

Creating Your Own Menopause Goddess Group

Much of our knowledge about creating a menopause goddess group, we gained in retrospect. Looking backward and marveling at our unfolding over the past five years, we pondered what had made the Menopause Goddesses so successful. “Maybe we were just lucky;” we thought. Or maybe the right women simply came together at the right time through kismet. Is it possible that our goddess group is so special that it can’t be duplicated? We honestly don’t think so. Time and again, we’ve bonded on the same menopause and midlife issues with women we barely know: on planes, in restrooms, and in grocery store checkout lines. The raw material of women in community is powerful magic indeed. The willingness to open up and share is a part of our essential female makeup. All we need is a structural framework, tight enough for focus and loose enough for the alchemy that results when women come together. With that in mind, we offer a few more thoughts designed to help you create your own Menopause Goddess group. Remember that these are not rules, simply guidelines.

Getting The Right Mix

Theresa-Venus and I started by asking one another “Are there any others out there like us, who are wondering just what the @#&* is going on with this crazy time of life?” We subsequently invited women we knew (in turn having them ask one or two of their friends) to join us for a weekend slumber party with a focus.

First, and foremost, we didn’t try to overcontrol the makeup of the group. Whether blessed or naive, we simply trusted that the right women would come together for our first gathering. Naturally, we did avoid asking women who routinely seem to suck the oxygen out of any room they occupy. Thankfully we know few of them. (Although it seems like everyone knows at least one!)

Begin Before The First Gathering

Again, looking back, we see how important it was to start working before we came together initially. We devised and sent out a questionnaire to all our potential attendees, as well as to some women who were interested in the questions for themselves once they heard about what we’d planned. (These women were satellite goddesses and contributed their thoughts and feelings in the spirit of helping us all.) The questionnaire was to be completed and returned prior to our first meeting. It was also meant to weed out anyone who wasn’t serious about working on these issues and questions together. Interestingly enough, no one opted out and most spent a great deal of time and soul searching in their answering.

Theresa-Venus and I also thought that our questionnaire might serve as a focusing tool and general icebreaker when we did come together. Little did we suspect that it would serve as much more. The process of looking at our attitudes and feelings, past and present, fostered a level of self-awareness that propelled Meeting One forward. Our questions and answers also helped inform our group as a whole. Personal information gleaned was as new to each individual goddess as it was to our sisters. Yet universal themes emerged and we knew we were on the right track. For a pdf copy of our questionnaire click the following link: [questionnaire for blog](#). (Pdf files require Adobe Acrobat Reader. You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader for free – <https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/pdf-reader.html>)

1. Meet No More Than Once Each Year

Perhaps every six months would also work. We are not sure, since we began our group with annual meetings. However, it seems that it takes us a full year to realize and integrate changes from the insights proffered at each meeting. We didn't start out knowing this; we initially met once a year because the Goddesses' schedules are busy (read crazy). In hindsight, we see how valuable it was to have a full twelve months to embody what we learned at our previous gathering.

2. Meet No Less Than Once Each Year

We feel that we can indeed create and enjoy virtual community via the Internet. After all, we started the Menopause Goddess Blog, not only to expand our community but also to help nurture and connect us when we aren't physically together. But we don't think there is any substitute for meeting face to face with open hearts and arms. Not to be too woo-woo about it, but the energy we create together fuels our transformation into the goddesses we want to become. And it just plain fills us up to bursting to be with one another. We honestly look forward to it all year.

3. Nobody Can Know Everybody

In retrospect, we realized that it was incredibly important that we didn't all know one another from the start. Every goddess knew some of the women at our initial gathering, yet not one of us knew everyone. Because we had no shared history or patterns as a group, it made it easier to focus on our intentions and what we hoped to accomplish. Too often a group who know one another well can slip and slide into bitch sessions that may be fun but make no forward progress. In addition, we had no preset roles that we enacted within group. For example, Sandy-Venus is the strong peacemaker in her group of close friends at home, and to be vulnerable and open is just not her role. In the goddess group, she is able to allow and even celebrate sharing her deepest feelings and fears.

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We thought that the questionnaire might serve as a focusing tool and general icebreaker when we did come together. Little did we suspect that it would serve as much more. The process of looking at our attitudes and feelings, past and present, fostered a level of self-awareness that propelled our Meeting One forward. Our questions and answers also helped inform our group as a whole. Personal information gleaned was as new to each individual goddess as it was to our sisters. Yet universal themes emerged and we knew we were on the right track. Feel free to use all or part of our questionnaire. Download the pdf here: [Questionnaire for Goddess Group](#)

5. Set Ground Rules - What Each Woman Agrees To Bring And Keep

None of us is sure that we verbally articulated each of these rules as such. It seemed that they were just understood. Looking back, we think it would have been a good idea to clearly state the ground rules as we saw them. Our “rules” were essentially a set of values that we lived as members of the group

A. Respect

Mutual respect and unconditional positive regard were a must. This was pretty easy for us, and likely will not be difficult for any Venus group, but it needs to be understood.

B. Confidentiality

Personal info that is shared stays with the group only, but the knowledge gleaned can and should be shared generally, especially with other women and our spouses/partners.

C. Safety

Trust is an absolute necessity for any goddess group. We agreed to take the outer layers off and bare our souls. No envy, no cliques, no hidden agendas would be tolerated. (and that included the book, which was secondary, even tertiary. In fact, I didn't even want to write a book, but the goddesses prevailed upon my better nature after a couple of years.)

D. Focus

Establish an agenda and focus, but allow the organic movement of the group. Venus gatherings were not business meetings conducted with Robert's Rules of Order nor was any agenda carved in stone. Be focused but not rigid.

E. Work Ethic

Show up to share and to work, as well as play. As we said earlier, we've heard from so many women that they are members of “women's groups” that never seem to grow or get anywhere as a result of their propensity to degenerate into bitch sessions. While we'd be lying if we didn't cop to the fact that we occasionally enjoy a good “whine and wine” get-together every now and then, we had some serious issues we wanted to tackle and we sure didn't want to waste time.

Other than these five core values, we had no rules. However, we did set some intentions in order to get the best from our efforts.

6. Set Intentions

A. Compassionate Truth Telling

We would ask hard questions of one another with compassion and commitment to reflecting back what we heard to the group. We also would provide a reality check when a goddess was too hard on herself.

B. Sharing and Examination of Dilemmas

We would hold nothing back. We would indeed bare our souls. No question was too weird or trivial to get our full attention.

C. Sharing of Epiphanies Created By Our Synergy

We were committed to sharing all that we realized or learned without censoring or wondering if it was relevant. Our entire *raison d'être* was to share our bits of insight, cobbling together a whole of wisdom that might help all of us.

D. Sharing of Remedies and Advice

It is our belief that the way in which women truly get their information about remedies and treatments is through the sharing of actual experiences with one another. We intended to share it all sifting through the gravel for the gold.

E. Mutual Compassion

Perhaps our most important intention, we would honor each goddess's thoughts, feelings, ideas, and stories. We want most to be understood and heard, not simply 'fixed'.

Especially since there seems to be no real FIX for menopause and midlife. We need all the support we can get.

Our goddess group is like therapy with someone who loves you. We are physician, homeopath, counselor, patient, sister, and best friend to one another. As is the case with therapy, we contract to do some work: exploring, accessing, shaping, and growing through our tears and laughter. But our sisterhood extends beyond therapeutic relationships. We've created a community that allows, no not allows, expects us to thrive. Thrive we have. Individually and collectively, the goddesses are healthier and happier than we were just three short years ago. We're still menopausal and we are still confronting challenges. But together we've come a long way and we owe much of our progress to the synergy of our goddess group. We wish you success - feel free to check in with us: lynette@9points.com. We'd love to hear how it goes!

And as always, visit us at the [Menopause Goddess Blog](#) or our [Facebook page](#). (Our book [Becoming A Menopause Goddess](#) is available on Amazon.)