

The Message of Pain

By Dr. George B. Roth

Pain is not the Problem. Pain is a message that something is out of balance. As we get past the fear of pain, we can discover its value in helping us focus more powerfully on our desire to be well.

Many people, who seek our care, are looking for solutions to their pain. When a patient asks me if I can get rid of their pain, I usually respond in one of two ways:

I will tell them that *“I am not interested in getting rid of their pain”*. After a brief pause, I am certain that many people ask themselves if they are in the right office. I then proceed to tell them that I AM interested in getting rid of the **problem** that is causing the pain.

I tell them that pain provides a very useful service. It has alerted us to a problem, and it can also prevent us from further damaging an already injured area. The goal of our treatment should be to identify and correct the **source of the problem**. Once that happens, the pain can take care of itself.

Another way to understand the purpose of pain is to think of it as information in the form of electrical energy. Many studies now verify what we have been saying for the past 30 years: the



the body is an electrical system, and that the tissues of the body are normally electrical generators and conductors. However, when we are injured, the affected tissues become *resistors*, meaning that they block the flow of electricity¹. This is similar to how an electric stove works. When you turn up the temperature control, you are increasing the amount of electricity going through the element. The stove element is a resistor, which blocks the flow of electrons. This causes the metal in the element to heat up.

In very much the same way, when the body is injured, the cells in the injured area become more resistant to the flow of electrical current. This leads to increased tension, irritation, swelling and inflammation. This results in the sensation of pain². Some sources of irritation are misinterpreted by the nervous system, where the pain signal goes to another receptor site in the brain. This causes us to sense that the pain is coming from some place other than the source of the irritation. This is called *referred pain*. Our assessment procedures should detect the actual sources of injury, which is the basis of Matrix Repatterning. It is often surprising to the patient that the source of their problem is located in an area that they did not sense as painful, even though it is usually *tender* to the touch³.

Dealing with Pain

Remember what it feels like to have an eyelash in our eye. Think of the amount of discomfort this causes, then ask yourself how many other things in your body are uncomfortable or painful? All of it combined, usually will not tip the scales in terms of the thousands of body parts and trillions of cells that are functioning perfectly and feeling just fine. But, it is the discomfort or the pain that we focus on. It often provokes a sense of worry or even fear. *What is causing my pain? Do I have a serious condition?* And, the more we focus on our pain, the more distressed, tense and uncomfortable we tend to become^{4, 5, 6}. This becomes a '*vicious cycle*'.

Pain may be defined by the area in which it is felt. We may even feel that it has a definite boundary. By recognizing that pain is simply energy that is impeded, and caused by tension and resistance in the area, we can make a new choice. Instead of becoming fearful and tensing up

against the pain, we can choose to consciously relax our mind and body, which can allow the trapped electrical energy to flow through the area. We might be surprised how quickly we can release the tension and reduce the sensation of pain. As we accomplish this, we are doing much more than just reducing our pain. We are also allowing the electrical energy of the body – the life-giving force that feeds and supports well-being in every cell – to flow more freely to the injured part that is asking, through the message of pain, to receive the energy it needs to restore balance.

By coming to an understanding of the purpose and the opportunity provided by pain, we can decide to respond to it in a more appropriate and helpful manner. A positive response to our pain can actually help our body overcome the injury that caused it in the first place. The exercise outlined below is designed to alter your perception of pain by using a positive mental image to reduce its intensity and degree. Instead of perpetuating a vicious cycle, you can replace it with a *'virtuous cycle'*.

A Simple Mental Exercise to Help Reduce Pain: *Dissolving the Pain*

1. Find a comfortable position, sitting or lying down.
2. Focus your attention on the area of pain. Define the current boundary of the painful area.
3. Visualize the boundary beginning to soften around the edges. Feel the muscles and tissues in the area of the pain begin to relax and soften. Imagine the boundary of the pain begin to melt or dissolve. As you do this, focus on your breathing, making it comfortably full and relaxed.
4. Next, imagine the area of pain begin to shrink away from the former outline. Do this in several steps, allowing the painful area to become smaller and smaller, each time feeling the new boundary softening as in the step above.



With a little practice, you should be able to diminish the intensity of your pain and therefore reduce your overall level of stress and tension. This can help to break the cycle of pain-stress-pain that can often become so debilitating. Don't worry if you're not successful right away. You may find that as your Matrix Repatterning treatment progresses, the pain will begin to reduce enough for you to begin applying this exercise more effectively. Throughout the day, whenever you feel a twinge, or if the pain or discomfort begins to arise, use it as your cue to relax and soften the area around it, in order to disperse the tension, and allow the sensation to dissolve. This will help you develop a much more constructive habit with respect to any pain that might arise in the future.

The combination of both the physical treatments and the mental approaches described above may be more powerful than either might be individually. In this way, we can become an active part of our own recovery. We don't need to let pain 'take us out', but instead, use it to help ourselves achieve the well-being we desire.