



Transcript

RhondaNP

The Menopause Guide Podcast with RhondaNP Episode #006

Show notes at <https://www.rhondanp.com/006>

- Announcer:** Welcome to RhondaNP's Menopause Guide Podcast with Rhonda Jolliffe, nurse practitioner, hormone expert and menopause mentor. Balance your menopause experience with natural solutions and regain control to live the life you love. Let's get started.
- Chris Dockter:** Hi there, this is Chris Dockter and I am your co-host for the Menopause Guide Podcast with RhondaNP. I'll be joined in just a minute by my partner Rhonda Jolliffe and if this is your first time listening, welcome. We're so glad you're here. We produce this podcast every week and you will be able to find any of the resources that we mention, as well as our show notes at our website, RhondaNP.com.
- Today's episode is number 006 and it's all about mindset. So I love this episode and let me tell you why I love it so much. Well, because it really hits to the core of why Rhonda and I began RhondaNP which is to help empower women with their menopause experience, but with a positive approach to this transition. Just a quick preview of this episode and what we're going to be covering today.
- As I said, there are a lot of positive pieces to menopause, both biologically and emotionally. We will be looking at this pretty closely. We are also going to talk about how this new norm for us has a really cool benefit that not many people know about and it's really the emergence of a new sense of creativity. We're going to go in to some detail on this topic as well. We are also going to look at the role of testosterone and there are some very surprising benefits to testosterone. We will talk about the evidence-based linkage of positive thinking and better health outcomes and finally we'll wrap it all together with a discussion about gratitude.
- We have a great free download for you to help get you started in your own efforts around thinking about gratitude. So there's a lot of fantastic information in this episode. Let's get moving.
- Okay. In today's episode, we're calling it menopause mindset. Saddle up, girlfriend, we've got a long ride ahead. Really, this episode is all about positive mindset. Let's set the record straight here first of all. Menopause is not a disease, right?
- Rhonda:** It's not a disease. It's not a disease at all. It's a transition into a new life and actually it's a pretty darn good life if you look at it that way. You have two ways of looking at it, that this is really sucks, which I don't swear much, but that just really kind of fits. Or you can say, "You know what, here's the positives," and there are many. There are many.



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- Chris: Let's talk a little bit about your menopause journey, because I think it's really fascinating. You've been treating women, well really all people for the last 20 years, but really have focused on women's health in the last ... We can talk through that, but share your journey when you're going through menopause, what that felt like.
- Rhonda: My journey might be different than everybody else's, or not everybody, but a lot different than most because I started treated menopausal women in my mid-30's, so I knew a lot about it. I heard the stories. I knew what the symptoms are. Everything really that I did for 20 years prior to menopause, I had the information. Many women go into it not having the information. I not only had the information, I was helping women through it before I experienced it myself. It's really interesting, it's like going through anything. Until you've really walked in someone's shoes you really don't have a clue.
- I'm like, "Wow, this ... Are you kidding?" These women sat, just kind of pretty nice and calmly in their chairs in my office and I'm thinking they should have been up choking me or something or shaking me and saying, "You need to do something." It was interesting, I never really realized, kind of like having a baby, until you have it you don't know what that feels like. It's an interesting experience, but I kind of pulled out all my little tools and started trying to work on myself and it's a process. It's a process in and ongoing process. But one of the things I decided and I decided far before I went into menopause that I was going to stay positive and so I really do try to stay positive and some days are worse than others, obviously. But there is so many positives to menopause and not only physically and emotionally, but biologically.
- Our biology of our body changes and it changes to some actually some good things that I think we understand out there. One of them is, is when you lose your estrogen and progesterone, you actually have a higher testosterone level. Now, your testosterone doesn't raise, per say, but your estrogen and progesterone decline. So now you have this different balance. Women's moods and energy and everything feed off their estrogen and progesterone, but when you're in menopause you have a little more testosterone that you're working off of because you don't have as much estrogen and progesterone. One of the things about that is that you're a little bit more like a man.
- Chris: What? Have you ever wanted to be that way?



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- Rhonda: Well, honestly, I never did, but there were some things I was jealous of men about and one of them is that really there are certain things you get to this point in life in menopause and it's like, "Oh, I don't care about that as much as I used to." So when women tend to get really worked up about things when we're younger, when you go through menopause biologically or hormonal changes, you really don't ... I'm going to swear again. You don't give a shit about things that matter anymore. Or that don't matter anymore. That's kind of a nice thing. It's kind of a nice shift that it's like, "Okay, I'm okay with that." When you used to really get upset about it or you'd kind of go on and on and on and you're thinking about it, so that is a positive.
- Chris: Wait, wait, let's just stop a minute. That's pretty life-changing, in mind-shifting. Because we all know if we have men in our lives, the way that they kind of process things in terms of big things can happen to them personally and they just kind of let it roll off their back. Or they get over things so quickly. Is that kind of what you're saying?
- Rhonda: That's exactly what I'm saying. It is kind of life-changing.
- Chris: It is. I feel like you say, "Don't sweat the small stuff." You can say that, but as women we know we go over things over and over and over in our heads, what could I have done differently and blah blah blah. Really, in this time in our lives, maybe we won't be doing that as much, so that's certainly a positive.
- Rhonda: What's cool is you actually start paying attention to the more important things and that becomes what you focus on. When you're younger you focus on so many little things that really don't matter in your big picture, but you just kind of worry, worry, worry, worry, worry about that and it's okay because you're raising kids and it's usually about the kids and those kinds of things. But yeah, it kind of opens up this whole new space in your brain that you can now utilize.
- Chris: I love that, because I think in perimenopause, we know we have a lot of brain fog and I really again, about being positive ... In my situation I had a high pressure career and I had a large staff and I couldn't put words together some days and I thought, "Do I have Alzheimer's?" Seriously.
- Rhonda: Oh yeah.



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- Chris: So that was part of the negative of what's happening, but really that's just a symptom. I don't have that as much anymore now that I'm really out of perimenopause, so I think it's almost looking at your symptoms and looking at that them ... Some of them will be short-term. Some of them will be longer, but really this whole process is a journey. I'm on a journey. I was in breast cancer fundraising forever and we talked about the breast cancer survivor being on a journey and definitely she is. But the word journey for me, some people embrace that and some people don't like that, but this experience of menopause is really a journey and it lasts for quite a while. So our mind-set's really important.
- Rhonda: The mindset is really important because it really is your new norm. It's really your new norm now, so what are you going to do with that? Well, you can be really negative about it and sometimes that's the very first thing I get out of a woman when she's in my office is that she's very negative about it. I try and turn that around and say, "Okay, although there's a lot of negative feelings and things that are going on and changes, there's a lot of positive things as well."
- One of the other things that comes out with that biology changes your creativity. I don't know if I've talked to you about that a whole lot, but our creativity ... So if you're finding that you're going through this whole menopause and you're wanting to do things that you put on the back-burner years ago that really was more your creative self, but you got into a job that didn't use your talents or whatever, this is the time when you really need to open up that drawer, pull it out and bring out your creative skills.
- What's really cool is we're seeing women at this age now changing jobs, which never was heard of years back, but now we're seeing a lot more home-based businesses and some other things that women are really bringing out their creative self and that's actually a biology that's going on in our chemistry. It's not just there because you're getting older. It's actually a chemical process that is going out. What's cool is you have more time. If your kids are grown and gone, you have more time for those creative energies to come out. Figure out what they are and if there's something you've always wanted to do, but you never have, now's the time to do it, because you're going to be really good at it because it's a passion.
- Chris: It's kind of like you've got that testosterone, like you don't give a shit and this creativity, you are going to be just ... No one's going to stop you during menopause. I love that. I think that's so much better than feeling like you're a victim.



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- Rhonda: Absolutely, absolutely. I think we all have to change how we look at things. Although menopause has been so negative and there's negative symptoms, I want to turn it around and really focus more on the positives, because if you focus on the positives you're going to feel kind of good about it. It's like, "Oh, this is cool."
- Chris: But isn't there a linkage between research that's been done and positive health outcomes based on attitude.
- Rhonda: Oh absolutely. And I've seen that over the years. I can totally tell if somebody's been diagnosed with cancer or any major chronic illness and they come in and they are just doom and gloom, they end up not doing well and the person that comes in and says, "Well, you know what, got to go to my treatments. I'm going to get this done, this done, this done and they're living their life and they're very positive, it really makes a huge difference in their health outcomes.
- Chris: When we were researching for this episode, I was looking at some interesting research specifically around heart disease and there's one example from Johns Hopkins, which talks about people with a family history of heart disease who also had a positive outlook. They were actually able to document that one third were less likely to have a heart attack or other cardiovascular events within five to twenty five years than those with a more negative outlook. That's pretty fascinating.
- Rhonda: It is fascinating. The research is there and if you're a clinician in practice, you see it. You literally see these people decline or thrive. It is one or the other.
- Chris: We talk a lot about gratitude and I think gratitude is a hot button word right now anyway, but you really look at people that have been successful and positive through-out history have been grateful individuals. One of the things that I'd like you to talk about is ... Do you work with your patients about gratitude? Or how do ...
- Rhonda: I do a lot. If I see, especially if I'm really feeling someone's negative, because I can kind of feel their negative energy. I'm like, "We need to turn this around," and sometimes they need a tool. They need a very specific daily thing to do to turn that energy around. I recommend a gratitude journal. What that it is every single day, the same time of day, you can do it in the morning or the evening, whatever works for you, writing three to five things down for that day that you're grateful for. Some people have a hard time, "Oh, what am I grateful for?" Well, you can start out with some really simple stuff and just write it down. There's a chemistry in our body also about thinking about it versus writing about it. You're thinking about it, you're putting the pencil in your hand. You're actually writing it down so that you're more grateful. It's more gratifying for your body's chemistry when you actually write it versus just thinking it.



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I do recommend a journal. I tell women, "Go down and get yourself a pretty little journal that just catches your eye and sit with that every day, three to five things." And I have had so many people say that has been such a great tool for them.

Chris: I bet, too, and I don't do this specifically but I need to start, if you look at your gratitude and look back over a few weeks or months or even a year from now, I bet you it's really quite heart-warming.

Rhonda: It is. It is. Yeah. You can always look at ... I always think everything is a positive. Even in the darkest moments, there's always a positive that comes out of everything. I actually figured this out just naturally from a very young age and I remember being even in my twenties when I would, when something bad would happen, I'd almost get excited to see what positive was going to come out of it, because it always did. That rings true to me and I believe that so deeply that anything that does happen, there is a positive that comes out of it.

Chris: Right. I think it doesn't matter if you're a religious person or what religion you are, but just that you have a belief system that it's not about you. I think that's, when we're going through menopause and you've got such, some women, debilitating symptoms, it's just unfair. It's just, "This sucks." You've got to kind of think there's a bigger, broader message and path and plan going on and you're part of it. Really, you're attitude's going to carry you through or it's going to knock you back.

Rhonda: Absolutely.

Chris: Okay, I think one of the things that we are going to challenge you as a listener to do is keep a gratitude journal. What we're going to do is on this lesson, we have a gratitude journal for you and it's a download and it kind of walks you through what you need to do, thinking in the morning or in the evening, just writing down like Rhonda said three to five things that you are grateful for. They can be the simplest things or they can be really big things. They can be the same things every day or different things every day, right?

Rhonda: Absolutely. Yep.

Chris: So there's no real rules to this ...

Rhonda: There's no rules. There's no rules. You can be thankful for your toothpaste that tastes good that day. It can be anything, yeah, anything.



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- Chris: But I think the bigger message here for this episode is that menopause is really, again it's not a disease, it's a journey, it's a transition, but it's a long time. It's not a I'm going to take a pill and I'm going to be all better. It's really a process.
- Rhonda: Really, it is. It actually is a time when you change if you have been a negative person in the past, you can actually change this and become a positive person for the rest of your life. It can be a life-changing thing, menopause can be, because it's that time when we should be reflecting on where we are at in our life at this moment in time and how we want the rest of our life to look like.
- Chris: The thing too is, we are in menopauses in our late 40s or 50s and the average lifespan in the United States is in the mid-80s. I think it's 84, 85 maybe. That's a long ... That's decades more that we have to have a full, fun, feisty, whatever we want to call it, and it's up to us. I think that was my ah-ha moment that menopause has been characterized in my frame of thinking as negative because that's what the media tells us. That's what advertising tells us. We have RhondaNP.com, which is our website and our business and when I'm searching for pictures and I put in menopause you should see the stuff that comes up. It's like what is wrong with these women? These poor women, they're suffering. I think that's really our message here is we don't want it to be a suffering time or a time of depression. We want it to be a time of power and change, gratitude and really hopefulness.
- Rhonda: Yeah, and I think sometimes we think now we're old and we're not of value to society, when in fact we're not old. We have experience, knowledge, wisdom that can be very valuable to our society, so we need to really, really take that and go with that.
- Chris: Absolutely. I think the biggest thing we can do is change for our daughters and our daughters-in-law and who's coming up to say, to talk about it now, because it's been such a shadow and in the shadows before. It's almost like breast cancer was in the 80s. Nobody said cancer and, God, nobody said breast. Really, talking about negative thing.
- Rhonda: Right, exactly, perfect.
- Chris: So on that note, ladies, we are going to end this episode and let you know that we do have a gratitude journal for you as the free download, so check it out at RhondaNP.com. Thanks. Until next time.



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Rhonda: Thanks for tuning in.

Chris: We appreciate you. Thank you so much again for being with us today. We hope you come back often and feel free to add the Menopause Guide Podcast to your favorite RSS feed or subscribe directly on iTunes. You can also follow us on Facebook. Please share and like our information with your girlfriends or Rhonda on Twitter, @RhondaJolliffe. Jolliffe is spelled J-O-L-L-I-F-F-E. That's two Ls and two Fs. So if you like what you hear jump on over to iTunes and please give us a review so other women can find these resources when they really need them. Leaving a review is really easy. It doesn't take very much time at all. Just navigate to the top of our podcast page and you'll see ratings and reviews. Click on write a review and take about 30 seconds and share your thoughts with us. In this same place, you can also subscribe to our podcast or share on social media. Until next time.

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