

# Maintaining Your Well-Being

- 1. Assess your symptoms.** Work on becoming sensitive to the subtle changes that your body undergoes during your cycle and during your aging process. Pay attention to the onset, intensity, and duration of your symptoms.
- 2. Involve others.** Your family, friends, co-workers, physician, psychotherapist, and other health-care providers can give you important information about how they perceive you during your cycle, changes they observe, and treatments that you might consider. Ask for research evidence from those who can provide it.
- 3. Consider your options.** If you have any doubts about recommended approaches, seek additional opinions, read, and attend seminars or lectures.
- 4. Consider your family history.** Think about your family in terms of both medical and psychological health. Weigh the treatments that you may be considering in the light of this generational health history. Reflect on how you have responded to previous approaches.
- 5. Weigh the evidence before deciding.** Remember that there is no “right way” to work with your symptoms. Make your own decisions based on the best information that you can gather. Empowering yourself does not mean following others’ advice blindly but taking it into account as you commit yourself to action.
- 6. Set goals.** Having short- and long-term targets may help you take charge of dealing with PMS and peri-menopause. In general, it is best to make “stretch” goals, ones that require you to reach farther than you ordinarily do. Some of your goals may span the next hour or day, while others may span weeks, months, or even years. Some criteria to bear in mind are those captured in Jones’ SPIRO Model:

<b>S</b> Specificity.	What <i>exactly</i> are you going to do?
<b>P</b> Performance.	What exactly are you going to <i>do</i> ?
<b>I</b> Involvement.	What exactly are <i>you</i> going to do?
<b>R</b> Realism.	Can it be done, given your resources?
<b>O</b> Observability.	How will you know that you have succeeded?

Setting goals may involve creating a vision for yourself. This means writing a statement that describes a way of being that is substantially better than your present condition. The two major considerations for stating your vision should be that it is both desirable and doable.

- 7. Forgive yourself.** You may not follow your chosen approach with 100 percent reliability. Your self-improvement program may not give you relief from all your premenstrual or perimenopausal symptoms, and you may experience continuing symptoms even as you attempt to prevent them. All these eventualities can cost you in terms of self-esteem, and your program’s success can be jeopardized in the process. It is important that you forgive yourself when you make mistakes, when you are inconsistent, or when you reach for goals that are unattainable at the time.

8. **Reward yourself.** No one else may know how difficult your self-improvement program is better than you do. They may not notice your progress or the energy you expend in taking care of yourself.
9. **Search for wisdom.** See your mistakes as your great teachers. View your attempts at working through your symptoms as a growth process. Listen to yourself and intuit what is good for you. Search for wisdom from acquaintances and from what you read.