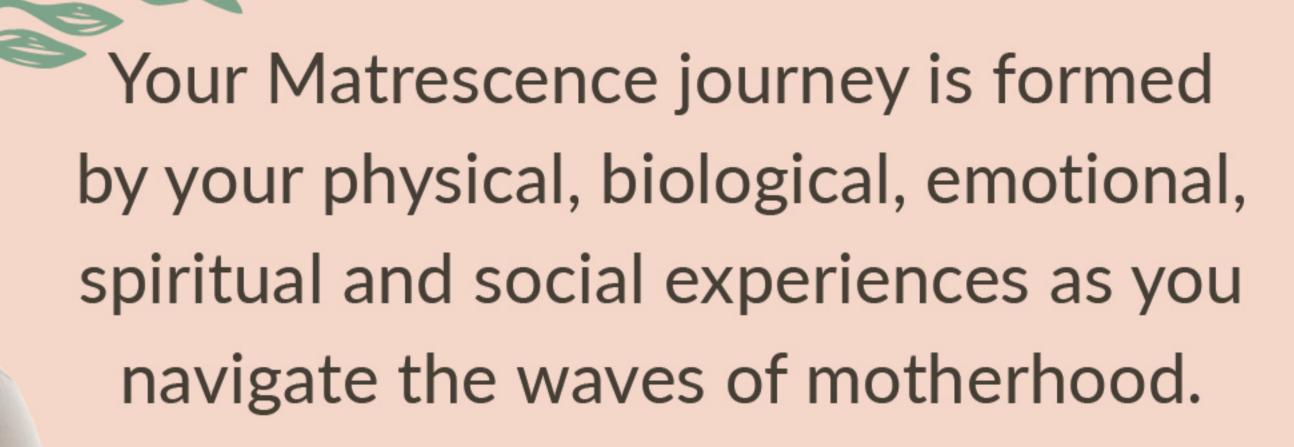
## Matrescence - The becoming a mother

## MATRESCENCE IS THE DEVELOPMENTAL TRANSITION TO MOTHERHOOD – A BODY, MIND AND HORMONE SHIFT THAT SOUNDS LIKE "ADOLESCENCE".



Matrescence is a developmental passage where a woman transitions through preconception, pregnancy and birth, surrogacy or adoption, to the postnatal period and beyond. The exact length of matrescence is individual, recurs with each child, and may arguably last a lifetime! The scope of the changes encompass multiple domains – bio-psycho-social-political-spiritual – and can be likened to the developmental push of adolescence.

Motherhood can be so deeply beautiful and at the same time devastatingly brutal. Sometimes it is difficult to express and identify exactly why.

Matrescence provides the language that enables us to communicate these challenges while validating, normalizing and creating an awareness of the changes that take place.

As we approach the birth of our children there are changes that we can predict and expect; we know our bodies will physically change, our time will be more precious, our day-to-day activities will be different. But less commonly acknowledged are the intense changes to our biology, our identity, our beliefs, our independence, our purpose. Less commonly acknowledged are the challenges of ambivalence, the mental load/divided mind, dependence, lack of control, disappointment, relationships and the motherhood penalty.

Becoming a mother is more than just a single moment in time, it is a complex and dynamic evolution that deserves the same recognition, validation and awareness of adolescence. Everyone understands that adolescence is an awkward phase. But during matrescence, people expect you to be happy while it feels like you are losing control over your entire life.

## The transition to motherhood takes 2-3/10 years

It's more than just learning how to change nappies and make really strong coffee ... it's an identity shift



## Reframe your thinking and change the way you feel

- You are both learning, it takes time to get to know each other
- There is NO one right way
- Prioritise only what is necessary
- Lower your expectations of yourself and your productivity
- Expect challenges, reflect, try new things
- Care moments are quality moments
- It's okay to be/feel anything
- Acknowledge your feelings
- Find things to be grateful for
- Ask yourself "is this thought/ action helpful?"
- Baby's crying is communication I am a detective
- You must be having a growth spurt or development leap so you need more from me at the moment
- Looks like today is just going to be a day of cuddles
- I'm not sure why you're crying but we will figure it out together
- I'm doing my best and my best is good enough
- You need me lots right now but this won't last forever
- My baby does want to sleep, they just need my help

















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