and I want to acknowledge this as a fact. So in this book (as well as in my life) I speak from my structural and physiological point of view - the point of view of an individual who is experiencing life through a woman's body - that includes not only my body shape and features, but above all my *feminine hormones*.

From now on, even if it looks like a generalization, in order to make everything simple I will speak of "men" and "women", and males and females, only and strictly from a

biological, physiological, and hormonal point of view, acknowledging that there are as many shades of masculinity and femininity as individuals on Earth.

Masculine energy and Feminine energy are not a prerogative of just men or women, but present in any living being in different degrees and shades.

This book is a journey to wholeness.

I know that it looks like a paradox, but to achieve wholeness and overcome gender discrimination and roles, we have to acknowledge and accept gender as a first step in order to appreciate and acknowledge all the infinite beautiful shades and colors in between. They transcend this definition.

About Feminine and Masculine

In many spiritual traditions from different parts of the world, the feminine energy is described as receptive, welcoming, nurturing, supportive, caring, and intuitive, while the masculine energy is described as active, penetrating, risk-taking, competitive, goal-oriented, and logical. Feminine is described as cyclical, and masculine as linear.

These attributes are mostly related to shapes and functions. The shape of a female's genitals and pelvis is designed for *receiving and welcoming* the sperm, then containing and supporting a baby-in-progress. A woman's breasts are designed for nurturing babies once they are out of the womb. A woman's nervous system is designed to react and respond to other's needs and requests.

The shape of a male's genitals is designed for penetrating to release the sperm (and the individual spermatozoa look like they are competing to conquer the egg).

During the fertile stage of their lives, women go through monthly hormonal changes (the *period*) in preparation for possible conception. They experience the cycle of producing ovocytes (eggs) in their ovaries; they have a uterus that gets thicker to prepare for nurturing a fertilized egg; if conception does not occur, the uterine lining designed for welcoming the nestling egg will be released from the body as blood through the vagina during the period, or menstruation. If conception occurs, a woman's body is designed to go through approximately nine months of gestation (pregnancy) to arrive at delivery, followed by a period of breastfeeding.

New discoveries in the field of psychophysiology point out that women - because of their structural and hormonal features - are designed in a way that makes them more responsive to others' needs than men. A woman's nervous system is designed to detect and respond immediately to minimal signals coming from the baby (expression, sounds, etc.).

A man's body is not designed for that. Not for carrying babies, nor for nursing them.

Men have hormonal shifts too, but way less complex than women's - at least in the outcomes.

The primary sex hormones playing the main roles in a woman's cycle are estrogen and progesterone while the primary sex hormone for men is testosterone (however, women produce small amounts of testosterone and men produce small amounts of estrogen and progesterone).

To maximally simplify, a woman's cycle is the product of a monthly dance between estrogen and progesterone, while a man's testosterone levels can vary depending on different circumstances, and even seasonal shifts, but in a less evident way. It's not comparable with a woman's cycle.

It's really interesting to notice, however, that men experience a daily rise and fall of testosterone levels, peaking in the morning and falling in the evening like the Sun, while women experience a menstrual cycle which usually lasts 28-29 days and presents with four phases like the Moon cycle.

My book starts here. I will take you with me on a journey of practical discoveries to help you understand the magical connections between the world within and the world surrounding us. We will travel through the Elements of Nature (Fire, Earth, Air, Water...) and across the Seasons and the Moon Phases to reconnect with our forgotten power and unleash our inner Divine essence.

You will be guided through the Sacred Body path to integrate the Masculine and Feminine in a way you might never have experienced before.

In this book you will find that this first part is about the relationship between healing and reconnecting to Nature, and the second part includes practical instructions, meditations, and activations related to the Elements, Seasons, and Moon Phases which reflect and represent both the phases of a woman's period, and the stages of a woman's life.

I will guide you to understand the gifts you can receive from each phase and stage, and I will give you the practical instructions and codes to access those gifts.

Whatever the life challenge or transition you are going through...

Welcome on board.

Beyond Patriarchy

In many years of work with women, I witnessed firsthand that there is a lot of confusion about the *feminine* and *masculine*.

There is a lot happening regarding *feminine awakening*. A lot of feminism (the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes) emerged in response to sexism and male chauvinism. There is a lot happening regarding healing and reconnecting to the feminine.

And I often read or hear sentences like “smash the patriarchy!” or some such coming from aggravated women.

But it's time to go a bit deeper and beyond the “smash the patriarchy” slogan, because it hides a patriarchal trap. In fact, the “smashing” attitude is typically patriarchal. We have to deeply understand what the feminine is, and how to reconnect with it before taking any other step if we want to successfully create an alternative to the patriarchal attitude, which is mostly enacted through violence, imposing, exploiting, and controlling.

This is one of the purposes of this book - to overcome discrimination and the damages created by the patriarchal attitude through many centuries and across many areas of this planet.

One of the most subtle and dangerous outcomes of our society exists in regards to women entering into menopause. A step that in many ancient traditions around the world is considered a rebirth, an initiation, and the moment in which a woman can fully unleash her power (also on the sexual perspective), is seen in our society as a kind of illness to be “cured”, or “the end of fertility” - meaning mostly the beginning of the end of life.

This on top of all the challenges women go through if and when they decide to step away from the *usual path*, which is to be married to a man, make babies even if they don't feel driven to motherhood, and enjoy following their grandmothers' steps and accepting their partner's decisions. Maybe this doesn't apply to you, but sadly it applied and still applies to many women who feel the social pressure driving them to do this or that, instead of following their soul call.

It still looks like a woman's purpose should be to fulfill the desires of the men surrounding her. She is useful when she is fertile, nurturing, supportive, obedient, and that's it. And most of the time a woman is considered attractive only when she is in her fertile age.

From our Planet's perspective, this attitude is the same one which brings mankind to exploit the natural resources without respect, and with no vision for the future.

It's time for a change.

Before we continue, I want to warn you: This book is not about history or sociology. It is about the way we function and the correspondences between our physiology and the primal forces which have given shape to the Universe and to our world.

It is a book about *embodiment*, and so you will not find notes or references in it (but you will find a chapter with some resources at the end), because I want to keep you *in the flow* while reading.

It is about how our body reflects Nature, its Elements and cycles, and how symbols, myths and archetypes teach us the path to overcome any challenge, any life transition, and achieve fulfillment.

It's about practical inspiration to help you understand, embody and manifest the Feminine Energy by acknowledging the sacredness of your body, and support you in finding your path to freedom, fulfillment, and wholeness, independent of your age.

This is a book about healing our lives as living beings by reconnecting to the sacredness of Nature through our body.

So long as we keep fighting patriarchy with contemptuous, polemical, and derogatory (and therefore...patriarchal!) attitudes and responses, there will be no healing. *Before* overcoming patriarchy we have to build something that will enable humanity to go

beyond the patriarchal model by replacing it with something more functional, and this is our responsibility today. Now.

Our brain works this way: Before getting rid of anything, a habit, a pattern, a model - an established neural network, or pathway which corresponds to something we want to leave - it needs us to create an alternative, a new neural network or pathway, meaning a habit, pattern, or model that is more functional than the one we want to get rid of.

This is how we - as humans - function. And this is why, when my clients or students ask me to help them overcome anything, I always start working to discover their hidden resources first, and then to create alternative and more functional patterns and pathways in order to open the road to their quantum leap potential and desired transformation.

Once we create a more functional alternative to what we want to let go of, then our brain recognizes that there are more benefits to the new pathway, and will stop resisting the change, choosing to go for it.

If our human brain works this way, our human society works like this, too.

This means that if we want to overcome the patriarchy we need to nurture and reinforce a model that is more functional. We need to build it within ourselves first, going through a process of inner transformation, and then acknowledging how our transformation will naturally involve and spread to our families, our circle of friends, acquaintances, neighbours, becoming, step after step, *the* alternative.

The result is a *natural* and pleasant alternative that will be impossible to not to embrace and follow.

About Nature, the Feminine, and Wholeness

I remember how my son looked almost shocked when he realized that a woman can deliver both males and females. He was just three years old when he realized he was born *from* me, meaning from my body. He asked, I answered. Then he looked so puzzled and baffled, and he told me that he thought that men delivered boys, and women delivered girls.

After the initial perplexion, he seemed on the one hand to be in awe, like I was an almighty Goddess, and angry on the other, telling me that it was not fair that only

women can carry and deliver children. I felt that, through him, I touched something deep that day.

I was in front of a *man's* frustration and admiration caused by a woman's *almightiness* - and I understood a lot about patriarchy as a response and reaction to the power of the feminine body, and Nature.

Looking at most of the spiritual paths and traditions on Earth, and even approaching Western Astrology, we discover a distinction between feminine and masculine forces, energies, attributes, Signs, and the Elements of Nature - Fire, Earth, Air, and Water.

Earth and Water are classified as feminine Elements, while Fire and Air are classified as masculine. But then we can also notice that Mother Nature, the primal Goddess, includes all the Four Elements in the form of Seasons and Moon Phases. We will deepen this topic in the second part of this book dedicated to embodiment.

Think about Mother Earth, or Mother Nature, and its Seasonal cycle at middle latitudes. Think about our Earth-Sun-Moon system, and about the Moon Phases.

We will see how a woman's body works as a *mirror* of all this (the Seasons, the Moon Phases), including the Four Elements, and not just the two defined "feminine".

It looks like Nature invites us to move towards a level in which *feminine* and *masculine* can be integrated into wholeness.

If we want to work to increase spiritual awareness, we have to aspire to wholeness in order to become a complete, accomplished human being.

But from both my training as a bodyworker and my spiritual training with different teachers and masters from various parts of the world, I understood that in order to realize wholeness we first need to go through differentiation. Otherwise, we would just have confusion, and no prerequisite for integration.

We will deepen how the Lunar and the Seasonal cycles reflect both the menstrual cycle and the stages of a woman's life. How does all this relate to healing from our wounds, embracing wholeness, and unleashing our maximum potential to live the life we want, thriving in any field of our life and independent of age?

Women *are* different from men because of their physical structure and physiology, encompassing hormones, features, and also the way they process information.

A woman's structure and functioning is different from a man's structure and functioning, and the way a woman reacts and acts also changes according to the hormonal phase and life stage she is going through. This is true over a month or a lifetime.

When a woman is in her fertile age, every hormonal phase in a month, as well as every life stage or *season* then presents specific characteristics.

It's not easy even for a woman to understand and accept how all this works, so imagine how it must be for a man! There is a level of complexity that can be understood, integrated, embodied, and mastered only through specific work involving our body, mind, and soul.

And this work starts from differentiating the Feminine from the Masculine, and acknowledging differences due to hormonal settings and physical structure, in order to come to integration and wholeness.

To have the same rights and the same opportunity doesn't mean that women and men are *the same* and so there are no differences between them.

There *are* differences, and this is precious, as all the shades between the definition of masculine and feminine are precious.

Again, let's explore all this in the part dedicated to *embodiment*.

We will find out that the Divine Feminine energy is not just related to beauty, harmony, intuition, and care. The Divine Feminine energy is for sure nurturing, supportive, and even reassuring, but also powerful, fearsome, harsh, and merciless.

By understanding the process of the embodiment of the Elements and cycles of Nature, we will become able to master the complexity of all the Feminine's aspects and come to wholeness.

And so we will be ready to create, introduce, and establish a new model to replace the obsolete and dysfunctional patriarchal model.

This is how we can create a better world from within.

A world in which women are aware of their nature and acknowledged for their wholeness in all the shades.

A world in which women will be free to enjoy their uniqueness and be respected for who they are, independent of others' expectations.

We can change the world for the better, but it's not a competition against the masculine. If we keep opposing matriarchy and patriarchy, or feminism and machismo, we will never stop the conflict. And nothing will change.

We have to understand what the word *integration* means. But, again, integration comes *after* differentiation.

Every woman, right now, has the responsibility to awaken her own Divine Feminine energy and learn how to master it in order to learn to respect, acknowledge, heal, and free herself first, from the inside out, and then by connecting with other women on the same path. This will make this world a better place.

Our reconnection with Nature from within is the key to understanding how to proceed on this path. This deeply needed revolution is not a power game. It can only come from a place of awareness, wholeness, and respect - an inner place that has to be cultivated in every human being.

The knowledge we can find by looking at Nature and learning from it can only bring order and a new level of awareness and harmony.

A Proposal for a Better World

What is your challenge?

Are you dealing with a challenging transition, or do you feel on the verge of a life-changing decision?

Has the moment finally arrived and you are ready to follow your soul call?

Is there anything holding you back?

What is preventing you from living fully?

Or maybe you feel the need to be heard, listened, seen, respected, understood...

You know the answer.

It's time to acknowledge *where* you are, in order to start the journey of transformation leading you to embrace your wholeness and express yourself fully so you can live the life you want in the world you are creating.

If we want to live free from restrictions, prejudices, and discrimination, if we want to be respected, we need to acknowledge, embrace, celebrate, exalt, express, and manifest our *true nature*. It cannot happen by fighting it. This is what we have to understand first.

It's true that women are *biologically* and *physiologically* designed for motherhood, and so for most of us our own *feminine* settings (physiologically speaking, meaning our body structure, hormones, and the way our nervous system responds to their fluctuations and to the environment) bring us to be more attentive to others needs than ours.

The design of women's structure, and so Nature itself, in our society is enacted as a *conditioning*. The key to becoming free from this conditioning is not to fight Nature, nor to deny it.

The key is in *mastering* Nature from within. So Nature, which acts as a conditioning in our obsolete model of society, will also become the key to our freedom from all the limitations.

If we want to free ourselves from any conditioning and live fully in a better world, we have to learn how to master our physiology by reconnecting with Nature from within. We have to start from ourselves, then spread the message, and educate other women - and men, of course.

To master our physiology means to become able to surf on the hormonal waves instead of suffer, and use them to express our freedom and wholeness at any age. It means to access a higher level of understanding and embody those forces of Nature, elements, and cycles in order to harness them and use them *beyond* their physical utility in the realm of simple procreation.

There is a world made of pleasure, joy, connection, harmony, excitement, fulfillment, enjoyment, creativity, and freedom that awaits discovery and experiencing. This world is our body.

Through Nature, and the awakening, embodying, mastering, and expression of its forces, we become unstoppable models of the Divine Feminine in action. We become the conscious embodiment of Nature itself, *the Goddess*, in all her aspects, functions, and

shades, and we actively participate in the creation of a new world by harnessing these forces and manifesting these functions constructively, and by not letting them lead our life, nor by trying to deny them.

This book is meant to take you through a healing journey in which you will understand the connection between healing, Nature, and the Feminine.

We can go beyond gender roles only *through* the understanding and acknowledging of the differences between the feminine and masculine, also acknowledging the differences between male and female body structures and physiology.

It's not by denying or erasing these differences, it's not by flattening everything and claiming that men and women are the same that we can do the work and change the world.

It's only by acknowledging and exalting the differences, and all the nuances, that we will overcome discrimination.

Differentiation and discrimination begin both with a 'd' but have totally different meanings, which evidently is lost on those who keep trying to blame the differences to explain and eliminate discrimination.

Perhaps one day it will be clear that mutual respect and equality of rights is independent from any gender and based on *differentiation* - as it happens among the Indigenous Americans and other cultures around the globe, where equal rights are recognized without flattening sacred differences, and where not only two genders are acknowledged and welcomed, but all the shades in between.

Differentiation, as I already reminded you, is the prerequisite to integration, that is the only way to overcome discrimination. Let's explore this concept, and the connections between integration, wholeness, healing, and nature at the end of this first part. Before closing this chapter, another reminder.

We all aspire to wholeness.

This is a book about *embodiment*. Sometimes I will tell you enlightening initiatory stories, sometimes I will disclose precious information, but above all I will guide you through practical meditations and activations in order to pass on my experience and the transmission I received so far from wonderful medicine women and men, and from extraordinary healers and spiritual teachers belonging to traditional lineages and paths around the world.

At the end of this book, you will have integrated enough information and gotten enough tools to start your journey towards the full expression of your feminine wholeness.

It will be like a treasure hunt on the path of Goddess Nature's embodiment. Sometimes, in some places, you will find links to *portals* through which I will guide you to activate specific aspects - the Elements of Nature, the Moon Phases connected to Goddess archetypes - you might need and want to integrate within yourself and in your life.

Stay curious, be open, and enjoy every step.

See you on the path.

