

Healing Fibromyalgia and Associated Pain Syndromes

By Sandy Breckenridge

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We recently learned about a new book by Howard Schubiner, MD titled [Unlearn Your Pain](#) which was published by Mind Body Publishing.

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Researchers and scientists are making leaps and bounds supporting the connection between health, healing, and consciousness. Dr. Schubiner, MD offers a unique approach.

The following article by Dr. Schubiner provides insight into how fibromyalgia develops, and discusses healing symptoms along with pain management, embracing the mind-body connection.

Imagine ...

Imagine that there is a disease that primarily affects women. It has become epidemic in this country and there are now approximately 10 million women who are affected.

It causes their bodies to be wracked in severe pain, all over. The pain is constant, yet moves from one area of the body to another, affecting the arms, legs, neck, back, feet, and jaw. In addition to that, most women also have severe fatigue, headaches, abdominal or pelvic pain, bladder and/or bowel frequency, dizziness, insomnia, and difficulties thinking straight.



About half of these women are unable to work and go on disability, while the others push on but find life barely worth living.

Doctors Who Don't Understand

Imagine that physicians don't understand this disorder.

Research shows that the areas where the pain is being felt are normal. Some physicians tell these women that they are crazy, that it's "all in their heads." Yet the pain is real.

Other physicians tell them that they are doomed to suffer, that there is no cure, that pain or nerve or anti-depressant medications may help, but that they will have to take them for the rest of their lives.

Groups of women band together to gain support. Many lose their marriages. Many fall into depression and anxiety. They take strong pain killers but continue to suffer. The men who get this disorder are even more poorly understood and isolated.

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Shared Common Experiences

Imagine now that there are some common experiences that these women share. They are likely to have been abused as children, either physically, sexually, and/or emotionally.



They are likely to have had parents or caregivers who were controlling, critical, demanding, and/or self-centered.

They grew up to be "people pleasers," looking for love and praise from their parents and anyone else.

They are likely to be conscientious, selfless, needy,

kind, caring, self-critical, and worriers.

A typical story for someone with this disease is as follows:

A young girl grows up with a father who is self-centered, highly critical, and emotionally abusive. Her mother is caring, but has difficulty showing love and is unable to overcome the dominance of the father in setting the tone and rules for the family. This girl grows up trying hard to please and gain praise. She works hard to achieve good grades and does not act out for fear of retaliation from her father. When she is 16, she falls in love with a boy at school. After he has sex with her, he calls her a "slut" and dumps her. She is horrified and is afraid to show up at school, but no one understands and she has no one to talk to about this. At this time, she develops migraine headaches.

When she is 25, she marries a man who she thinks is unlike her father. She is wrong. He turns out to be controlling and emotionally abusive. They have two children, but he gets worse: goes out a lot and leaves her with the children and the housework. He spend money and may be cheating on her. She then develops pelvic pain and irritable bowel syndrome.

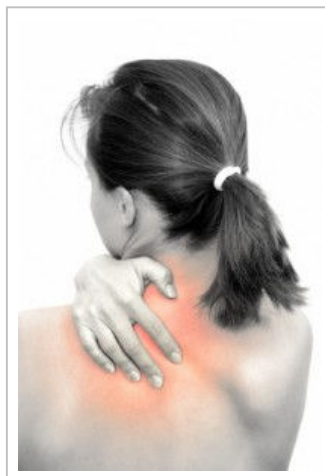
When she turns 33, she can't take it anymore. She divorces him, but he continues to be controlling, trying to get custody of the children, not paying child support, trying to turn the children against her. At work, her boss is also controlling and tries to "hit on her." At this time, she develops body pains that become worse and worse. She goes to several doctors and finally they diagnose her as having fibromyalgia.

Pain in Muscles and Tissues

[Fibromyalgia](#) is a label given to a set of symptoms that are described above. It simply means "pain in the muscles and tissues."

The body is normal, and researchers agree that the cause is some kind of amplified pain signals in the brain. But no one understands why these pain signals are amplified.

But we do. I am part of a team of scientist researchers who are helping women overcome fibromyalgia because we actually understand it. The pain is real. These women are not crazy. They are suffering from a real disorder, but not one that requires medication, surgery or injections. They need to understand why



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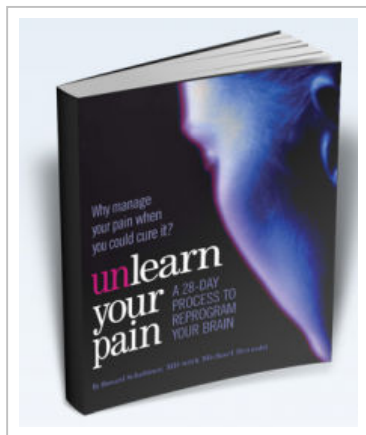
they have it and they need to fix their lives.

Fibromyalgia Pain: Learned Nerve Pathways

The pain is caused by learned nerve pathways.

These pathways are simply a set of nerve connections that affect everything we do. When you learn to ride a bike as a child, that creates a set of learned nerve pathways that persists so that as an adult you still know how to ride a bike. How we walk, talk, eat, and react to people are all caused by learned nerve pathways. Pain can be a learned nerve pathway. Areas of the brain that create pain (notably the anterior cingulate cortex) are activated by strong emotions, such as fear, anger, guilt, and shame. Reactions in the body, such as pain, occur during times of strong emotions, especially when women are stuck in situations for which they see no outlet, when they are powerless, and when their emotions are held in and suppressed.

Unlearn Your Pain



All of the above is described in Dr. Howard Schubiner's book, *Unlearn Your Pain*.

In addition, Dr. Schubinger has created a 4-week program that has been demonstrated to help women reverse their pain and other symptoms. Those who participate in the program are thrilled to tell their stories because they have seen that they can change their lives and stop their pain. Schubinger explains, "All it takes is an open mind, an ability to understand that these women are not diseased, but their real pain is caused by the situations that have occurred in their lives. It is not

their fault, and when they change their lives, take control over their pain, learn to be more assertive, learn to be more loving to themselves, forgive themselves, and forgive others, their physical symptoms disappear."

Dr. Schubinger's research group has published one study showing the benefits of this simple approach and intervention:

"We have just received a grant from the National Institutes of Health for over \$3 million to do a larger study.

Imagine a 4-week program for people who had been suffering in severe pain. They realize that they can get better. They smile for the first time in months. They enter a class with other women who have similar stories. They begin to feel empowered and gradually gain confidence that they can overcome their pain in a matter of weeks.

They engage in therapeutic writing exercises and are surprised by the depth of their feelings. They learn to meditate and begin to feel more comfortable in their bodies. They talk to themselves and their bodies, giving the powerful messages that they are healthy and strong, that they are getting better. And they do.

Some get better within a couple of weeks, some a bit later, and some in months. They learn to be more assertive and stand up for themselves. They learn that they are important, worthy, and loved. They make necessary changes in their lives and sometimes confront people who are harmful to them. They learn that they can fix their pain by fixing their lives."

To your health,

Howard Schubiner, MD

Dr. Howard Schubiner is the Director, Mind Body Medicine Center, Providence Hospital, Southfield, MI. He is a Clinical Professor, Wayne State University School of Medicine, Detroit, MI.

You can visit his website at: UnlearnYourPain.com, or email him at: hschubiner@gmail.com

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By [Healing Magnets](#)

February 8, 2011



Fibromyalgia is quickly becoming a health epidemic. Traditional medicine's inability to understand or deal with it is only making the situation worse. However, many women have had success with a variety of natural remedies and treatments. But, first you have to take your health care into your own hands.

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