

Hey there, beautiful! 🌸 Before you dive in, a quick heads-up: this transcript is a super close-to-verbatim buddy from our podcast, but it's got its quirks! We didn't call the grammar cops on it, so you might bump into a typo or two. But hey, that just adds character, right? 😊 Embrace the wild side of language and enjoy the read! Happy exploring! ✨



Say Goodbye to Menopausal Depression Naturally

Carmen Hecox: One morning I woke up feeling exhausted and my entire body ached. My first thought was, I must be sick, and I'll just have to let this virus work its course. But as two and three weeks went by, I noticed I'm not feeling better. Why isn't my immune system responding to this virus? Why am I not feeling better? In fact, I'm actually feeling worse.

I use the excuse that I haven't responded to texts or voicemail messages because I'm sick and I need to rest. I also distance myself from my husband and daughter because of course I don't want to get them sick too. But did you know that most viruses typically last a few days to two weeks?

So, what was wrong with me?

Discovering Menopausal Depression

Carmen Hecox: It was menopausal related depression. Yes, you heard me right, my symptoms are common among women aged 40 to 60 who are within the three different stages of menopause.

Understanding Menopausal vs. Depression Disorder

Carmen Hecox: So, you might be asking, what's the difference between menopausal related depression and depression disorder, also known as depression.

Someone who's been diagnosed with depression disorder, during an episode they may experience a depressed mood, they may feel sad, irritable, empty, and they may feel a loss of pleasure or interest in activities. Those feelings can last most of the day, nearly every day, or for at least two weeks. A person who has depression disorders are prescribed medication and are actively receiving treatment from a therapist and a psychiatrist.

But here's the thing, depression disorder can also affect other areas such as body pain, stomach issues, and more. So, it's very important that you have open communication with your medical providers.

The Role of Hormones in Mood Swings

Carmen Hecox: Meanwhile, menopause related depression is caused by a reduction in estrogen and progesterone. The drop in these hormones can trigger mood swings that make you less able to cope with things you would have normally ignored. These hormone dips can set off menopausal depression episode.

And here's something interesting, for those of you who are currently in perimenopause, did you know the same hormone that controls your menstrual cycle also influences serotonin, a brain chemical that is known as the happy hormone. So, when your happy hormone drops, it can make you feel, irritable, anxiety, and sadness. Serotonin is also responsible for your sleep cycles, appetite, learning, memory, and much more.

Personal Journey to Recovery

Carmen Hecox: So, here's what I discovered. I found that subconsciously, even though my life, as I call it, was stress free, I was creating my own internal stressors. I felt like my life had passed me by. I had goals and dreams, earmarked with timelines and milestones, which I failed to meet. I'm getting older. My weight's getting out of control. This wasn't the life I saw for myself 10 to 15 years earlier. What can I do to get back on track to achieve my goals and dreams?

But this negative self-talk and my declining hormones was the reason I was feeling sick. It was then that I remembered something I always tell my loved ones who suffer from depression disorder. The only person standing in your way of feeling

good is yourself. Meaning you cannot expect someone to come along with a magic wand or a pill to make you feel better.

I needed to do my part to manage my menopausal depression. Of course, my loved one's situation is slightly different because they would need to contact their medical provider right away and discuss what they are experiencing and feeling. Their provider may consider changing their medication and perhaps incorporating additional therapy.

In my case, I knew I needed to force myself to feel better, so I forced myself to find ways to create positive change.

Incorporating Healthy Practices

Carmen Hecox: I found that getting outside and walking around my neighborhood can improve blood flow, promote endorphins. And I'm not going to lie to you, sometimes I felt like walking outside was one of the most difficult things I could ever do. But since my research outlined the benefits, I had to force myself to at least give it a try.

My first day, I discovered once I got out into the fresh air, I noticed I was standing taller, which is what I refer to my confidence was slowly being restored. I was no longer feeling sick, in fact, I was beginning to view life in a new light.

Another thing I noticed was on the days that I walked, I had fewer hot flashes. I also noticed that when I was faced with life's hiccups, which is very common, I was able to take a deep breath something I haven't been able to do in many years and deal with each hiccup without getting stressed out or panicking.

Another thing I notice is that when I lay down, In my bed at night to sleep, I was no longer struggling to fall asleep. I slept through the entire night without being disturbed with those pesky night sweats.

This morning walk routine became the best morning ritual I needed to boost my energy and eliminate this brain fog that crept in about the same time as my menopausal depression.

Another practice I incorporated into helping me control my menopausal depression was meditation. I had a prior guest who shared when she was diagnosed as being highly functioning on the spectrum as an adult, her life suddenly began to make sense. She developed what she calls her tools of resilience. One of those tools was meditation. She shared meditation helped her slow down her thoughts and spend time in stillness so she could become more centered with what truly was important to her.

Jennifer Hill's description of her meditation practice helped her slow down her thoughts, and being still was a form of meditation that piqued my interest. I borrowed Jennifer's practice; except I added my own spin by speaking to God during my meditation practice. Meditation has given me inner peace, acceptance and clarity. I found that this too helped me let go of my negative talk, improve my self-confidence and eliminate my negative self-image of who I thought I should be or accomplish 10 to 15 years back.

The Importance of Sleep

Carmen Hecox: Another practice I added is focusing on getting at least seven to eight hours of sleep every night. I never realized how important sleep was until I interviewed expert Dr. Val Cacho, who's a sleep medicine physician. In our discussion, Dr. Val emphasized the importance of sleep and how sleep is essential for our bodies to repair cells, restore energy, and release molecules like hormones and proteins and clear out information we no longer need.

Since I began my new sleep practice of sleeping seven to eight hours, I find that I have more energy, I'm happier, and that I'm able to handle life's challenges with ease rather than being an unpleasant person to be around when those challenges arise. I think this sleep practice has also helped me become my old self who does not need to write things down because I retain information, and tasks. My goal is to sleep between 8 and 9 hours. Real soon!

Family Support and Final Thoughts

Carmen Hecox: The last practice I adopted is taking evenings and weekends off and spending it with my husband and daughter. I still remember when I thought I was sick during that unpleasant time. They were always there for me to remind me that they love me and that I have a purpose.

So, there you have it, menopausal depression can be a challenging time, but as I mentioned before, no one is going to rescue you out of menopausal depression. We women have been professional problem solvers, family and friend motivators, and the one who inspires those around us. I guess you can say we're pretty tough. Now it's your time, you need to carefully put one foot in front of the other and be your own rescuer and challenge yourself to get those endorphins going. Go outside, breathe the fresh air, get your blood flowing and walk off your menopausal depression.

Again, menopausal depression is different than depression disorder, also known as depression. If you are currently taking any kind of prescription medication to aid you with anxiety or depression, do not stop taking your medication. And always speak with your medical provider if you are feeling any form of depression, as they will assist you in finding the best solution for you.

Conclusion and Upcoming Episodes

Carmen Hecox: If you enjoy today's information, don't forget to share, comment and subscribe. If you'd like additional information, you can find that at createthebestme.com/ep104.

If you want to watch my conversation with [Jennifer Hill](#) or [Dr. Val Cacho](#), you can find those episodes below in my show notes.

And don't forget to come back next week as our guest will be Evalee Gertz, who is the founder of Sia Silk. Evalee created these beautiful masks with large eye cups for those of us who have long lashes and want to protect them. An adjustable strap that allows you to custom fit it, and 100 percent mulberry silk, which means it's good for your skin sleep mask. She will be here to share more information about why Sia Silk mask is the last sleep mask you'll ever buy.

So, you'll need to come back next week. Until then, catch you next week. Bye for now.