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Sovereignty in Transition: The Inner Reorganisation of Pregnancy

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We are living in a time where women have risen beyond where they have ever been before. We are more powerful, more accomplished, and more consciously aware, and yet, despite this progress, many women feel powerless when it comes to creating what they most truly long for.

Research continues to show that women are often not thriving in the way we might expect.[1] Many report feeling less happy, more anxious or depressed, and physically more depleted than in previous generations.[2] It doesn't quite add up. We would assume that with us having greater autonomy and opportunity, women would be experiencing a deeper sense of fulfilment and freedom - this is not the case. So why does there remain this underlying sense that something is not quite right?

In my therapeutic work, I have found that one of the most significant challenges many women face is a disconnection from what is called the *Feminine Guidance System*. This is an internal orienting system—something like an inner compass—that guides us towards our strength, embodiment, and sense of wholeness. This system is finely attuned to the subtle shifts within our nervous system, our emotions, and our sensory experience. Moreover, this system helps us to access our intuition and deeper knowing, and our sense that there is something meaningful unfolding beyond what can be logically understood.

For generations, however, the *Feminine Guidance System* has not always been acknowledged, supported

or valued. Instead, women have been encouraged—directly or indirectly—to move away from their inward orientation and to look outwards for external validation. This outward orientation often leads to the overriding of our internal signals in favour of relying heavily on logic and reasoning, and thus enforcing orderliness, measurability, and productivity.

These adaptations have enabled women to succeed in many ways, but they also come at a cost.

Orienting in a system that is cognitively driven, without checking into ourselves, makes this system highly sensitive to disruption - particularly during times of profound physiological and emotional change, such as pregnancy.

When your body no longer feels like your own

Pregnancy has a way of interrupting even the most carefully constructed sense of balance. Suddenly, the body no longer feels entirely your own. Energy becomes unpredictable. Emotions can feel heightened or unfamiliar. There is a growing awareness that your body and mind are responding to something beyond conscious control.

Even when a pregnancy is deeply desired, there is often a tension to navigate - the space between who you have been, and who you are becoming. Now, strategies that once supported you may no longer fit in the same way. Your body is asking for something different.

For professional women, this may be particularly challenging. The very traits that have supported their success-drive, structure, logic, and forward planning are often rooted in a way of operating that is more externally focused. And yet, pregnancy calls for something else entirely.

Pregnancy is, at its core, an embodied process. It asks a woman to turn inward. To listen. To feel. To respond to the subtle signals of her body with care and attention.

And when there is a disconnect from your internal guidance, it can become difficult to interpret what your body is trying to communicate. This is often when a sense of unease begins. Your body may be asking for rest, for slowing down, for a shift in pace, but instead, your mind rebels and attempts to solve or override the experience you are having.

You try to think your way through something that can only truly be felt.

And in doing so, you move further away from the very thing that would help you feel safe and grounded.

Here many women start to feel out of kilter, not because something is wrong, but because the way they have learned to navigate the world no longer aligns with what their body is now asking of them.

And this is precisely where the conversation around sovereignty becomes so important.

Rethinking Sovereignty: Not control, but relationship

When we hear the word sovereignty, it is easy to associate it with control. In order to feel safe, we try to gain control over our body, our choices, and our circumstances.

But pregnancy challenges this idea completely. The truth is, during pregnancy, control is limited. Your body is influenced by powerful hormonal changes that are specifically designed to support your baby's development and growth. Your brain is rewiring in preparation for motherhood. Your nervous system is recalibrating itself around protection, sensitivity, and connection.

So, if sovereignty is not about control—what is it?

I believe that sovereignty is the ability to remain anchored within yourself whilst everything is changing. It is not about force. It is about developing your capacity to stay connected to your internal world, even when it feels unfamiliar. To listen to your body without overriding it, even when it feels uncomfortable or uncertain - and to respond with awareness, rather than reacting from old patterns.

Sovereignty is not dominance over your body; it is about developing a respectful and deeply attuned relationship with it, understanding it as a living system of intelligence.

The Body as a Living System of Intelligence

Most of us do not see our body as a living system; we simply live in it.

However, if sovereignty is understood as collaborative self-governance, then your body becomes the perfect lens through which to explore it. Your body is not governed by a single controlling force. It is a living system made up of multiple intelligent processes working together.

For example, your heart circulates blood, carrying oxygen and nutrients throughout the body. It has its own self-generating rhythm, yet the speed at which it beats is influenced by your nervous system.

Your nervous system, in turn, senses and responds to both internal and external signals. It is connected to nearly every cell in your body, releasing neurochemicals that influence how other systems function.

Your digestive system relies on vast communities of microorganisms to break down and assimilate what you consume. Even within your muscles, the mitochondria, once independent organisms, now work in collaboration to produce the energy that sustains your life.

Each system has its own role. Each system has its own intelligence. And yet, none of it works in isolation. There is both independence and interdependence at play at all times.

This is what creates coherence. This is what creates health and wellbeing.

Sovereignty, then, is not about one system dominating the others. It is about each part being able to function in relationship with the whole.

Pregnancy: A Dynamic Exchange

Pregnancy introduces another layer to this system.

There is now another presence within your body; one with its own genetic blueprint.

Your immune system is designed to protect you by identifying and eliminating what is foreign. And yet, your baby, despite being genetically distinct, is not rejected. Instead, a complex and intelligent adaptation takes place.

Your baby is not passive. It actively communicates, adapts, and influences you.

It releases hormones and chemical signals that interact with your physiology. It draws on your resources for growth. It participates in shaping your internal environment in ways that are both subtle and profound. At the same time, your body becomes the protector and provider.

There is a constant dynamic exchange taking place between you and your baby.

You are influencing your baby. And your baby is influencing you. Neither of you are in full control. And yet both of you are participating in an intelligent, responsive process. For me, this is a form of intelligent surrender, not a loss of sovereignty, but a deeper expression of it.

I have learned that when a woman creates space to fully embrace and trust this process, control does not disappear,

It transforms into something more expansive and grounded.

The Paradox: When Control Falls Away

This is where many highly focused professional women experience the greatest challenge.

As the body begins to lead, the mind often tries to regain control. It thinks more, plans more, and pushes harder.

A common example is a pregnant woman who feels she must prove herself at work, fearing that maternity leave will take her out of the game. She takes on too many responsibilities, neglects rest, and stretches herself across both work and home.

Her body will try to accommodate this strain in order to protect both herself and her baby, but there is a

limit. Eventually, something has to give.

Pregnancy does not respond well to force. It responds to attunement.

Attunement is the capacity to notice what is happening within you - physically, emotionally, and energetically - and to respond in a way that supports rather than suppresses it.

This is where the true embodiment of sovereignty begins. Instead of asking, *"How do I control this?"* the question becomes,
"What is my body-or my baby-asking of me right now?"

And then having the courage and wisdom to act on that information.

This is the true reclaiming of yourself.

What becomes possible when sovereignty is reclaimed?

When a woman reconnects with her internal guidance, changes in her circumstances are profound.

One woman came to me during her second pregnancy carrying the imprint of a deeply traumatic first birth. That experience had left her feeling powerless and afraid. The idea of going through labour again felt so overwhelming that she had already decided on an elective caesarean section.

At 36 weeks, she went into spontaneous labour.

In that moment, everything she feared was suddenly happening. But instead of panic taking over, we worked together to bring her back into her body, to feel what was actually happening, rather than what she feared might happen.

As she softened into that connection with herself and her baby, the labour began to settle and eventually stopped.

That experience changed everything for her.

For the first time, she felt that her body was not something to fear, but something she could work with. From that place, she chose to trust herself, her baby, and the process of birth.

When the time came, she went on to have a vaginal birth, something she had previously believed was not possible.

The transformation was not just in the outcome. It was in her relationship with herself



Another woman I worked with had experienced the devastating loss of a child. The grief of that loss had left her in a constant state of anxiety about the safety of her remaining children.

Her nervous system was on constant alert.

Her eldest child, independent and strong-willed, triggered this fear even more. She found herself considering placing a tracker on his phone, not from control for its own sake, but from a desperate need to feel safe.

Through our work together, we began to explore her relationship with fear. She started to recognise how her internal state was shaping the dynamic with her child. As she began to regulate her responses and reconnect with a deeper sense of trust within herself, something shifted.

She no longer needed to control in the same way.

Instead, she was able to communicate clearly, set boundaries, and build a more grounded relationship with both her child and the adults around them. The idea of the tracker naturally fell away.

Not because the world had become more certain - but because she had.



A more honest understanding of trust

Before I conclude, I want to name a phrase that is often shared with pregnant women:*"Just trust your body."*

If you have ever been in a situation of deep uncertainty, you will recognise the tension in this. On one hand, you know it is true and on the other, every part of you may feel that it is not. So whilst there is truth in this statement, it is important to understand that trust is not something that can simply be switched on, especially when a woman feels disconnected or overwhelmed.

Trust is built through understanding. Through experience. Through support. It holds fast when the situation appears uncertain. In those moments, it is not about controlling what is happening externally. It is about knowing that you will be able to meet whatever arises.

Thus, sovereignty is not blind trust.

It is an embodied relationship with yourself.

Coming home to yourself

To finish I would like to reiterate that all of us will go through many transitions in our life. Some of our choosing and others not. Thus it becomes important that we understand that sovereignty is not about

losing who you are.

Nor is it about holding tightly to who you once were.

- It is about learning how to stay with yourself as everything changes.
- To remain grounded whilst your body reshapes.
- To stay connected whilst your identity evolves.
- To trust - not because everything feels certain, but because you are present within it.

Sovereignty, in this sense, is not the absence of influence. It is the presence of self within it.

This becomes one of the most important foundations a pregnant woman can build - not only for herself, but for the life she is carrying.

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1 Caspar Kaiser *et al.* (2025) Two paradoxes in women's well-being. *Sci.dv.***11**,eadt1646(2025). DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.adt1646

2 Stevenson B., Wolfers J. (2008) The Paradox of Declining Female Happiness. https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/Intellectual_Life/Stevenson_ParadoxDecliningFemaleHappiness_Dec08.pdf