

# Riding the Waves of Perimenopause



**Why it feels rocky, and how to feel  
steady, strong, and like yourself again**

By Esther Kane, MSW, RCC

# A season of change

Welcome. I'm Esther Kane, psychotherapist, MSW, RCC with nearly 30 years helping women through life changes, and I'm in my 50s navigating this season myself.

If perimenopause feels bigger, more emotional, and more exhausting than you expected, you are not alone and there is nothing wrong with you. This short guide will help you understand what is happening and share gentle tools that truly help.

If you happen to be highly sensitive, you may feel everything described here even more strongly.

# Part 1: Why This Season Feels So Big

Many women tell me perimenopause hit them by surprise.  
Here is why it can feel so strong:



01. Your body is shifting. Hot flashes, poor sleep, aches, cycle changes, and body shifts — even small changes can disrupt your whole day.
02. Your feelings rise faster. Mood swings, irritability, anxiety, tearfulness or flatness are common as hormones shift.
03. You get tired quicker. Noise, busy schedules, multitasking plus brain fog and fatigue drain you fast.
04. You think deeply about change. Questions about aging, identity, purpose, and what is next stay on your mind. That is normal processing, not overthinking.
05. You may react more to medications. Every body is different. What works easily for a friend may feel too strong or not right for you.

**You are not too much. You are in transition.**

## Part 2: If You Are Exhausted, This Is Why

Many women over 45 tell me: I sleep but I still wake up tired. Here is what is really happening:

Think of your energy like a daily budget of \$100. After years of work, caregiving, tracking everyone's needs, and holding feelings for others, many women are running on empty by noon.



In perimenopause that budget gets a little smaller. For years, estrogen acted like a soft cushion for mood, sleep, and calm. As it shifts, that cushion gets thinner. Life comes in louder.

And when you are tired and wired — exhausted but mind racing at night — that is a tired stress system, not failure. You do not need to push harder. You need a different kind of rest.

## Part 3: Rage, Tears, Old Memories — You Are Normal

Sudden anger, grief, or anxiety in midlife does not mean you are losing it. For many women, this is your body waking up.

Midlife stirs up old unfinished pain — childhood hurts, losses, stress you pushed down to keep going. When hormones shift, what was buried can rise up. That can feel scary, but it is also a chance to heal.



You may also grieve — your younger self, roles that are changing, people you have loved and lost. Grief here is not going backward. It is part of becoming.

On the other side is something beautiful. Many women feel fiercer, clearer, more creative, and more themselves after this crossing. Like a caterpillar growing wings.

## Part 4: Your Steady Path — The TIDES Practice

Tides move in and out — just like this season:



**T** — Tune into yourself. Pause and listen inside before you search outside. What do you feel and need today?

**I** — Identify your needs. Name one small need: slow mornings, quiet after work, gentle movement, time alone. Yours matter.

**D** — Develop self-compassion and care. Talk to yourself like a dear friend. Place one or two hands over your heart, feel the warmth, breathe slowly, and repeat softly three times: May I be safe. May I be peaceful. May I be kind to myself. May I accept myself as I am.

**E** — Engage in self-advocacy. You are driving the bus. Bring a list of all symptoms to your doctor, ask questions, speak up if something does not feel right.

**S** — Slow down for self-discovery. A gentler rhythm creates space to hear what lights you up next — joy, pleasure, and calm heal your system.

## Part 5: 3 Gentle Resets That Work

Sensory Sabbath - 20 minutes daily. Phone off, screens off, lights low. No input. Just you, breath, and quiet. Many women tell me: I got a piece of myself back.



02. Body Check-In - 60 seconds. Before a busy moment, hand on heart or belly, one slow breath, ask: What do I need right now? After, ask: What can I let go of?
03. Decompression Window - 30 minutes after stimulation. After work, social time, or hard news, take in nothing new. No phone if you can. Walk slowly, sit, journal, lie down. Let your system catch up.

Protect your energy daily, spend time in nature, write to clear your mind, track sleep, moods and triggers to see patterns, and find other women who get it. Sharing your story is healing.

# You Are Crossing, Not Ending

Perimenopause is rocky, but it is not the end of you. It is a crossing. You are not falling apart. You are becoming more honest, more creative, more fully yourself.

**Go slowly, kindly, and consciously. Joy is your birthright.**

This guide is educational and supportive, not medical advice. Please talk with a health professional you trust about your own body.

# If You Want Personal Support in British Columbia

If you need extra support, you do not have to go through this alone. If you live in British Columbia and would like counselling with me, I would be honoured to help.

Please call me at 778-265-6190 or email me at [esther@estherkane.com](mailto:esther@estherkane.com) to book a free consultation and see if we are a good fit.

— Esther

ESTHER KANE • MSW, RCC