



Edited by Valerie Stanley

## Pain and Your Brain

### What's Inside

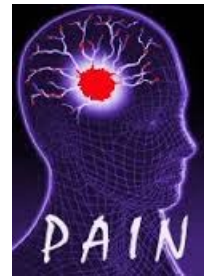
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One *SONG* can spark a moment  
One *FLOWER* can wake the dream  
One *TREE* can start a forest  
One *BIRD* can herald spring  
One *SMILE* begins a friendship  
One *HANDCLASP* lifts a soul  
One *STAR* can guide a ship at sea  
One *WORD* can frame the goal  
One *VOTE* can change a nation  
One *SUNBEAM* lights a room  
One *STEP* must start each journey  
One *WORD* must start a prayer  
One *HOPE* will raise our spirits  
One *TOUCH* can show you care  
One *VOICE* can speak with wisdom  
One *HEART* can know what is true  
One *LIFE* can make a difference

Author Unknown

**Where is your pain?** The simple answer—in your brain. It may seem as if it's in your stubbed toe, or your aching elbow but the response to the event is always in the brain. Signals from a 'hurt' or injury are sent to the brain and go through incredibly detailed brain processing to determine the appropriate response. Information is received from your eyes, ears, nose etc. to assess the entire environment. The brain will even recall past experiences that may be similar. Our current mood, state of stress and *perception* of the situation is also factored into the brain's processing of the 'pain'. *Our perception seems to be a key factor in how we will experience both acute and chronic pain.* Researchers have discovered that what we feel about our pain is dependent on how we perceive the situation. *"How we feel about pain affects the experience of pain."* (Dr.



Mark Borigini, Rheumatologist) In one study researchers followed 266 people with hip and/or knee osteoarthritis over 12 weeks using a pain index inventory. The results showed that for those people whose moods dipped the lowest, the chance of a painful flare the following week was more the 2 times greater than those who had feelings of well-being. This is not to suggest that there is no basis for pain, rather, *it is now understood that our emotions have the capacity to change the biology of pain.* This is an exciting discovery into the management of pain. "Pain is interpreted by the brain," explains Dr. David Hanscom. (Arthritis Today, April 2015) If you are angry about and frustrated by

your pain, your body may be tense and secrete cortisol and adrenalin, chemicals that will amplify your pain.

*Easing your emotions will ease the pain.*

Pain has the ability to negatively impact our mood, sleep, ability to concentrate and decrease our appetite. These symptoms can become a terrible cycle that enhances a negative experience with pain. We now understand that we have the potential to stop that cycle, and can ease pain by managing our relationship with the pain. *How you think and feel about the pain is how it will be.*

Many seniors live with minor aches and pains while others live with chronic arthritic and other painful diseases. Harnessing your thoughts and emotions about your pain will greatly impact your quality of life. Taking pills is only one limited approach to pain management. Using the power of your thoughts and emotions (your brain) will offer you relief and a better quality of life.

Dr. Norman Doidge has just written an incredible book, "The Brain's Way of Healing". He explains that the more attention we pay to the pain the bigger the 'brain map' we make to processing pain. Therefore, the brain will become very attuned to paying attention to 'pain' and less able to pay attention to more important things like sleeping, eating, regulating emotions, and so on. *The less attention we pay to pain the 'smaller the brain map' is made in our brain.* This is the outcome we want—a quieter brain that is less focussed on pain.

## 8 SIMPLE TIPS FOR LEARNING TO LIVE WITH PAIN...

**Learn Deep Breathing or Meditation** to help relax: The soothing power of repetition is at the heart of some forms of meditation. Focusing on the breath, ignoring distracting thoughts, and repeating a word or phrase causes the body (muscles) to relax. Breathe in deeply through your nose—and hold—then blow forcefully out through your mouth. Repeat up to 10 times. This is a ‘reset button’ for your brain.

**Positive Thinking:** Not surprisingly, people suffering with unrelenting pain can tend to have *repetitive, negative thoughts* which we now know actually increases the pain! Try to switch to more positive thoughts. Try Cognitive Behaviour Therapy strategies which focus on changing thought patterns. We want to make our ‘brain map for pain’ as small as possible. Be relentless...push out negative thoughts and replace them with positive thoughts and words. Try singing a verse!

**Visualization:** If you visualize your pain as a throbbing, red mass, try to slowly shrink it or make it pink and soft. Or imagine yourself on the beach or seeing your worries melt away. “The key is knowing what kinds of thoughts are relaxing for you.”



You can imagine you're in a warm bath with your hands floating on the water. “Go through the

whole imagery of getting into the tub—your toes, ankles, knees, hips, lower back, middle back, shoulders,”...imagine your joints being warm and relaxed without the pressure of gravity as you allow your limbs to float about in the water.

This and many other examples of visual imagery will take your mind to a

calm and relaxing place—away from the pain—and most important—will prevent you from establishing a large pain map in your brain.

**Food Fantasies:** Thinking about food—whether it is warm, gooey chocolate brownies or a juicy roast beef dinner—has been proven to help alleviate pain from migraines, cramping and more. In one study, researchers found that fantasizing about a favourite food took away some of the pain associated with plunging a hand in icy water.

For most seniors, long held memories of childhood are the last to fade; so recalling favourite childhood foods and meals is a calming and positive technique to use. ‘Simply visit your photo album in your brain to be transported to memories of freshly baked apple pie, sitting in the kitchen window cooling!’

**Yoga:** If you are looking for an alternative to pills to treat joint pain and other common aches, relief may be a yoga class or pose away. A Duke University study found that yoga is effective in the treatment of chronic pain, including osteoarthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and fibromyalgia. The patients experienced significant reductions in joint pain, muscle stiffness, and overall physical discomfort while greatly improving their flexibility, range of motion and muscle strength. Yoga's fluid movements allow swollen or otherwise painful joints to glide smoothly over one another, increasing mobility and strength without excess wear and tear.



### Listening to Music:

Numerous studies have demonstrated that music has the ability to prevent the transmission of pain signals from the spinal cord to the brain; and have found that it has the ability to reduce the experience of pain. The improvement of physical well-being isn't only about perceived pain relief. Studies show that playing music for patients before, during, and after medical procedures can help lower blood pressure, reduce anxiety and stress, ease muscle tension & more.



**Find Good Company:** Those who have regular contact with others with similar forms of chronic pain find that their pain becomes more manageable—as long as it is not just a time for talking about pain.

Socializing with friends regularly provides opportunities for changes in the environment, exposure to new situations and the chance to have diverse conversations about topics that have nothing to do with pain. I call this ‘changing the pain channel’. Explore, talk and do other things. Join a book club, or an art group, or become a volunteer somewhere.

**Hang out with others and smile and LAUGH! A known fact that laughter can be the best medicine.**

**Walking:** Walking is a gentle, low-impact form of exercise. It strengthens your heart, it lowers disease risk, it keeps weight in check, it has a protective effect on brain function, it stimulates and strengthens bones-increasing their density, it helps maintain healthy joints, it boosts your Vitamin D level when you are walking outside, it gives you energy by increasing the supply of oxygen to each and every cell in your body, and it makes you happy.

## Nature's Natural Pain Relievers

There are many natural pain relieving foods and herbs—most have been known to have healing properties for centuries. **However, it must be noted that just because something is natural does not mean that it is harmless.** For example, **ginger** is widely known to have beneficial properties for digestion, inflammation and nausea; but research has also found that people who have a bleeding disorder or who are taking blood thinning medications should be very careful with consuming ginger. The same caution is made about St. John's Wort.

So with **caution in mind**, here are some of nature's natural pain killers:

**Tumeric:** a curry ingredient contains curcumins which ease inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis.



**Cherries:** Cherries are known to have properties that block inflammation and they inhibit pain enzymes. They are said to have the highest anti-inflammatory content of any food.

**Peppermint** is available in many forms. Eating peppermints leaves is a



delicious treat. It is most often used as a natural remedy for toothaches, (*although cloves are a more effective tooth ache remedy*) discomfort from bloating and gas, joint conditions and muscle pain.



**Cranberries** and cranberry juice: Cranberry juice is known for aiding in the treatment of stomach ulcers. Also it is recommended for urinary tract infections.

**Raw Honey** works wonders on sore throat and mouth sores. The natural enzymes in honey banish inflammation, help to destroy viruses and speed up the healing process. Mixing honey and **cinnamon** in a warm cup of water and drinking it on a regular basis has also shown to relieve arthritis symptoms.



**Baking Soda** is excellent for easing the pain from a burn.

Make a paste with baking soda and a bit of water and apply to the affected area. (boy does this work)

**Tomato juice** helps relieve leg cramps which are typically caused by a potassium deficiency due to heavy perspiration during exercise or when



flushed out by diuretics. Take 2 glasses daily to keep cramps at bay.

**Garlic:** In the ancient world, garlic played a starring role as a pain killer. Chop up a clove of garlic and heat it in a tablespoon of olive oil or mustard oil. Apply it over aching joints (it should not be hot—just warm).



**Cloves:** As previously mentioned cloves are a proven ally in treating the toothache. Simply dab a little clove oil sprinkled on a cotton swab and apply it to the affected tooth.



**Tea:** The tannin in tea helps to stop the contractions in the intestines which occur during a bout of diarrhea or colitis. Drink plenty of tea to relieve the pain when suffering the unpleasant effects of diarrhea.



**Dark Chocolate:** In dark chocolate, resveratrol blends nicely with other antioxidants and minerals such as manganese, and iron. Add plain chocolate to a glass of milk or your morning bowl of **oats**—another super food.



\* Remember, this information is not intended to be a recommendation.

On May 26 Audiologist, Ian Gray will be our guest at the Lunch and Learn in the Belvedere Auditorium at 11:00 am.

We will learn about issues associated with age related hearing loss (*presbycusis*) and much more. Approximately 1 in 3 people between the ages of 65 and 74 has hearing loss and nearly half of those older than 75 have difficulty hearing. This health issue could make it hard to understand others, hear door bells, telephones, and smoke alarms. Hearing loss can also make it hard to enjoy talking with family and friends, leading to feelings of isolation. Because the loss is typically gradual you may not realize that you have lost some of your ability to hear.

How many of the following questions apply to you?

**HEARING LOSS**

Yes No

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

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☐

☐

**Ask yourself the following:**

Do I have a problem hearing on the telephone or cell phone?

Do I have trouble hearing when there is noise in the background?

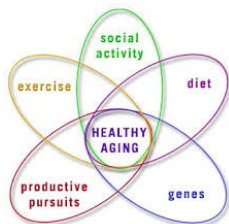
Is it hard to follow a conversation when two or more people are speaking?

Do I have to strain to understand a conversation?

Do many people many people I talk with seem to mumble?

Do I often ask others to repeat things?





Living better ageing Well

"Ultimately, we are all just walking each other home." Ram Duss

## 'Spring Forward'

**30:** How many **minutes** you should spend outside when the weather turns warm and sunny to get a boost in your mood and memory. The best known benefit of sunlight is its ability to boost the body's vitamin D supply. Low vitamin D levels will precipitate and exacerbate osteoporosis in both men and women. Moderate exposure to sunlight has been known to be a proven medical treatment/intervention for centuries. Florence Nightingale promoted nursing wards—and recovery rooms to have direct sunlight exposure.

**167:** Calories burned per hour of **gardening** for a 155 pound person. Gardening pays off physically and mentally. Gardening is the second most popular form of exercise—2nd only to walking. It helps improve mobility and flexibility. It promotes endurance and strength. It reduces stress levels and promotes relaxation. Container gardening can be an easy way to add fresh vegetables and/or flowers into a senior's life.

**815,872:** Metric tons of **pineapple**—in season now—imported to the US in 2010. The fruit is high in bone-healthy manganese and in vitamin C, which is good for connective tissue. It is also a source of bromelain, an extract that may help reduce pain and inflammation. One cup of fresh pineapple chunks provides 131% of your vitamin C needs for the day, 2% of vitamin A, 2% of calcium and 2% of iron.

**25%:** In spring, **asparagus** costs on average 25% less than the rest of the year. Asparagus is a good source of fiber and protein, both essential for good digestion and immunity. It contains a number of anti-inflammatory compounds to protect from heart disease. It has antioxidants, including one called glutathione which is known to protect the skin from sun damage and pollution. The vitamin K in asparagus is excellent for healthy blood clotting and strengthening bones.



**45%:** One serving of **rhubarb** provides 45% of the daily value in vitamin K, which supports healthy bone growth and can limit neuronal damage in the brain. One cup of rhubarb contains as much calcium as a glass of milk. It tops the short list of foods, along with salmon and spinach for the having the highest amounts of calcium. Rhubarb is an early sign of spring. It originated from China and was prized for its medicinal properties. Choose flat stalks that are not curled or limp. Deep red stalks are sweeter and richer; tenderness is not related to size.



**35:** **Walking** 3 times a week for **35** minutes a day is the simplest and most effective activity you can do to boost your mental and physical health—bar none. Of course you can walk more if desired. Walking with a walker, or with walking poles are practical assistive devices to help those with balance issues walk safely. Go with a friend to add a social component. Walking 3 or more times a week is ideal preventative medicine and has been proven to provide the following benefits:

- ◆ Reduced risk of developing colon cancer
- ◆ Reduced risk of developing high blood pressure
- ◆ Reduced risk of heart attacks
- ◆ Increased muscle strength, flexibility and sense of balance, all which reduce the risk of falls.
- ◆ Helps to reduce blood pressure in those who already have high blood pressure
- ◆ Improves mood, memory and broadens cognitive style (an openness to new information & creative thoughts)



Other activities to consider now that Spring has arrived:

1. Go fishing—grab a friend and a rod and have fun
2. Be a bird lover / watcher—put out a bird house
3. Plan to host or attend a Victoria Day picnic with friends.



**WORD FIND: find the 14 words listed here** →

Y	Y	N	U	T	S	I	E	J	U	D	T
M	R	A	O	F	U	P	F	C	H	V	Z
U	R	R	B	T	O	E	I	A	P	R	R
S	E	B	E	H	A	T	S	R	G	N	X
E	B	T	G	B	B	M	H	R	F	I	B
I	N	A	A	R	E	E	O	O	A	A	I
O	A	O	B	O	E	U	I	T	N	S	E
P	R	T	B	C	T	E	L	A	Y	P	A
S	C	I	A	C	S	I	N	B	S	T	U
W	D	S	C	O	R	A	T	S	A	C	S
V	L	Z	N	L	R	Q	V	R	R	F	D
T	O	S	T	I	U	R	F	T	C	L	L

\* Puzzle Solution is found on back page

**TOPIC—GOOD IN YOUR DIET**

BANANA  
BEETS  
BLUEBERRY  
BROCCOLI  
CABBAGE  
CARROT  
CRANBERRY  
FISH OIL  
FRUITS  
GREENS  
NUTS  
OAT BRAN  
TOFU  
TOMATO  
PURPLE

**PLEASE!!  
NOTE****Important Notice About CSS Friendly Visiting Transportation Services and Fees**

This program is intended to help individuals maintain social interaction with the community and alleviate isolation. Additionally, it promotes an individual's efforts to increase their physical and mental fitness which will help to decrease their potential for falls. Volunteer drivers provide companionship and support to help seniors retain their independence.

- ⇒ Carefully screened volunteers are matched with clients. Volunteers provide a personal continuous one-on-one relationship with clients ensuring safe arrival to the activity and/or appointment.
- ⇒ **Eligibility**—Seniors who have limited access to rides may qualify.
- ⇒ **Fees**—As long as CSS funding and financial resources remain available for those individuals who qualify, a client may receive up to \$500.00 (annually) towards their CSS approved activities transportation costs. This will be the client's Friendly Visiting transportation account. Every Friendly Visiting trip taken to an approved activity will be charged against that account. If and when the \$500. is completely used up throughout the year, then it will become the client's financial responsibility to pay for transportation to and from activities.
- ⇒ **Activities that may qualify** for Friendly Visiting Transportation: Seniors' Exercise Programs; Occupational/Physical Therapy; Dialysis; Chemotherapy; Attending a hospital or Long Term Care facility to visit with a loved one or close friend.

CSS is always looking for **VOLUNTEERS** to help drive, visit, shop and support seniors in the West Parry Sound area. If you would like to give an hour or two of your time, whenever possible, you could be the person who makes a difference in a senior's life. Many seniors are alone and would appreciate a visit, or help with groceries, or getting to an appointment. Please consider becoming a CSS volunteer... it may just change your life. We know volunteers can and do, positively change the lives of many of the seniors they support.



**Community Support Services 21 Belvedere  
Ave. Parry Sound, Ont. 705-746-5602  
email: [ltaylor@belvedereheights.com](mailto:ltaylor@belvedereheights.com)**



### **DINERS' CLUBS:**

**Parry Sound** on **May 11** and **June 8** at 4:30 p.m.  
Belvedere Auditorium, \$12.00 at the door. Breaks until September.

**Dunchurch:** at the Whitestone North Landing - **June 2**  
at 12:00 p.m. \$12.00 at the door. Breaks until October

**LUNCH AND LEARNS: (\$8.00 at the door)**  
Parry Sound, Belvedere auditorium @ 11:00 a.m.

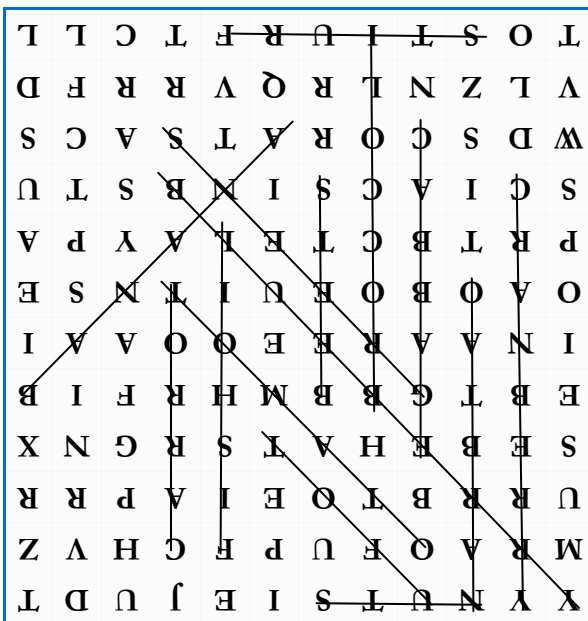
**May 26—Dr. Ian Gray, Audiologist**

**June 23—Dr. Shapiro & medical team from the  
WPSHC sleep clinic**

**Nobel / Carling, will join with the Parry Sound  
Lunch & Learn for 2015 Spring & Summer series.**

**Gifts of Joy Committee: 4th Wednesday of the  
month @ 1:15 pm. Belvedere Auditorium. Breaks  
until Spetember.**

### **Word Search Puzzle Solution**



*"Our Mission is You"*



### **EXERCISE PROGRAMS**

**Body flow for Health & Vitality Exercises:** Thursday mornings at 9:45 am in the Belvedere Heights Auditorium—no cost, although donations are accepted. Leader—Dorit Bartman

**Gentle Exercise for Men with Limited Mobility:** Thursdays @ 1:00 p.m.—Balls, therabands, gentle breathing and stretching—Leader Dorit Bartman

**Walking / Exercise Programs** throughout our area are being organized and scheduled through the YMCA. They have the schedule and you can call for programming times and days. Call: 705-746-0511

**Beginners' Tai Chi—Wednesday mornings:** Belvedere Auditorium. 9:30 am. Call CSS first to see if class is ongoing. 705-746-5602. Leader is Mary Ann McEwen

**Yoga Classes:** Tuesdays @ at 3:00 p.m. Chair Yoga with Theresa Gregory 705-389-1669. Mat Yoga Class at 5:00 p.m. \$10.00 per class

### **SENIORS' PROGRAMS AT BELVEDERE AUDITORIUM**

#### **Seniors' Movie Night:**

The 3rd Thursday evening of the month. Popcorn. Lots of movie titles—comedies, dramas, musicals. We have a wide and varied selection. FREE.

**May 21, – at 6:00 pm.**  
**The Imitation Game—Oscar winning movie**  
**June 18, —at 6:00 pm.**  
**Still Alice —Oscar winning movie**  
**July 16—@ 6:00 pm.**  
**The Woman in Gold —Oscar nominated movie**



**Parkinson's Support Group:** The 1st Wednesday afternoon of each month. 1:15 pm. Belvedere Auditorium. Darrell Smith 705-746-6996. (Breaks for the summer months)

**Stroke Support Group:** Wellingtons or Whitfield Restaurant, 12 noon, 3rd Wednesday of month. (Breaks for the summer months.) Bill Slaman 705-378-0454

**Crock Pot Cooking Lessons:** On the third Monday afternoon @1:00 p.m. of each month , participants can bring their crock pots, and a meal will be prepared with all of the ingredients provided. Participants take home the prepared meal to cook. Cost: \$7.00. Breaks until September. Call a week ahead.

Next CSS Newsletter— July 2015