

Becoming Real: Harnessing the Power of Menopause for Health and Success by Rose Kumar, M.D.

Excerpt Pages 188-189

Many of my patients become extremely anxious and depressed during their midlife transitions. This is the gateway where the language of the soul replaces the language of the world and women often feel like they are on foreign ground. The tension created between the expectations of the world and the demands of the soul provokes anxiety. A woman at this juncture needs guidance and orientation to travel from one level of identity to another. This “medial time,” is the time when she has not yet embodied wholeness. First, she has much to deconstruct of her old identity that is defined by the world. This identity carries momentum and familiarity. She has to learn a new language, the language that her soul expects her to learn and understand. She has to learn how to live in the world without compromising herself. She needs to learn who she is and what makes her tick. At this juncture she may find that what is intrinsically real for her, and what she has been conditioned to believe, are different, and the chasm between them evokes anger and anxiety. This is an awakening process, one which is not marked by our culture. It is marked by her changing hormones.

Midlife women need the courage to help each other reframe this powerful time as a movement towards health. Those who have integrated their real selves into their identities must midwife those who are still in process. This is the work of the “village.” We must mentor each other in order to offer orientation and direction through the treacherous terrain of this journey where our vulnerability can lead us easily back into familiar patterns of self-denial. Our new-found power may not yet have gathered momentum, and we are much like newborns in this rebirthing process. As we help each other understand the depth of our feelings and consider this process sacred, our symptoms of anxiety will be short-lived. They will be replaced with curiosity and creative fire.