

Signposts: Healing mind and body

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In this hectic world we have created for ourselves, more is expected of us at work – we are expected to accomplish more, often with less resources – and less time is reserved for creating life balance.

Not wanting to be seen as “slackers”, we often ignore the symptoms we feel, telling ourselves that the pain or discomfort will go away or that we can rest and feel better at the weekend.

The weekend comes, you feel a little better and suddenly other things on the agenda are more important. And so the cycle continues.

My coaching client Peter had been with me for quite a while before he told me about the challenges he had experienced for many years with back pain.

By the time he mentioned it, the pain had reached intolerable proportions. He could barely walk and was struggling to stay focused in the office.

I have had similar issues myself. One of my massage therapists told me that we have actually increased our ability to handle pain. Our pain tolerance – the amount a person can withstand before breaking down emotionally or physically – is now higher in most people.

This means that today we are actually forcing ourselves to live with pain in our bodies for longer periods of time before we believe that it is

serious enough for us to see a professional.

That might explain why Peter suddenly reached an unbearable situation with his back: he had probably been ignoring the signs for months.

The psychological research carried out on the topic of pain is based on the understanding that pain can be manifested by negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, stress and anger. In our society, we are taught to think, not to feel – or at least to rule our feelings with solid, rational thought.

Although Peter did not believe the back pain had anything to do with his emotional life, he was still open enough to explore the subject.

In *Heal Your Body*, Louise Hay

explains how each part of the body has a mental-equivalent thought pattern that can contribute to healing or disease. The back represents support. When we feel overwhelmed by life, we often have back problems.

Peter had been running his own small consultancy firm for a few years. He thrived on the freedom it gave him to work for himself, but until we embarked on this conversation, he had not realised this freedom came at a price.

Peter soon became aware of a feeling of being on his own with so much responsibility to handle. He did not feel supported, even with capable staff working for him. It was hard to delegate responsibility to others, hence he would work extra hard to make sure jobs were done “just right”.

With increasing workloads and additional stress to meet deadlines, Peter realised he had been ignoring his health, fearing what might happen if he was not there to take charge. His fear of being unable to pay the bills also kept him from hiring more people, and so he tried to do more himself.

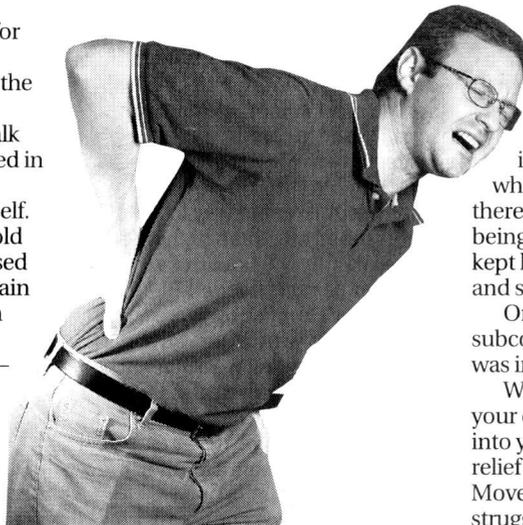
Once Peter became aware of his subconscious feelings at work, he was inspired to make changes.

When you introduce balance into your daily routine, you invite healing into your physical body and provide relief for your emotional turbulence. Move beyond the emotional struggles that so many are afraid of,

start new relationships or projects and take risks. Once you let go of pain, anger and other difficult emotions you can move forward in your life with joy and enthusiasm.

Peter’s first action was to start seeing a health professional. We also continued working together to reveal more of his hidden beliefs. If you still cannot understand the idea of the body-mind connection, you have other options. Some of the steps that worked for Peter may work for you:

- Ask yourself daily (and answer): “What do I need now to help me feel fully alive and dynamic?” and “What can I do in this moment to take care of my health?”
- Ask: “Where in my body do I feel stress or tension? What can I do for myself right now to relieve this?”
- Ask: “Can I delegate this task to somebody else?”
- Use some of the following affirmations daily: “I feel the excitement and thrill of being alive today”; “My life is easily balanced with work and play”; and “I am fully supported always”.
- Create a routine outside of work that inspires you.
- Make daily lifestyle choices that nourish your body, mind and soul.
- In every decision process, be clear about what is important in your day against what is urgent.



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