

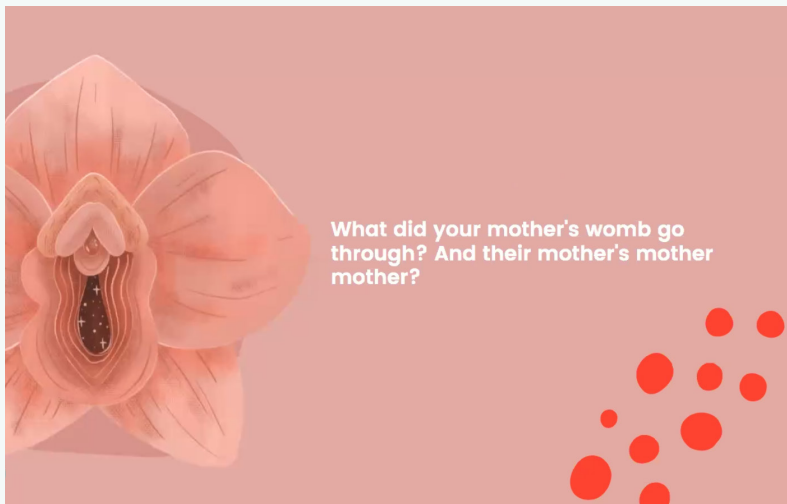
“The Pulse of the World”: Womb Wellness with Juju Angeles and Gingi Allen at the Fluid Mutualism Symposium

By Kristen Wawruck

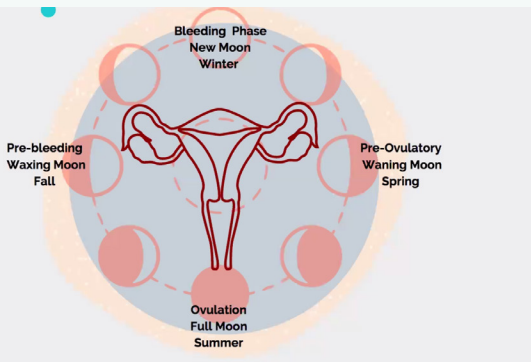


It was fitting that “Womb Wellness: A Reproductive Lens to Moonstration” was hosted on the eve of a full moon, and one that was entering the zodiac sign of Pisces, a water sign, no less. Nearly 60% of the human body is comprised of water. For those of us who menstruate, bleed monthly, or experience some combination of the both, it should be no surprise that the approximately 28-day lunar rhythm that guides the tides also cycles in our bodies. As midwives, healers, and educators, Juju Angeles and Gingi Allen want us to remember that this connection to the earth can be a key to unlocking awareness and better health.

This program was hosted within the weeklong, multidisciplinary “Fluid Mutualism” symposium and organized by Professor V., who at the beginning of the session described this rhythm—our periods—as the “pulse of the world.” There was a reminder, too, that a war on menstruating bodies has been a violent instrument of control for centuries of white supremacist and capitalist rule. Professor V. described how this oppression can be exemplified by Pope Innocent VIII’s declaration against midwives and healers in 1484, which suppressed embodied knowledge and waged war on wombs themselves. This war continued within the Catholic church through the 1700s.



Juju Angeles and Gingi Allen discuss the maternal history of birthing in their slide presentation



Juju Angeles and Gingi Allen present the moon cycles of menstruation in their slide presentation

Of course, this subordination continues in a myriad of pernicious and banal ways, whether it is a prevailing attitude of periods as “dirty” to sell products to make us “clean”; the lack of knowledge or care around the long-term ill-gone effects of hormonal birth control methods; or how certain endocrine-disrupting chemicals are allowed with impunity into our food, water, personal care products, beds, and more. It is against this capitalist-driven thoughtlessness or outwardly harmful landscape that Angeles’s and Allen’s work aims to create a space for healing and empowered decision-making.

If there could be only one key takeaway from the program, it was to pay attention to our bodies. Listen to it, keep note of what it is doing and when. From that observation, patterns emerge, and we begin to see different markers of time that can help inform daily choices. If a bleeding phase can be described as a “new moon” or “winter,” then follicular “waning moon spring” and ovulatory “full moon summer” phases follow, to be completed by a pre-bleeding or luteal “waxing moon autumn.” Why are we inexplicably tired some days or frisky on others? Noticing these particular shifts in moods or physical symptoms correlates with hormonal changes. Unlocking these unseen chemical changes means we can make better decisions for our well-being.

For anyone who has ever gone to a doctor suffering from headaches, cysts, unexplained infertility, cramps, etc., only to be told you are “healthy,” this newfound knowledge can be a game-changer. The stakes have always been high, and we are only beginning to discover just how vital this information is in the face of rising cancer rates, mental health

crises, and alarming infant and maternal mortality rates. While some environmental factors can and should be mitigated, sometimes factors like inherited trauma, [transmittable over generations](#) as demonstrated through the burgeoning field of epigenetics, cannot be undone. Moreover, if [you are Black or a person of color in the United States, the risks to you or your child's health are even higher](#)—Black babies died at a rate of 10.97 per 1,000 births, or more than twice the rate for white, Asian, or Hispanic women; African American babies are two times more likely to die before reaching their first birthday than white babies, regardless of the mother's income or education level; and the premature birth rate among black women is 49% higher than for white women.

The work that midwives and doulas like Angeles and Allen and others are doing—helping us gain control over our bodies, with particular attention to Indigenous people and people of color—is in the face of these stark and ominous statistics. They, alongside many other doulas and healers, should also be acknowledged for their ongoing work in increasing the inclusivity of what “women’s” health can be. Their efforts are an affront to a medical-industrial complex that is interested in minimizing costs and maximizing profits over women’s health, which treats childbirth and fertility as [a luxury good](#) instead of a right. We are lucky to have them as part of our extended CCA constellation.

Resources:

Steamychick.com (herbs & steaming)
Instagram: @royalmothering (womb release)
“The Fifth Vital Sign” by Lisa Hendrickson-Jack
Seed Cycling
Midwives and Doulas



Slides by Juju Angeles and Gingi Allen

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