



The Message of Pain

Both emotional and physical pain are messages that we need to stop and pay attention.

When we feel pain, our first impulse is often to eradicate it with medication. This is an understandable response, but sometimes in our hurry to get rid of pain, we forget that it is the body's way of letting us know that it needs our attention. A headache can inform us that we're hungry or stressed just as a sore throat might be telling us that we need to rest our voice. If we override these messages instead of respond to them, we risk worsening our condition. In addition, we create a feeling of disconnectedness between our minds and our bodies.

Physical pain is not the only kind of pain that lets us know our attention is needed. Emotional pain provides us with valuable information about the state of our psyche, letting us know that we have been affected by something and that we would do well to focus our awareness inward. Just as we tend to a cut on our arm by cleaning and bandaging it, we treat a broken heart by

surrounding ourselves with love and support. In both cases, if we listen to our pain we will know what to do to heal ourselves.

It's natural to want to resist pain, but once we understand that it is here to give us valuable information, we can relax a bit more, and take a moment to listen before we reach for medication. Sometimes this is enough to noticeably reduce the pain, because its message has been heard. Perhaps we seek to medicate pain because we fear that if we don't, it will never go away. It can be empowering to realize that, at least some of the time, it is just a matter of listening and responding.

The next time you feel pain, either physical or emotional, you might want to try listening to your own intuition about how to relieve your pain. Maybe taking a few deep breaths will put an end to that headache. Perhaps writing in your journal about hurt feelings will ease your heart.

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