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BellaOnline's Ergonomics Editor

Unlearn Your Pain - Book Review

The book *Unlearn Your Pain* provides a self-guided question and answer format that is designed to lead the reader through a 28 day process that leads to gaining control over pain.

The first section of the book is a description of the theory, including many examples of how patients have experienced success in pain control by using his methods. The second section of Schubiner's book is a manual for guiding yourself to identifying your chronic pain and the method of dealing with it. A CD of exercises is also included (*Meditations for Healing Mind Body Syndrome*).

The basic premise is that many types of pain are actually learned body responses. Sometimes they originate in the distant past. Frequently, they are more current. This are not imaginary but are shown to activate areas of the brain related to pain.

It has been shown in many research studies that pain is affected by stress, by emotional condition, by other conditions you may have. It has also been shown that pain is cyclical; it comes and goes, although sometimes it doesn't completely go.

Dr. Schubiner states that an injury can start a cycle of pain. The pain signals may be continuous for a period of time, related to a specific incident. While the body heals, the pain neurons get continuous and intensive work.

It has been shown that any nerve fiber gets larger and faster when it is stimulated a lot. Once it gets enlarged, that nerve is easily stimulated. Like a well trodden path, it tends to get continued use. The ease of stimulation seems to be enhanced if there is emotional upheaval or excessive stress during the period of heavy use. This can lead to chronic pain.

Our response to pain is composed of three components: the

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sensory, the affective and the cognitive.

The Sensory component includes intensity of pain and type of pain (burning, shooting, aching, etc). This is what comes to mind easiest when you think of pain.

The Affective is what we feel about the pain and how it affects you emotionally. It is easy to get depressed when pain goes on and on. Other emotions that arise may be anger, fear and worry. You may also feel resentment, either at the cause of your injury, at the limitation pain seems to impose, or at people around you.

The Cognitive component involves the stories we create about pain: what was the cause, why does it continue, do you think it can be cured?

All of these play into the severity of the pain we experience. Dr. Schubiner quotes several pain studies that support this view. I have found it to be true myself.

The discussions in the book remind me of some I have had with my own sports medicine consultant in the past. The ideas sound true and the flow of discussion is logical. Because of the multi-layered aspect of pain, I believe this approach will work.

My only concern with the book *Unlearn Your Pain* is that the exercises require a lot of dedicated effort and self-searching. If you are highly motivated and feel that this approach will help you, then this book is a good investment. You will need to structure specific time and energy to do the work required. If you have someone near you that you trust, they may assist in keeping you on track.

[Unlearn Your Pain](#)
Howard Schubiner M.D.

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I was given a publishers advance copy of this book without cost in order to determine it's appropriateness for review in this column. I found it highly relevant to many who has ergonomic issues, and so provided a review. Please note that I recomend it with some reservations



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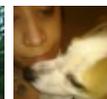
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