



Your Pain is Solvable – by “Giving Up”

Chronic pain is a complex situation with multiple factors affecting your perception of it. Regardless of the source of the pain, your brain is being rapidly bombarded with unpleasant sensations that become magnified and embedded with time.



We tend to spend a disproportionate amount of time trying to understand and “fix” ourselves. However, the past is over – you can’t change it and you cannot change the links to the past.

Picture a complex circuit board that has billions of etched-in circuits that represent your lifetime of programming. These circuits are not alterable for several reasons. First, they are memorized, similar to riding a bicycle. Second, any time you spend trying to analyze and figure them out is counterproductive. The more attention you pay to these patterns of activity, the more they are reinforced. Finally, as the powerful unconscious brain is estimated to process 20 million bits of information per second (compared to your conscious brain only processing 40 bits per second), rational interventions alone, such as talk therapy, cannot hope to make a dent in these circuits. It is like trying to move a high mountain peak with a shovel. It is not going to happen and much of your life’s energy is consumed in the process of trying.



Sounds Unsolvable

It all sounds pretty discouraging. You have these permanently embedded pain circuits in your brain and the harder to try to fix them, the more they are reinforced. They are also much more powerful than your conscious brain and are necessary for survival. So, what do you do?

Understanding that you cannot solve or improve these unpleasant circuits is the first and necessary part of the solution. You need to put down your shovel and move on. Instead of trying to “fix yourself,” new strategies are needed to create fresh circuits in your brain. Most of these strategies involve methods that connect with the unconscious part of your brain by utilizing your senses, while also calming down your nervous system. I often use the analogy that it’s similar to diverting a river into a different channel. You have to begin with small steps to create these new channels, but eventually the water’s flow will also aid in the process.

I have been fascinated by how often people can separate from their pain circuits relatively quickly, and almost everyone can succeed with persistence. Additionally, by **letting go** of trying to solve an unchangeable situation, you’ll experience a huge energy surge that allows you to move forward.

Crippled by Pain at an Early Age

I had the privilege of talking to two young adults suffering from extreme chronic pain. Both of them were in their mid-twenties and had been struggling for over five years with crippling anxiety and multiple physical symptoms. They had been to many physicians without success and were becoming despondent, as essentially every possible treatment had been tried. However, they were both incredibly open to new ideas and were fast learners.

I was able to spend a few hours with each of them and explain the neurophysiologic nature of chronic pain. As soon as they understood that they had been spending most of their time trying to solve unsolvable neurological problems, their eyes lit up. It was time to move on. They also engaged in expressive writing and committed to getting more sleep. Within a few weeks they made major leaps forward and are continuing to thrive years later.