

A photograph of four women of diverse ethnicities smiling warmly at the camera. They are outdoors, with a background of trees and foliage bathed in soft, golden light, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting. The women are dressed in casual attire, and their expressions are joyful and confident.

Dr. Elwood Rolle

**Embracing Change:
A Holistic
Approach to
Menopause for
Women Over 45**

Embracing Change: A Holistic Approach to Menopause for Women Over 45

Dedication

Dedicated to all women who hold the hands of other women going through menopause, because that's way more valuable than holding their hands on a bungee jump. Courage, change and experience are more valuable than their hands on your breasts. Wisdom, memories and a sisterhood are more valuable than their hands on your privates. Spirit, laughters and sisterhood are more valuable than their hands on your anus. Courage, strength, love, sisterhood and virtue are valuable, like holding on to these things. This book is for you, women. If it inspires just one woman and she passes it on to another ... Amen. And men. And transgender. Go. Go. It's gonna be okay.

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Embracing Change: A Holistic Approach to Menopause for Women Over 45

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Preface: Embracing the Second Spring

Here is your invitation. Welcome to the Feminine Power Journey – to the natural adventure and rite of passage of menopause – a time of new-found power, senior wisdom and vitality, moving far beyond symptom management.

For a very long time, menopause has been treated as a mysterious and mystified process – always viewed in negative terms such as decline, loss and beyond. However, I want you to embrace the view of menopause as a ‘second spring’, as represented in the image above, as a process of awakening and liberation. Expect to see a time of letting go, of shedding old patterns and behaviours and reclaiming your power.

Inside are the resources you need to guide you through this stage as smoothly as possible. You’ll find information to help you with the physical changes that come with menopause, experience sharing for how emotions affect you, expert tips to understand and manage your symptoms, and everything you need to know to make decisions about treatment that will help you feel your best.

No woman grows old. The kid who had been growing smaller keeps growing back: and so it will be for some time. Not every woman’s life ends in menopause. Yes, it may be inconvenient, yes, it is also an opportunity to learn, a chance to understand and, most of all, a journey to empower yourself and other women. Because here’s the truth: the menopause is part of your life and it is also part of the natural world. It is spectacular and dull, glamorous and humbling, a time to fail, to pursue adventures, a time to be respectful and a time to rage.

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It is a period of discovery and engagement, a moment for real and immediate revolution. For the frail and old, or for those waiting a few more years to finally end years of perimenopause. Because no woman grows old. The kid who had been growing smaller keeps growing back: and so it will be for some time. This is no time for numbing reality. This is women's time. Second spring. Welcome.

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Chapter 1: Understanding Menopause

The Biological Process of Menopause

Menopause is one of the most heavily documented transitions in the whole animal kingdom. It marks the time in a woman's life when her body stops making eggs (ovulating) – a well-defined moment in life that occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, and often triggers a long, slow drop in key hormones such as estrogen and progesterone produced by the ovaries. The biological basis for menopause might not be the easiest topic for women undergoing the experience, as it is rife with terms that conjure medical distress.

Once a woman enters menopause, this precedes a stage known as perimenopause, sometimes lasting several years, during which time she can have different symptoms related to the hormonal changes in the body. She may also have menstrual irregularity and a hormonal rollercoaster ride, with hot flashes, mood swings and sleep disruptions. In addition, the ovaries produce less oestrogen, and the body's release of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) from the pituitary gland will increase, as it stimulates the ovary to produce hormones. This imbalance of hormones can lead to certain bodily and psychological changes, and is a good time for women to learn what to expect.

One of the negative sequelae is the phase that can be called menopausal disease. Before it occurs, the decrease in oestrogen levels can lead to changes in the cardiovascular system, skeletal health and cognitive function. Post-menopausal women may experience a higher risk of osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease and memory problems, which demonstrates the need to consider the entire organism, especially via a balanced diet that can help protect against these consequences of the climacteric phase.

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Following 12 consecutive months without menstruation, women can declare themselves in menopause, which is considered a permanent end of fertility; however, it does not mean that health issues will cease. Rather, the post-menopausal period can bring about unique concerns of its own – including more hormonal changes and other health concerns that women should be alert to. As is recommended for any aging adult, women are encouraged to have periodic health screenings with their primary provider and be vigilant with discussions of any changes in health to proceed with appropriate testing.

The more we can recognise how this physical change affects our bodies, the more we can also take charge of it. Menopause could be embraced more positively if women understood the biological happenings within themselves. Perhaps they could then adopt holistic measures like mindfulness, food habits and community support to deal with the change. Menopause need not be ‘survived’, but instead embraced in a way that brings out the best and the healthiest aspects of what it has to offer.

Common Symptoms and Their Impact

In your forties, somewhere between the ages of 45 to 55, you are likely to face this natural phase of life known as menopause. While many women may view this as a new interesting and rewarding phase of their lives, it can nevertheless bring with it an assortment of uncomfortable symptoms that could affect their day-to-day activities. Women aged over 45 require more information about them to be able to know what to expect and take the necessary steps to manage their experience during their menopausal phase successfully.

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One of the best-known symptoms of the menopause is the hot flash. A hot flash is a feeling of warmth that rises throughout one's body and can be accompanied by sweating and feeling uncomfortable. Hot flashes tend to occur abruptly, and can even happen during sleep, making it difficult for some women to obtain rest and leading to fatigue. Because hot flashes can arrive at any given time, and in some cases without any warning whatsoever, women may find themselves being anxious due to the unpredictability of the perimenopause. Being preoccupied with such anxieties can make women feel uneasy in social settings or at their place of work. Moreover, the physical discomfort or unease caused by hot flashes can have an impact on women's emotional wellbeing, self-confidence and overall quality of life.

Another frequent symptom is profuse mood shifts, from irritability to intense melancholy. Fluctuations in hormones during the menopausal transition cause significant neurotransmitter changes in the brain, altering mood and emotional functioning. Some women feel the impact on their emotions as turbulent mood swings which strain intimate and professional relationships, either because they cannot articulate or share their feelings and concerns, or cannot handle their extreme emotionality. Recognising such emotional changes as part of the menopausal transition process can help women reach out for support and take steps appropriate to the developmental stage of menopause to ensure good emotional health.

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Sleep disruption during menopause is also common (usually due to night-sweats and anxiety) and insufficient sleep can significantly impact quality of life and disease outcomes. For example, insufficient sleep is associated with cognitive dysfunction, memory problems and increased stress. This can result in a negative feedback loop of fatigue and irritability that can impact sleep and daily functioning. Increased awareness of how menopause and sleep can feed into each other can help women explore natural ways to overcome sleep issues such as relaxation techniques, dietary changes and developing a routine and ambience for bedtime.

Finally, fluctuations in libido and sexual function are common during menopause and can be distressing or make women feel abnormal, inadequate or less attractive. These changes can have a variety of causes, such as hormonal changes, vaginal dryness or psychological causes. When menopausal changes affect a woman's intimate life or relationship with her partner, it is important to talk with her partner and her healthcare provider. Many solutions to these challenges exist, and they can provide much-needed relief and help enhance sexual health and satisfaction. For some women, embracing these changes is part of taking menopause into their own hands – and into their bedrooms.

In conclusion, some severe menopause symptoms have significant and lasting effects on multiple aspects of a woman's life. Awareness and understanding of menopause symptoms are the first step for women aged 45 years and older to success in changing their lives and seeking the best strategies for management. A holistic, all-inclusive approach to the experience of menopause help older women find better ways to cope with bodily changes and live healthier lives physically, emotionally and socially at this phase in the life span.

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The Emotional Landscape of Menopause

Menopausal transition is as much an emotional journey as a physical one. Managing these emotions is key to maintaining quality of life over 45. Understanding these emotions in yourself or a loved one is one of the most challenging aspects of perimenopause (the stage before menopause) and the menopause itself. Changing levels of oestrogen and progesterone – and other female sex hormones – can lead to a range of emotional experiences, from mood swings to anxiety and depression. Recognising these changes as part of the process can help you survive this time with the least possible impact on your mood, stress levels, and overall wellbeing.

One normal experience that can be traumatic is mood swings, ranging from irritability and sadness to anger. All can feel quite random, and leave you feeling irritated and confused. If you haven't felt this way before at the same menopausal age of this other woman, it may make you wonder if you still have the right to feel like the same person who used to be well-regarded for your ability to conquer anything that would stand in your way. Acknowledging these emotions can be the first step towards normalisation. Recognise that your friend isn't behaving randomly, but that you don't feel you have the same right to be this way. This is where direct communication with your friend can help. Discuss these feelings, recognising that a normal experience, and not a sign of mental ill-health, is happening to everyone. It would also be great to develop a network of support: other women, such as friends and family members, can often be of great help, as can support groups.

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Anxiety and depression can increase due to menopause too, and this may be amplified by other usually concurrent life changes – like children leaving home or caring for a parent. Being process can lead women to think about their own mortality, which might precipitate an existential angst and questioning of identity, making them feel unanchored or anxious about the future. It is important to remember that these feelings might arise not just from changing hormones but might equally be related to the above life concurrent stressors, and engaging with mindfulness, yoga or meditation might help ease such feelings of anxiety and improve emotional wellbeing.

Moreover, these recent writers note, the emotional experience of menopause can also provide opportunities for change and discovery: it can spur women to consider new ways of being and perhaps rededicate their lives to the things that really matter to them. It can be a time to look back and learn from the life that has been lived so far, perhaps developing new interests or hobbies, or even switching jobs. A period of (positive) introspection and change can contribute to a renewal of life. It is urged upon women to think less of menopause as an end, and more so as a new beginning.

Ultimately, deeper, talk-therapy support from a professional can be a valuable tool for managing disordered emotional menopause through an appropriate strategy, considering the individual's needs. A therapist, counsellor or women's-health practitioner can offer coping strategies and tools. The wide range of treatment options includes cognitive-behavioural therapy, hormone replacement therapy, oestrogen through patches or gels, lifestyle modifications and more, to help women manage the emotional terrain and plough through until the weather clears. Taking control of your emotional health can help you become more resilient and resolute about the changes, leading to an empowered, new life in later years.

Chapter 2: The Holistic Perspective

What is Holistic Health?

Holistic health is the act of seeing the body, mind and spirit as an interconnected whole, and understanding that a person's best chance to achieve health is by addressing all the various parts impacting their life. What does that have to do with understanding menopause? For women in their 40s and 50s, particularly those in menopause or perimenopause, developing a deeper understanding of the role that holistic health plays on how they experience and understand that phase of life can be transformative for how they see their bodies, their lives – and themselves. Instead of focusing solely on what their physical bodies tell them about menopause – the hot flashes or the mood swings or the sourdigestion or not – solely through a lens of physical health, a holistic understanding of women's health encourages us to consider emotional, mental and spiritual health as crucial components of our overall wellbeing.

Inherent in the philosophy of holistic health is the individualism of each woman, so hormonal therapy, cognitive therapy, exercise, spirituality and creativity – all must be tailored to the unique individual. Menopause can be a major life change, and not just in a purely biomedical way. Women might be going through shifts in their relationships, careers and sense-of-self during the transition. With an elevated awareness of these changes, they might be able to create a healthy and balanced life through menopause to a balanced life after menopause.

Chapter 13: Resources for Ongoing Support

Books and Literature

Books and accounts explaining and exploring menopause are crucial as we develop ideas about the menopause and experience it. Discussing menopause and developing our own individual understanding of this transition will be fundamental to moving through the experiences and supporting others through the menopause as well. For women aged 45 and above facing menopause, there's a range of books to turn to for support. From self-help guides to memoirs and scientific tomes, the diversity of menopause literature can empower women to make good decisions about how to manage their health and bodies in this transformative phase of life.

The most significant reward of reading about menopause is that it can increase our awareness of others by sharing real-life stories, which registers a strong emotional response in the reader. Not only does reading about menopause inspire a sense of community, but this can also improve the mental and emotional wellbeing and vitality associated with social connections. If a woman learns by reading or listening to others' stories that others have managed to cope with the adversities of menopause, this heightened awareness of others can lead to the possibility of finding support through friendships, mutual support groups or professional venues, and diminish a sense of perceived isolation.

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Much like the personal ones, there are countless informational texts on menopause that delve into the science and medicine. And again, the basis for informed decisions should not be friend or heckler who 'nearly died from the shots' (I have definitely been that heckler), but rather, an overview of hormonal changes that happen, a detailing of the physical symptoms that follow, and a discussion of the neurobehavioural changes that may occur. When presented with evidence-based information, women can utilise the proper channels of medicine to seek treatment and, especially since there is a multitude of choices now, find the treatment that is right for them, whatever their holistic values and styles may be – whether that is the traditional hormone replacement therapy or a completely different alternative.

Likewise in the pop-literature of menopause, there is an emphasis on self-care and wellness-based practices. For instance, many authors of these resources orient their readers toward holistic living, combining elements of nutrition, exercise, mindfulness and stress-reduction practices. Books that target these aspects of women's lives engage with self-help strategies and affirm women's agency in sustaining their own health. Practices that engage and integrate holistic approaches contribute to better physical and emotional health, resilience and wellbeing because they lead to a renewed engagement with oneself.

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Lastly, because literature is never closed, new voices are entering the discourse surrounding menopause; writers from different worlds make significant contributions to our growing cultural understanding of the effects of culture, race, time and biography on the menopausal aesthetic. This is crucial in opening up a more dynamic and inclusive narrative for all women. For women beyond 45, reading can provide an arsenal of resources they can tap into and a broadening of what it means to experience, express and embrace menopause with confidence and grace.

Online Communities and Forums

Online communities and forums also provide women with a vital resource throughout their menopause journey. They provide an outlet to share and be heard, give and receive advice, and find others who also want to explore this experience. For women over 45, a community can mean belonging, finding out what has helped or hindered others, exploring holistic possibilities or just engaging with others on a shared path.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of online communities is the information shared among them. Women described sharing and discussing individual experiences with menopause, including hot flashes, mood swings, sleep disruptions and weight gain and loss. So many shared experiences make for a strong support network and potential solutions to the physical and mental challenges women experience. This level of communal knowledge can serve to bolster confidence in taking charge of one's health both during and after menopause. Women interested in a holistic approach can also find suggestions for dietary changes, exercise and meditation to ease the transition.

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the support that can be found in many of these online spaces — the freedom to talk, the space to voice and work through concerns and feelings — can also help to normalise what is happening and enable women to forge bonds with others going through something similar to them. Connection with a community of women in parallel life experiences helps life make sense again. When people are isolated and vulnerable, they feel especially drawn to groups of support.

Beside moral support, informational resources are often found on online communities. Many forums feature guest speakers from medical experts, webinars, and articles that discuss menopause and other holistic health issues. In addition to receiving medical advice and answers to specific questions, women may feel empowered to explore alternative therapies and lifestyle practices that resonate with their values and help to establish a sense of efficacy. Easily accessible information can relieve the experience of menopause as something particularly threatening and unusual by de-mystifying and de-stigmatising it.

Lastly, these communities can inspire activism and advocacy in women – if each there addresses the same issues in front of them, then the more they share them, the more they might find themselves wanting to advocate for increased awareness, or improved treatment options for menopause. And by increasing visibility of menopause in both medicine and wider culture, we are inspired to do what women of all ages want to see more of in relation to menopause – a holistic and women-centred approach to women's health. By coming together in these digital spaces, we are not only then acknowledging and supporting each other as we enter midlife; we are changing culture, and opening the door for more women to improve their 45-plus years of life.

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Professional Help: When to Seek Guidance

Menopause marks a seismic shift for women. It is also the phase of life when symptoms associated with the natural deceleration of fertility can become a flurry of physical, emotional and psychological upheaval. Some women can manage their menopausal journey through lifestyle adjustments or self-care. In the moments where support is needed – whether by the patient or a loved one she entrusts to approach her practitioner on her behalf – it is crucial for women to understand their own body signals and when to consult a healthcare practitioner to ensure a safe menopause for themselves.

One of the first signs that it's time to seek professional help is the severity of your symptoms. Hot flashes, moodiness and insomnia can vary from being mild and easily controllable to wreaking havoc on your daily life and wellbeing. If you find that your experiences are keeping you from doing your job well, maintaining your relationships or just living life on your own terms, a healthcare provider can listen to what's happening and help you determine an appropriate intervention, whether that's making lifestyle changes, adding a hormonal treatment or alternative approach to your life.

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Another crucial consideration is the psychological impact of menopause: some women experience anxiety, depression or heightened stress during this phase of life. When feelings such as sadness or anxiety start to impede daily functioning or persist for prolonged periods, it's important to seek help from a mental health professional, such as a therapist or counsellor. Menopause can have social, emotional, physical and health implications, and a qualified counsellor can help a woman to find tools for coping, developing a support system and rising to the challenges of this unique phase of life. Accepting the need for assistance in the realm of mental health is a sign of strength, and feeling good is as important as living without pain.

Women having to cope with cardiovascular disease, diabetes or osteoporosis: all conditions that may be worsened by menopause
Men having to cope with cardiovascular disease or type 2 diabetes: both more common with age and significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease
Third, women and men having to cope with cardiovascular disease, diabetes or osteoporosis: all conditions that may be worsened by menopause. If you do have a pre-existing condition, you need to ensure that the treatment is working and that you remain in control by having regular check-ups with a health provider. You also need to prepare for any new symptoms that arise by seeking advice and referral. Healthcare professionals can help in treating and coping with menopause-related symptoms while monitoring and treating any underlying health issues.

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Second is that it's highly personal, so while the average age range for many of the symptoms might be in the mid-40s to mid-50s, your own body and health might dictate that they develop at an earlier or later age than average. Third, knowing that these changes can be associated with genetic, life and lifestyle factors, combined with their highly individual nature, means that if you are feeling confused or you have questions related to treatment, both natural and medical, don't be afraid to ask questions of your doctor or holistic healthcare practitioner. Naturopaths, nutritionists and other holistic practitioners can be great places to seek out alternative approaches to menopause that better match your values and lifestyle. With the right supportive network, you can be both fearless and graceful on your menopausal journey, or at least give it a good go!

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About The Author Dr Elwood Rolle

Dr Elwood Rolle is an advocate, for health and education. He serves as the Co-owner and Director of the Herbal Life Treatment Institute as well as the Dean of Academics at Michael University. Additionally, he operates his practice, Balance Health Holistic Services where he offers tailored holistic health consultations. Dr Rolle's commitment to healthcare is evident in his role as a certified paramedic with the Bahamas EMS service where he previously held the position of Operations Manager for eight years.

Dr Rolle's extensive educational background showcases his dedication to learning. He holds a degree in Natural and Holistic Medicine a PhD in Educational Leadership a Master's degree in Business with a focus on Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. His impressive qualifications are further bolstered by certifications in health, allied health education, business leadership and management.

Dr. Rolle, a prolific author has written more than 20 books in the last decade. Currently 12 of them are published while 8 are set to be released soon. His writing showcases his expertise and enthusiasm for holistic health and wellness.

Outside of his work Dr. Rolle pursues interests such as martial arts exploring history and religion, writing, swimming and staying updated on advancements in technology. Most importantly he values time spent with his family.

With a background in services, business leadership, holistic health practice and academia Dr. Rolle brings a perspective to his writing and teaching. He is committed to empowering individuals to take charge of their health and well-being through an approach that addresses the mind, body and spirit.

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Take this book and put it back on your bookshelves, menopause is not the last chapter, it is the opening of your new book. Your wisdom book. The reclaiming of you. No two women's experience of being in Menopause are the same nor should they be treated the same way. Follow your intuition, listen to your body and be the captain of your ship. You are not alone.

And this book is simply your map; the guiding light for you as you walk your journey through your challenge with menopause. Keep learning, keep growing, and keep tuning into your inner voice. Feel your way through, delight and discover along the way. Celebrate your own milestones – live longer, live better, live more joyfully – and let the fire of a woman burn brightly in your heart and soul. You deserve no less. Blessing to you!

Dr. Elwood Rolle Author