Living Well with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome and RSD

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• Primarily **PAIN**: Continuous burning or throbbing pain, usually in your arm, leg, hand or foot. Sensitivity to touch or cold. Swelling of the painful area. Changes in skin temperature — at times your skin may be sweaty; at other times it may be cold.
My Personal Story: I have chronic regional pain syndrome

- At the time, I was a psychologist, working with your average depressed or anxious person for about 12 years. Then, one day, I was walking down the stairs with a client to the garage where our cars were. She was afraid to go in the garage herself or in the elevator because she had been sexually accosted in those situations.

- Suddenly, my right foot slides out from underneath me and I go tumbling down the slippery tile stairs, all 13 of them. I tried to break my fall with my wrists and I ended up crushed like an accordion. Landed on cement. I passed out. My client thought I was DEAD.
My client calls 911 and the paramedics get there to try and read my pulse from my wrists, when I end up screaming-- Hey, I wasn’t dead! That was the good news. And I didn’t break my neck. Yay!

- Okay, so that started the 15 year journey of me getting my crushed wrists put back together. I had to get pins put in 9 places in each wrist. The pain was excruciating. They sent me home to a mother who couldn’t care for me. I had to learn how to survive and get better.

- I started using assistive devices as soon as possible to go to the bathroom and to shower. 2 weeks later, I’m back living at my own apartment by myself. The surgeon was brilliant and put my wrists back together with mechanics and then ordered occupational/physical therapy for my hands.
How do people cope with pain?

• I became a pain sufferer and researcher
• How do people cope with this high pain?
• I wanted to know for myself and I wanted to turn my accident around and find a way to help others.
• I try to learn something through every experience I have, whether perceived as good or bad in the moment, it can be turned into something for good in the long run.
• What I learned to help me may or may not help you, but it is a start.
But, **SERIOUSLY**, how do people DEAL???

- Most of what I learned in grad school to become a psychologist was to help people in emotional pain.
- I found that information to help immensely, but I had to add the body, the soul, and the mind in this mix of therapies.
CRPS may be understood as a **biopsychosocial** disorder: pathophysiological (bio), psychological, and social factors interact in a highly complex manner.

"The medical support keeps me *alive*, but it is the psychological and social support that enables me to *live*."

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I had to learn how to:

• Write, type
• Hold a cup
• Use a fork
• Turn a knob
• Turn a key
• Hold a phone
• Pull a tissue out of a Kleenex box
• Wipe my butt,
• get dressed, Etc.
ACCEPT Help

• Strive to be INTER-Dependent, not Independent
Improvise, ADAPT and OVERCOME

STRENGTH
doesn't come from what you can do.
It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't.

Rikki Rogers
Pain Management

• Medical Model says there must be a “cure”

• Psychological model says, “Pain Management”
Multidisciplinary approach

- Get a Treatment Team
  1. General Provider Doc
  2. Pain Doc or Surgeon
  3. Counselor or Psychologist
  4. Family Therapist
     - Get Family involved
     - Be honest with Spouse, children

Massage therapist, chiropractor, etc.
Accept your Diagnosis

"Acceptance doesn't mean resignation. It means understanding that something is what it is and there's got to be a way through it"

- Michael J. Fox
Use your medication and medical team
Eat an Anti-Inflammatory Diet

**ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOOD LIST**

**OILY FISH**
- † levels of omega-3 fatty acids
- Dramatically reduces inflammation
- Eat at least 2 portions of fish per week

**GINGER**
- Alleviates "stomach problems"
- Cut into coins and add to food and beverages

**TUMERIC**
- Yellow spice common in Indian cuisine (i.e. curry)
- Curcumin a compound in turmeric may help to reduce inflammation

**BERRIES**
- Anthocyanins | compound in berries possess anti-inflammator properties

**CHILLI PEPPERS**
- Capsaicin, anti-inflammatory component of chilli peppers.
- † chili pepper † capsaicin
- Pain reliever
- Consume in moderation

**ALMONDS + WALNUTS**
- Rich source of omega-3 fatty acids
- Reduces inflammation

**OLIVE OIL**
- Oleocanthal, a compound in olive oil, prevents the production of pro-inflammatory enzymes
- May lose health benefits when heated

**GARLIC**
- Anti-inflammatory benefits across body systems

**AVOID**
- Foods that create inflammation in the body
- Refined oils
- Sugar
- Simple carbs
- Processed foods
- Saturated fats
- Trans fats
- Alcohol
- White rice
- White flour
- White bread
- Pasta
- Pastries

**VINCHAY FIT CARDS**

**MINIMIZE**
- Pro-inflammatory
- Omega 6 oils: corn, soybean, sunflower, peanut, canola oil.
Psychological Aspects of Pain

1. Personal life before pain - Personal life after pain
2. Unaware of how long this will be
3. Changing work and free-time abilities
4. Sense of powerlessness > frustration > anger > depression
Look at your automatic thoughts and feelings
Counter-argument Extreme Thinking -
“I can learn my new limits”
“This is the new normal”
“I can reach out for help if I need it”
“The pain can seem outrageous, but I always get through it. I learn what works.”
“There will be challenges ahead, but I can learn to deal with them. I am resilient.”
Every day is a new day. Sometimes I take it hour by hour, minute by minute...
Try Art or being creative
Distract yourself by the natural beauty around you.
Talk it out, learn to manage stress & emotions
Try counseling and psychological services

A Strong Person is not the one who doesn't cry. A Strong Person is the one who cries & sheds tears for a moment, then gets up and fights again.
Try as hard as you can to get out of bed

I can’t get out of bed...

These blankets have accepted me as one of their own and if I leave now I might lose their trust.

BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE TODAY
Find peace by moving away from negativity

Beautiful things happen in your life when you distance yourself from all the negativity and drama.

TheLawOfAttraction.com
Go to or visualize where you can be calm
Have Compassion for self and others

I'm learning to LOVE MYSELF. It's the hardest thing I've ever done.

If you want to be happy, make others' happy.

thingsweforget.blogspot.com
Find Happy Moments

Find what gives you JOY and go there
Have sex if you can

Sex lowers blood pressure, boosts self-esteem, and increases feelings of intimacy with your partner.

It can also help you sleep better, which is a great benefit when you've spent sleepless nights stressing about problems.
Be around happy Animals

The most powerful anti-depressant has four paws and a purr.
Call on friends who “get you”

Lots of your friends want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.

Oprah Winfrey

Create something at LiveLuvCreate.com
Being grateful brings happiness
Music Therapy

Music is what feelings sound like.

One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain.

- Bob Marley
Enjoy your children
BENEFITS OF LAUGHING

- Reduces heart disease
- Natural pain killer
- Improves breathing
- Helps you lose weight
- Gives good sleep
- Decreases stress
- Makes you look young

THERE'S NO REASON NOT TO LAUGH!
Watch your favorite comedian
Living well vs Suffering

- What does it mean to live well with CRPS and RSD?
- Suffering is certainly happening.
- But, you are a complex person and you can learn to live well in between the suffering.
- You aren’t suffering all of the time. Make the most of the time you are able.
Say YES to life

You can do anything, but not everything.

www.themodernlilipublog.com
Say NO to requests you can’t do

'No' is a complete sentence.
Compromise

LIFE

WHAT YOU WANT

WHAT THEY WANT

COMPROMISE: WHAT YOU BOTH NEED
Meditate, pray, be mindful, focus on something else
Choose to Change your perspective

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

~ Dr. Wayne Dyer
Don’t over do, REST

Let her sleep, for when she wakes, she will move mountains.

Rest until you feel like Playing and Play until you feel like resting...

-Martha Beck-
Let’s take Heather For example

- Heather has had so many set backs in her careers because of injuries and pains.
- She bounces back
- Figures out what she can do.
- Goes to school to study “Support w/ RSD”
- Get’s her Doctorate
- Uses her medical team as much as possible
- Worries she’s going to over do it some day, but she keeps going
- Has flares
- Keeps on going
Knows she is going to have good days and bad days.

Tries to plan to do things on good days.

Rests and recovers on the bad days.
Resilience

It's been a rough week, but I made it... How about you?
Remember-- tomorrow is another day

There is something new right around the corner

KEEP GOING

Kevin Hall, author “Aspire”
Don’t give up HOPE

Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming, swimming, swimming. What do we do? We swim, swim