

# **GOD DOES NOT WANT YOU TO BE IN PAIN**

## **Proven Techniques and Faith Can Heal You**

By  
Eric Watson and Walter Oleksy

### **The Mindbody-Spirit Way to Healing**

You may be in pain or anxiety that began recently or has been with you for months or even years. You have had doctors examine you and may have had MRI, CAT scan, X-ray tests, and have taken medication, tried chiropractic and massage therapy and maybe even had surgery, but are still in pain.

There is another theory about pain, that it is not caused by anything structural, but by emotions that began in your childhood which remain in your unconscious mind as adults. The same can apply to anxiety.

This book on Mindbody pain solutions adds another important element – the spiritual – to help you heal from any emotional distress or physical pain. Welcome to the only book focusing on Mindbody-Spirit healing.

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Copies of this book and an Amazon Kindle version can be ordered at  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

#### Dedications:

**Eric:** I want to thank first my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I want to thank my Mom especially since she saw the king in me that I didn't see. Thank you, Mom. I want to thank all my friends and family at TMSwiki.org. You are truly all miracle workers. I want to thank my Dad who showed me through action how to be true to others. I thank Walt Oleksy for all his lessons and laughter he has shown me over the last 14 months. I want to thank Richard Bandler for showing me through his teachings a higher truth. I want to thank Dr. John E. Sarno for keeping it real and showing us a new way to healing. I want to thank every person I have ever helped in the healing world because when I helped you, you healed me. Love you Ninfa and thank you, baby. You saw the magician that no one else saw and you watched it blossom into the leader and faith warrior I am now.

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Internet sites for TMS information:

[www.TMSWiki.org](http://www.TMSWiki.org)

Videos on Dr. John Sarno's TMS causes and healing:

<http://tmswiki.org/forum/threads/the-classic-20-20-segment-with-dr-sarno.69/>

<http://tmswiki.org/forum/threads/this-is-it-guys-the-sarno-video-wow.3336/>

## **Introduction**

### **Pain Free for Life**

About nine out of ten adults experience back pain at some point in their life, and five out of ten working adults have back pain every year. Back pain may have a sudden onset or can be a chronic pain. It can be constant or intermittent, stay in one place or radiate to other part of the body. It may be a dull ache, or a sharp or piercing or burning sensation. The pain may radiate into the arms and hands as well as the shoulders, chest, legs or feet. Other than pain, weakness, numbness, or tingling may be felt.

Typically, when anyone suffers from back and other pain they see their doctor, and we suggest this. A doctor may either prescribe a pain killer or recommend an X-Ray of the painful area, a MRI, or CAT scan. However, research has found that those procedures are not likely to lead to discovering the root cause of the pain. Medication and even surgery may provide temporary relief, but only learning what is causing the pain can lead to it going away. Many doctors are not even concerned about the cause of pain.

Some physical therapists such as chiropractors, acupuncture and acupressure or sports medicine practitioners say they can relieve structural pain, while others say that with their help and time, the pain will go away. We suggest that anyone in pain not wait for it to go away, which it may not ever, or if it does it may take years, to give the alternatives in this book a chance to heal them. They have already helped many thousands of people with chronic pain in many parts of the body to become pain-free without, as we have said, medication, structural manipulation, or surgery.

The spine is a complex interconnecting network of nerves, joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments, and all are capable of producing pain. Large nerves that originate in the spine and go to the legs and arms can make pain radiate to the extremities.

Surgery is usually the last resort in the treatment of back pain. It is normally recommended only if all other treatment options have been tried or if the situation is an emergency. A 2009 systematic review of back surgery studies found that, for certain diagnoses, surgery is moderately better than other common treatments, but the benefits of surgery often decline in the long term.

Walt and I are collaborating on this book in alternating chapters about our twin journeys from acute back pain to healing and how it led us to a closer walk with God. It's our multi-faceted approach to the subject of Mindbody-Spirit healing. We have combined new techniques, both our own and borrowed, with ancient methods to form a unique

blend of approaches to healing physical and emotional pain without medication, needles, or surgery.

We are writing this introduction together, but I (Eric) speak alone in some sections. The humor, if any, is from Walt. He says the best technique for healing his back pain was laughing, so he added some lighter asides of his own. He said some of the techniques are kind of heavy for him, so for balance he kept some of his stuff lighter, “So as not to give anyone a head hernia.”

Our book offers pain-healing steps that can work for everyone especially if you add the spiritual element no matter what your religion. Faith *can* cure. From Biblical times to the present, stories have been told and books written about people healed of chronic pain or life-threatening maladies and diseases through their faith in God.

As well as our belief that God can and does heal, we have been strongly influenced by Dr. John E. Sarno, a retired professor of Clinical Rehabilitation Medicine at New York University School of Medicine and former attending physician at the Howard Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine at New York University Medical Center.

Walt’s and my physical journeys to become pain free began about two years ago when we both discovered Dr. Sarno’s book, *Healing Back Pain, the Mind-Body Connection*. By way of a very brief explanation, Dr. Sarno says if we have back or other pain and a physical examination shows no structural abnormality, the pain is *psychological*. “In my experience, structural abnormalities of the spine rarely caused back pain,” he wrote.

Dr. Sarno explains how repressed emotions can cause debilitating physical pain including back, leg, arm or other pain, fibromyalgia, migraine, and many other conditions. Often, it is not structural damage or the lifting we do that causes our physical pain. Rather it is what he calls Tension Myositis Syndrome (TMS). Others have called it Mind Body Syndrome and Psychophysiological Disorders (PPD). TMS affects everyone at one time or another. In some, it can be result in horrifying pain. In others it is mild. Either way, it is, as Dr. Sarno puts it, part of “the human condition”.

Dr. Sarno explains that back and other TMS pain is caused by tension that results in a mild oxygen deprivation in our nerves, muscles, and tendons. When we admit to having repressed emotions, the unconscious mind restores the oxygen flow and we heal.

It is not necessary to change a repressed emotion in order to become free of pain; it is enough to identify it. But it can help greatly toward healing if the pain sufferer can modify their perfectionist personality by not expecting or demanding so much of themselves and also forgive the person or situation that caused anger, fear, etc.

He explains that our unconscious mind inflicts back, shoulder, arm, leg, stomach, neck and other pain on our bodies to keep us from thinking about or even acknowledging past and present negative



emotions. These can include anger, rage, fear, guilt, all kinds of worries, anxieties, and stresses related to relationships with spouses, siblings, children, parents, bosses, etc., pressures of our daily home and work lives.

Pain also can be caused by our personalities. Strong candidates for developing TMS symptoms are perfectionists, worriers, the very ambitious, those who are self-critical and compulsive, over conscientious and responsible, and people-pleasers. All of these emotions create stress which can cause pain and, as some say, stress can kill.

Dr. Sarno also says that even if an X-ray, MRI, or CAT scan shows structural abnormality such as a herniated disc, the pain may still not be physically caused because many patients found to have such structural damage did not suffer pain from it. So the pain, again, is psychological, from repressed negative emotions. The same can be true of the elderly who believe, or are told by their doctor, that their back aches because of arthritis or other “normal” deterioration due to their age. Many people in their seventies and even those who are decades older may have back pain because of repressed bad emotions.

“Arthritis is like grey hair of the spine,” Dr. Sarno wrote. “You have grey hair, but it doesn’t hurt. You may have arthritis, but it’s not supposed to hurt.” He suggests that those who suffer from arthritis try the repressed emotions approach to healing.

Why does our unconscious mind give us pain? Is it being a friend or a foe? That’s not known for certain, but our unconscious mind is giving us pain because we are repressing potentially dangerous emotions such as anger about ourselves or others which might harm us or them. In that case, our unconscious mind is doing us a favour, not punishing us. The pain tells us to dig into our past or present emotions and identify causes of our distresses. Once we’ve identified them, our unconscious releases the pain.

It’s like a pressure cooker...steam builds up pressure inside the pot (our head or other body part) and when the steam is gradually released, the pressure goes down and then disappears. Walt, who is of Polish-Austrian ancestry, humorously calls pressure cookers “Polish microwave ovens.” His mother gave him one for his first apartment nearly sixty years ago and he still uses it.

Thousands of people have been healed of severe and chronic TMS. By reflecting on our past and present repressed emotions—anger, fear, hatred, guilt, feelings of abandonment and low self esteem—we tell our unconscious mind we are now aware of them. There is no further need to distract us with pain. Our mind, the cause of the pain, then relieves us of it. Maybe instantly, as some have claimed, but more frequently over days, weeks, or a few months. Eventually relief *does* come. We believe it comes faster if we involve God, with prayers and other spiritual techniques.

The crux of Dr. Sarno's TMS healing is in his 12 Daily Reminders. He suggests reflecting on them for 15 minutes a day. They are:

1. The pain is due to TMS, not to a structural abnormality
2. The direct reason for the pain is mild oxygen deprivation
3. TMS is a harmless condition caused by my repressed emotions
4. The principal emotion is my repressed anger
5. TMS exists only to distract my attentions from the emotions
6. Since my back is basically normal, there is nothing to fear
7. Therefore, physical activity is not dangerous
8. And I must resume all normal physical activity
9. I will not be physical. Concerned or intimidated by the pain
10. I will shift my attention from pain to the emotional issues
11. I intend to be in control, not my unconscious mind
12. I must think psychological at all times, not structural.

Some people say they became pain-free soon after reading the Sarno book and following the 12 Daily Reminders, while others say they still feel some pain months after reading and practicing the healing steps Dr. Sarno recommended. Walt's and my healing came after several months. Those in pain may need more guidance than they found in their other reading, and we hope this book will help fill that need.

Dr. Scott Brady, a Dr. Sarno disciple, suggests in his book *Pain Free for Life* ways of implementing Dr. Sarno's repressed emotions philosophy and also adds a spiritual element, asking God to be a partner in healing us. Also very helpful in healing pain the Dr. Sarno way is Steven Ray Ozanich's book, *The Great Pain Deception: Faulty Medical Advice Is Making Us Worse* the story of his 27 years of struggle to become pain free. There are many others, too, each based on Dr. Sarno's pioneering work.

For both Walt and me, healing came after several months of following Dr. Sarno's advice. We both added a spiritual element to our healing, asking God to help us become pain-free. We believe that was a very important part in our healing. As Jesus said in John 16:23-24: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy shall be full."

Walt and I also added our own variations to healing concepts involving meditation, journaling to recall repressed emotions, "flipping" good and bad images, and forgiveness (one of the most important requisites of healing). For example, "reframing" is a technique to almost instantly change a negative and emotionally damaging thought to a constant blessed state of peace and calm. There are many more such techniques in this book.

Our success involved learning awareness, acceptance, and releasing. Awareness and acceptance are particularly essential to TMS healing. A first goal is to understand how the mind and body interact. Once you know your pain is caused by repressed emotions you have reached what Dr. Sarno calls the “aha moment.”

The procedures in the following chapters can help relieve you of pain. Not every technique may work for you. Of course we can't guarantee any will but they worked for us and many others. As a friend once said to me, “If I get one really good recipe from a new cookbook, it was worth it.” We believe you are going to find a lot of good and helpful recipes here for becoming pain-free and staying that way.

Who is Walt? Who am I?

I'm in my early forties and he's about twice my age. I'm country bred, a roofer by trade and, by calling, a Southern preacher and physical and spiritual healing coach in Georgia. Walt is big-city bred, a former *Chicago Tribune* reporter and editor who has authored mind, body, and other books including *The Power of Concentration*, *The Nervous System*, *Head and Neck Muscles*, *The Circulatory System*, *Miracles of Genetics*, and *Laser Technology uses in medicine and science*. Over 60 of Walt's books are available online at [walteroleksybooks.com](http://walteroleksybooks.com) or at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

We met only a few months ago, on the Internet. The site [www.tmswiki.org](http://www.tmswiki.org) is maintained by a non-profit group of dedicated individuals who used Dr. Sarno's TMS approach to cure their chronic pain without pain-pills or surgery. The wiki and its forums are for information and support purposes only. It is visited by thousands of people worldwide who are seeking and sharing information about their experiences with chronic pain.

At TMSWiki.org you will see posts from those now in Sarno's free program as well as those who tell how they became free of pain afterward. There also are free online programs with daily steps to healing. The web site hosts are not practitioners, simply peers who recovered using TMS healing.

The web site hosts are not medical practitioners. They are simply peers who recovered using TMS healing. The site, like this book, does not provide medical advice, diagnosis, or recommendations for medical treatment.

We'll tell you more about our journeys toward becoming pain-free shortly, as we alternate writing chapters. We both experienced severe back pain, but its length and causes were very different.

Before I became free of chronic back pain and sciatica about a year ago (after suffering for twenty-five years) I used to wake up mornings with excruciating back pain, wondering, *When is this going to*

*end, Lord? How am I going to get out of bed, much less go to work as a roofer, climbing ladders and lifting heavy sheets of plywood?*

I remember my wife driving me to the doctor's office. Time and again he patted me on my shoulder telling me, "Things aren't as bad as they could be, it's only spondylodesis, or bulging disc, probably a degenerative or ruptured disc. After all, you're not exactly young anymore. At forty, you've lived a good life now and the good old days have caught up with you."

Gosh, this was such music to my ears. After all, I could have sworn that just a year earlier I was thirty-nine and feeling better than when I was twenty-nine. Really, a slight bend-over in the back yard had brought on all this hurting?

I remember the long painful walks back to the car after seeing the doctor again and getting more pain pills. I dreaded the ride back home, hoping my wife wouldn't have to slam on the brakes or hit a pot hole. Lord forbid if a car bumped ours from behind. Why was this happening again after being free of pain for years? With a fear of a life that had no meaning, the depression was over-whelming. I hadn't saved enough to retire on; at were my kids going to do?

At home, watching my wife tie the laces of my shoes because it was too painful for me to bend over, the fitness guru Jack LaLanne (1914-2011) who was still active when he died at age 93 would come to mind. At eighty-five years, he was still doing head-stands, push-ups and full-body workouts. How could he be so fit when he was more than twice my age?

And every day I saw many people decades older than I who were still running, living without lost hope and full of life. Weren't they hurting? Or had life just dealt them a better hand? I saw people in their eighties and beyond including my dad moving, bending, working out with weights, mowing the lawn. Could they just have been working against the pain?

I know at age 85 my dad wasn't "toughing it out." He wasn't in pain. When he'd have a sore day he'd take a Doan's pill for back pain relief or something called saltpeter and he would be fine as aged wine. He'd also spray WD 40 on his head when his blood pressure would go up, or if he had a headache, and it worked. I knew by common sense that Doan's pills were for the kidneys and saltpeter was salt. What was his secret? I have mine and want to share it with you in a minute. First, a little about back pain, which is the most common symptom of TMS.

As we have said, but it merits repeating, Walt and I both also added the spiritual element to our healing, asking God to help us become pain-free, and we believe that was a very important part in our healing. As Jesus said in John 16:23-24: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you."

Hither to you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy shall be full.”

You may want to skip some of the procedures in this book and try others, but we are confident that you will find the one or ones that will best suit your TMS taste buds. Bring your own wine, soft drink, or bottled water. People of all faiths or none are welcome here. God loves us all regardless of who we call who we believe is our Divine Creator. In our book, Walt and I focus less on religion and more on spirituality, which a Jewish friend said is “tied to belief, and that is a TMS theme.”

Neither Walt nor I is a doctor or a psychologist, so we suggest, as do Doctors Sarno and Brady and others including Steve Ozanich, that you see a doctor about any pain before you try the TMS method in this book that led us and thousands of others to become pain-free without surgery or medication. Even if your doctor suggests you undergo an MRI or Cats can and are then told you have a herniated disc in your back, a torn tendon or ligament or fibromyalgia, and need a strong pain killer or an operation, Dr. Sarno says the pain may not be from structural damage and instead is the result of repressed emotions.

Medication or surgery rarely give complete and lasting relief to pain, while the repressed emotions approach does, and has in thousands of cases verified by Dr. Sarno and others practicing his program to being pain-free for life.

Many people in pain, especially women, are told by their doctor that they have fibromyalgia, a syndrome that effects the muscles and soft tissue in the body. The symptoms include chronic pain in the muscles, fatigue, sleep problems, and painful tender points or trigger points at some parts of the body. Doctors say pain and other symptoms can be relieved through medications, lifestyle changes, stress management, and other treatments.

Dr. Sarno says most traditional doctors attribute many pain symptoms to fibromyalgia, but they do not really know what causes the pain, they lump the pain into a term they call fibromyalgia. But Dr. Sarno says fibromyalgia does not cause pain. Pain in the areas said to be affected by fibromyalgia are caused by TMS repressed emotions such as anger, rage, fear, feelings of abandonment, or physical or mental abuse by parents or others. There are a growing number of doctors who believe in TMS who offer healing advice following techniques including many of those you will learn about in this book.

Some people find relief from pain by talking sternly to their unconscious mind, even yelling at it that they know the pain is from repressed emotions and not from any physical impediment. Others talk to their unconscious in a sweet, friendly way while telling it about a repressed emotion. While Dr. Sarno said some people are released from pain by talking angrily to their unconscious, he later suggested talking to

it as one would soothe one's "inner child," instructing it about a repressed emotion.

The inner child is all that we learned and experienced as children, before puberty. It is an independent entity subordinate to the waking conscious mind and plays a major part in who we are today and what causes our pain or anxiety. The inner child points to unresolved childhood experiences and lingering dysfunctional effects of childhood dysfunction. It refers to all of the mental-emotional memories that remain stored in the unconscious mind from conception through pre-puberty.

Twelve-step and other programs involved in healing addictions consider healing the inner child to be one of the essential stages in recovery from addiction, abuse, trauma, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Dr. Sarno and other TMS book authors and practitioners consider dealing with the inner child the most important step to TMS healing. References to childhood will be made frequently throughout this book.

There were a lot of facets of TMS for Walt and me to learn about, but we decided that if we kept it as simple as possible from the beginning, it wouldn't be bewildering.

To repeat, because it is very important, Dr. Sarno's belief is that most back and other pain is not physically induced by any structural abnormality but the result of our repressed emotions. From that basic starting point, I explored my own paths to becoming pain free and establishing a new and very deep relationship with God as well as achieving a profound sense of calm and peace.

My twin journeys of being pain free and spiritually strong continues, and a large part of that is sharing it with others to help them achieve what I have been fortunate enough to find. As I said, you don't have to add the spiritual element to your pain healing, but many have found it to be a very important plus. It can be a very welcome period of reflective time each day like meditation to provide some perspective and balance to the fast-paced plugged-in world we live in that is often non-spiritual except for maybe an hour on Sunday morning.

Meditation is a very important part of TMS healing, but many people have trouble knowing how to meditate. There are many ways to meditate and entire books have been written on the subject. Each person may find their own best technique, whether it be closing the eyes and listening to soothing music or discovering the relaxing benefits of silence. Some watch a lighted candle, others focus on a vase of flowers, and still others may hold the image of natural beauty they saw while on vacation. Walt says he uses the latter technique, remembering sun-filled beaches or golden setting suns over lakes while on wilderness canoe trips in the Minnesota-Ontario border lakes region called Quetico.

As the Mayo Clinic suggests, “If stress has you anxious, tense and worried, consider trying meditation. Spending even a few minutes in meditation can restore your calm and inner peace. Meditation is a type of mind-body medicine that can wipe away the day’s stress, bringing with it inner peace. You can practice meditation wherever you are — whether you’re out for a walk, riding the bus, waiting at the doctor’s office, or even in the middle of a difficult business meeting.”

The Mayo Clinic’s techniques for meditation are 1) breathe deeply, 2) scan your body for any pain or tension and imagine sending heat or calming thoughts into it, 3) repeat a mantra such as “I feel fine, I am already healed” or a prayer, 4) combine meditation with walking, preferably in a peaceful natural setting such as a quiet park, 5) say a prayer such as the “Our Father” or “Hail Mary,” some say them with Rosary beads, 6) read a poem or passage in *The Holy Bible*, 6) focus your mind and spirit on love and gratitude.

For more on the Mayo Clinic’s suggested meditation techniques for stress management, see this web site: [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com).

We can find peace and calm in slowing down and reflecting on our relationship with God which also may need healing. Achieving peace with the Lord can relieve us of pain and bring us more calm and peace than we can imagine.

Jesus promised His disciples before his death on the cross, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you; do not let your heart be troubled, or be afraid” (John 14:27). His peace is wonderful to behold, so why not seek it?

My partner Ninfa and was a big help to me and Walt, my collaborator and fellow traveller on the Sarno road to becoming pain-free through discovery and release of repressed emotions. He will offer insights into his own journey throughout the book.

My religious journey, my walk to Emmaus, came from nearly a lifetime of prayer and reading the Bible and reading the works of past and present philosophers, physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, scientists, the religious, and others who shared their experiences and knowledge along their own journeys to good health and increased faith in Our Lord.

If you know your Bible, you know St. Luke’s gospel, chapter 13, where he tells of two men walking to the village of Emmaus when a stranger joined them who they talked with about Jesus’ death on the cross earlier that day. That night in the village the stranger broke bread with them, blessed it, and their eyes were opened. They realized then that He was Jesus after His Crucifixion, on His way to Jerusalem seven miles away to show himself to His disciples and prove His Resurrection.

Wouldn’t it have been wonderful to have been one of those two travellers on the road to Emmaus? You can be. It’s all in the wanting to undertake the journey, the most important of anyone’s lifetime.

Walt and I strongly recommend you begin your reading with Dr. Sarno's *Healing Back Pain* or his later book, *The Mindbody Prescription*. His video lecture based on that book is highly recommended and can be found free at TMSWiki.org. Walt's review and summary of it is in the TMS P.S. chapter of this book.

We also recommend reading the Brady and Ozanich's books. It is not our intention to draw heavily upon their works or Dr. Sarno's, but to briefly summarize the concept of relief from pain through identifying and acknowledging repressed emotions. Their books tell their journeys. This book tells Walt's and mine.

We've read that actors George Clooney and Anthony Hopkins both suffer from recurring severe back pain. Clooney has had several operations that gave him temporary relief, but the pain keeps coming back, most recently forcing him to drop out of making a new action film because it would be too physically demanding on him. Instead, he is thinking of getting another operation. Maybe instead he ought to try the repressed emotions approach to being pain free for life. It costs nothing and, as Walt writes in his first chapter, "It works!"

If misery loves company, and we know it does, you might find comfort in knowing about some other celebrities who are in pain. Irish rock singer Sinéad O'Connor suffers from fibromyalgia and bipolar disorder and performs despite that and raises four children. She said what helps her is lowering her expectations that her life can be "perfect." The network news anchor Cynthia McFadden has Crohn's disease and said a main therapy for her is humour. (Yes, Walt, I was sure to add this as you requested.)

Actress Kathleen Turner has RA (rheumatoid arthritis). A blood test confirmed the diagnosis, which, in turn, gave her a healthy dose of perspective. "Suddenly all that stuff about having good looks and being sexy took secondary position to being able to walk without pain," she has said. After abusing alcohol to cope with the pain, she got sober and set herself on a path to not only find a cutting-edge medication that placed her disease in remission, but to speak out about the disease. She went on a crusade to raise funds and awareness for RA (at least 1.3 million Americans suffer from it).

Television host Montel Williams suffers from multiple sclerosis. Williams is also the author of eight books, including *Body Change*, which outlines the exercise regimen he uses to stay strong and keep additional symptoms at bay. He has said he exercises for 75 minutes a day.

Actress-dancer Jennifer Gray has had chronic back pain for years, after a neck injury from a 1974 automobile accident. Her doctor advised her to exercise because "People are better off moving around than sitting around."



None of these celebrities has been told about TMS repressed emotions causing their pain, but they were given medication and surgery which has not helped them. You may think the approach is too unconventional and not endorsed by the medical profession. That is slowly changing, especially among new young doctors who are open to alternate medical treatments such as the Mindbody and Mindbody-Spirit approaches.

But, as at least one especially brave TMS medical doctor (Sarno) suggests, why would the medical profession find any validity in the TMS approach when it cures, not just treats pain? Following the free TMS program, there is no need to make repeat visits to the doctor's office or hospital surgery room. Such visits and the medication prescribed amount to billions of dollars annually to doctors, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, chiropractors, massage therapists, and other medical practitioners.

We offer some amazing testimonials about Dr. Sarno's method from well-known people who have found pain relief from and endorsed the TMS concept, such as these celebrities:

Janette Barber, executive producer of *Rosie Radio* on Sirius XSM and formerly supervising producer and head writer for the *Rosie O'Donnell Show*. Pain in her ankles was so severe she could hardly walk and was confined to a wheelchair. Medically diagnosed with posterior tibialis tendonitis, her doctors were doubtful of any recovery.

She sought pain relief from Dr. Sarno, experienced TMS treatment and recovery, and was interviewed about it on *Larry King Live* in 1999, saying Dr. Sarno said her body was telling her she needs to recognize and focus on her repressed emotions. Following that advice and his six-week healing program she became completely pain free. Later, she even climbed up a mountain to deliver food and supplies in a relief mission in Kosovo. She told King, "Without him (Sarno) I couldn't have done it."

Tal Ben-Shahar, Ph.D., an author and psychology lecturer at Harvard University, tells students that Sarno encourages his patients to acknowledge their negative feelings, to accept their anger, anxiety, fear, and other repressed emotions and that makes the physical pain go away.

Ben Crane, professional golfer. Back pain for six months in 2007 kept him off the pro golfing tour, and then became free of pain after following Dr. Sarno's TMS healing program.

Howard Stern, radio host, has been a staunch advocate of Dr. Sarno and TMS for years. In an interview on *Larry King Live*, he said he suffered from back pain most of his life, and tried every kind of medical treatment, with no real or lasting relief. He told King, "The pain was so severe that even during my radio show, I would lay down on the floor." Friends told him about TMS and he was sceptical, believing his back pain was because of some sort of physical defect. Eventually, Stern went

to see Dr. Sarno and as a result of learning the pain was all in his head, in a matter of a few weeks he became pain-free and has been for more than ten years. He endorsed the doctor's book saying, "I beg anyone who is seeking a solution to pain to study the amazing and revolutionary Sarno TMS approach. I did, and it changed my life."

Mehmet Oz, M.D., host of *The Dr. Oz Show* on television, wrote an article for Oprah Winfrey's web site that Dr. Sarno's belief is that stress is the source of most low back pain and it stems from buried emotional issues that trigger tension in the body. Ultimately, that tension deprives nerves and muscles of oxygen. Relief comes through understanding that link and by learning to deal with negative emotions constructively.

John Stossel, former co-anchor of the ABC Television news show *20/20*, says Dr. Sarno's TMS program freed him after 15 years of back pain. Before the treatment, when he didn't take time off from work, he "conducted meetings lying on the floor and slept with ice bags." In a segment he produced, four back pain sufferers felt some pain relief after 15 minutes with Dr. Sarno.

In the following chapters Walt and I tell of our journey to relief from back pain and stronger spiritual faith. We hope you will join us pain-free on the road to Emmaus.

As the Chinese philosopher Laozi (604 BC-531 BC) said, "A journey of thousand miles begins with a single step." It won't be anywhere near that long to recover from your pain, but your next step should be reading Dr. Sarno's *Healing Back Pain* and the postings on the TMSWiki.org web sites.

My friend Walt said that when he was in his mid twenties and dating a girl he was getting serious about, he asked his godmother when she knew she was in love and wanted to marry his future uncle. She said she began to like him, the butcher at her neighbourhood grocery store. She was a very proper, reserved lady at all times, about forty years old.

"I knew I was in love with him when one day I came into the store and felt like dancing on top of his meat counter!"

That's how I felt when, after twenty-five years of terrible back pain; I was finally pain-free. I was already in love, with my wife, but felt like I was in love with *life* again, and hadn't felt like that in a very long time. I was forty, but being free of pain, and without drugs, surgery, or even spinal manipulations, I felt like I was a teenager again. I was on a health and spiritual high.

Read on. You too, can be pain free, taking long walks with your dog, playing tennis or golf, jogging, skiing, sky diving, even bungee jumping or dancing on a meat counter. You can be in love with life again. It's true: *God loves you and does not want you to be in pain.*

You remember the very caring doctors on television? Handsome young doctors Marcus Welby, James Kildare, Ben Casey, and the

beautiful Old West medicine woman Dr. Quinn. The three most knowledgeable and caring real doctors you can have today to heal you of any pain are God, Jesus, and The Holy Spirit. They, too, are practicing doctors, and authors of what Dr.Sarno calls “Knowledge Penicillin.” The great thing is, their services are free and they make house calls, 24-7. You don’t even have to call 9-11. They’re inside you.

## Eric's Journey

### Chapter One: I Get Clobbered

I will tell you in this chapter how I came to have the terrible back pain that lasted twenty-five years and the techniques I used to free myself of the pain. I am totally confident they can heal you, too.

It's like I had been in a pain battle my whole life. At least since I was fourteen, and I'm forty now. This is how it began.

I weighed about 175 pounds and was five foot nine inches tall, playing football with my year-older but much smaller nephew in my folks' big front yard out in the country near Rome, Georgia. He was standing there looking at me and I could tell he was wondering, *Is this big guy about to clobber me?*

I saw the fear in his eyes, gave myself a deep breath of strength, and took off at my adversary. To him we must have looked like David and Goliath.

I didn't intend to hurt him, and doubted he could hurt me. This was just a front yard game of tag football. I had survived lots of scrapes; fallen out of trees, was in some pretty good bicycle wrecks riding downhill, got slung in more ditches and holes than I can count.

I watched football on television on Sundays, although Big Joe Green, our Sunday School teacher, said it was taking us away from church. Man, the big pro football players had it together. I mean, six guys could pulverize one guy and he'd get back up like, well that's another day at the office. Later on I'd find out all there was about the football school of hard knocks, and fella, it ain't easy.

Anyhow, as I looked at my nephew I took off in full force straight ahead like an opposing Dallas Cowboys lineman. He saw me coming like a locomotive as his eyes grew with adrenaline. I got closer at about a swift 18 mph pace or maybe a little slower, and then the moment of contact was upon us.

He just dived down and then stood up, Wow, that quick, and I was down and out. No moving, just groaning.

I couldn't move my legs. My whole body had been sent to the ground onto the side of my face. I felt my body snap like the lash of a whip. My back was bent in half at the lumbar area.

I knew something bad happened to me. I tried getting up and screamed from the pain.

If I knew then what I know now, I could have understood why I was in pain and gotten over it.

### **These are the steps I suggest to becoming pain-free:**

1. Believe that the pain you are in is psychologically-caused, not structural, and can be cured with the regimens laid out in this book.
2. Believe that you can change into being pain-free with the help of affirmations (positive words or phrases), awareness (being conscious of your emotional condition), and acceptance (accept the concept that your pain is TMS from repressed emotions). Some affirmations I've found helpful are: "I am going to be pain-free," "I will not let my repressed emotions give me pain," "I am healthy and not in any pain." Practice until you can reveal to yourself how these affirmations work in practice. Then you'll see that your stressors won't be so hard to catch, and reframe one of my basic tools of becoming pain-free.
3. Reframing is a general category of different types of psychological reversals. In more simple words, it's changing your thoughts and emotions from negative to positive. An example would be you were thinking hard on your wife Sally and how she took \$20 off your dresser, but then you remembered that she told you the night before that she needed to borrow the money, so you'll instantly feel relief. This metaphor proves that the reframing process works and it can be used in all types of negative situations. And, good ones, you can think of a memory that bothers you and reframe it to one that has no bad memories to it, which is explained in later chapters.
4. You must have the mind-set that you're going to do everything it takes to get yourself out of a negative psychological state.
5. Stop worrying. Yes, that isn't easy, but it can be done and is essential in healing. Worry means you are living more in the past or future than in the present. Live in the present moment and you won't spend time worrying, and as you know, worrying doesn't do any good but just causes stress and anxiety which cause TMS pain. Learn and practice calmness through relaxation methods and affirmations to help reverse negative thought patterns. Change your focus and accept that now is the time to believe more, and you will heal. Say "I'm calm and at peace"

when you get triggered to negative stressors. This is how we fight and win the battle against pain.

6. Read this book and Dr. Sarno's 12 Daily Reminders on page 82 of *Healing Back Pain* every day. Learn to know them by heart. Practice awareness and acceptance to deal with what's stressing you. Meditate to calm your mind and be relieved of stresses. Techniques for meditation are suggested in other chapters of this book.
7. Get to know your bad personality traits and why you have them by using awareness, and change them through acceptance.
8. All the above-mentioned strategies work. They tell you what pressures you're sensitive to. Now you can learn to see the stressors differently and accept them to heal you. It's the worry and stressors that are causing the TMS pain, along with repressed emotions, unless you have faced all those issues. Then learn to reverse the worry and pain with affirmations consistently until your mind starts to get used to the affirmations. Then learn more. It's a life change you need. Change these worries now. With the right tools, such as the ones on this list, you can stop your worries and become pain-free.
9. Through acceptance and affirmations and facing the issues you don't want to face you can begin to heal. Just reframe... accept that everything is really okay. Then you will begin to heal.
10. Release is when you have one or more negative emotions and you use acceptance, forgiveness, and reframing to discharge or release an emotion, pain or bad memories.

More techniques for becoming pain-free follow in this chapter, but meanwhile, back to the story of my pain...

My nephew ran to our house and got my dad. Together they wrapped my arms around their necks and took me to the house.

Mama stood with a hickory stick in hand, to give someone a whipping. But when she saw I was hurt, she shouted, "Get him in here!" I could never do wrong. It was always my dad, my brothers or sisters that got me into trouble; never me. She was a good Mama Bear. She knew how to calm me down and tell me I'll get over this. It may be bad, but I'll win if I don't give up. I didn't know at the time that it would be a two and a half decade battle

Dad and my nephew helped me to Mama's room and I lay there for two weeks on my back, not even able to roll over. Mama would come in and help me roll over as needed. She was a huge help, of course. As days turned into nights I began to run the "paralyzed" theory through my mind. The "never walk again thoughts" and the surgery route. In TMS it's called "catastrophizing." But I was young, after all. I'd heal, of course, or maybe not.

After two weeks I was able to stand for a few minutes at a time. The school was calling threatening probation if I didn't get back soon. I had to go back to school, but I still hurt, a lot.

Back in those days, Deep South boys didn't make hospital visits unless it was a matter of life or death. When we got hurt, first we'd see if we were going to get better. If I got stung by bees fifty times -- and I was, once -- I'd lay there to see if I was going to go into convulsions before I would get rushed to the hospital. Mama was smart and none of us on her watch ever did go to the hospital. We couldn't be hurt that bad.

After two weeks I still was in pain getting out of bed. About three months passed and I began to painfully walk downstairs to the living room. By then, school was threatening with probation for delinquency, so back to school I went.

I couldn't do physical exercise or much of anything. Even a slight bend in my knees and I'd be in instant severe pain, like a dagger stabbing me again and again.

This struck some severe fear in my mind about my health, and how was I ever going to recover? This seemingly small bit of fear had powerful consequences that I didn't know at the time.

See, I was from a family of expert worriers. I will write in a chapter on fear, when even a small bit of fear can lead to anxiety and debilitating pain. This fear will keep the TMS going long after you have physically healed.

I kept worrying with the "paralyzed" theory in my mind, and thoughts that I would never walk again. Or surgery, if something wouldn't change soon. The pain was unbearable. Walking for a few minutes was like walking through a fire. As more days passed, my back got weaker and weaker. I want to add another list here to becoming free of pain so you won't walk on the rocks I did:

1. Fear and frustration have to be dealt with through acceptance and affirmations. If you're having fear, just say the affirmation: "I have power, love, and a sound mind."
2. If you're getting upset at affirmations or acceptance, you're falling short with the program. This can't be cut out of the program. You have to learn to work with acceptance and awareness.

3. You have to get peace and acceptance going. Practice affirmations and acceptance so they become like second nature to you.
4. Think positive. Tell yourself again and again “I am going to be free of this pain.” You must be dedicated to believing in true acceptance of being without pain.
5. Understand that your unconscious mind thinks you do not really believe you are going to become pain-free by recognizing your repressed emotions (anger, fear, guilt, etc.).
6. If it’s hard for you to stay focused on the program and concentrate, this is because of tense thinking. You can get rid of tense thinking through meditations, acceptance, and affirmations.
7. When you mention or think of all your angers and anxieties, then use affirmations of calmness. Use affirmations that calm the nerves. We can know everything and still miss the main key. That key is to use the affirmations until they become a part of you, and learn acceptance and add it to the affirmations.
8. Your muscles will be sore and hurt because of tense thinking and repressed emotions. Try to consciously relax. Do that through affirmations and acceptance. In about a few weeks, or sooner, you will see that your mind will get away from the intensity.
9. You must convince yourself that your pain is not caused by anything structural (if you first visited a doctor and he or she comes to that conclusion). Your pain is psychological because of repressed emotions. If you are only 99 percent convinced your pain is from TMS, you won’t be cured. You must convince yourself 100 percent or your unconscious mind will continue to give you pain.
10. Walt tells how he struggled with this issue in one of his chapters. He held on to the belief that, at age 82, his pains were caused by aging. When he finally convinced himself it was repressed emotions and not physical body deterioration, he healed.
11. Thinking of the things that bother you is called “fear thoughts,” and these become TMS. Fear thoughts contribute to your pain. Learn to rid your mind of a negative memory with the



affirmation “I have power, love, and a sound mind.” Do this real intentionally and feel the words flow through you.

12. Affirmations and acceptance should calm down your nervous system in a few weeks. It's like learning a new habit and breaking an old one. That's all worry is. It's a habit that you can learn to break.
13. Now you know what to change: the tensive thinking. The above concepts will work in all these situations. Don't be in a rush to heal. What may take one person a few hours or days to heal may take you longer. But be assured, the healing will come.
14. Take time to learn and practice the finer arts of relaxation. You probably have a great deal of anxiety built up because of tensive and negative thinking. You may not think you will become pain-free, but you will if you stay dedicated to knowing your pain will be gone.
15. Find someone who has already achieved what you want to become free of pain. You will find them at [www.TMSWiki.org](http://www.TMSWiki.org). People are online there who have overcome their pain and who want to share their success stories with you.
16. We applaud you for your courage to work toward becoming pain-free. Don't give up. Look at what you have to lose and how much you have to gain.
17. You still may not be able to believe it's true that you will be pain-free. Make sure you give it three to six weeks to sink in, and don't give up.

Keep this important fact in mind: When you begin to change your thoughts, your new reality will not immediately follow. It will when you've done all the steps above and other healing techniques throughout this book both patiently and with full tenacity.

I would like to share with you some words on changing our thoughts by John Kehoe, author of *Mindbody Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

“There always will be a certain time-lag during which you will be in a position of developing new thoughts, but still stuck with your old reality. This ‘waiting for it to happen’ period is critical, because how you *react* during this waiting period will either quicken or hinder the *new reality* you are attempting to create.

“You may doubt things are changing. You may feel discouraged and wonder if you are wasting your time. Your mind will try to fool you by telling you that nothing will happen, that this won't work. These

thoughts are natural; they happen to us all. Do not pay them any heed. Just continue with your exercises, being patient and diligent in your efforts. It helps to remember that reality is a process, a continuous happening.”

I would like to add, do not forget the spiritual element in your healing. Ask God to heal you, and He will.

I'll skip ahead a little in the story of my pain, then get back to my teenage years. I kept thinking, “I'm young and I'll find a way to get rid of the pain. I'll hold my head high and believe. This belief got me through the next twenty-five years of pain. Never doubt how powerful belief is. You wouldn't be reading this if you didn't have belief. I *had* to try and work it out.

A cousin had a roofing company and offered me a job as a laborer. I was still fifteen and in great pain, but I said okay.

I figured I was young and I'd heal in time. I was able to stand again for a few minutes at a time. It's like when you're young you really can hold a lot of pain. I never accepted that I wouldn't heal. I had a lot of other issues, but I always had hope.

On my first day on the job, each time I grabbed a bundle of roofing shingles I had this pain shoot through me, and I was like “Oh God, please give me strength.” This is how I found that Scripture helps you, too.

On the outside, I had to be strong. I couldn't let my cousin or the guy helping me see how much pain I was in. My mind and body were working against me and I'd recite that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Then I'd get more endurance for about two hours until the pain would rear its ugly head again.

I had to figure a way to strengthen my back. I knew there was an answer. I just had to seek it out.

The pain got worse and worse. It never let up. I'd hurt all day working and at the end of the day I thought my roofing days were over. As my cousin paid each of us fifty dollars for our 8 hour marathon, I told him I'd be back the next day. Wanting to, but knowing in my heart I was lying. I couldn't. My body wouldn't let me. My roofing days were over, or so I thought at the time.

I stood there as all the older guys were happy to be finished with the job. I noticed they talked a lot about beer and women. Roofers were a different breed to me.

You ever see “Swamp People” on TV and how they dress, eat, and act? Well, that's roofers all the way. They try to make ends meet with about \$7,000 a year, all along telling their girlfriends they're making plenty.

Roofing is hard work and I've done it for more than twenty 20 years. Unless you're one of the top roofer names in any given city, you're going to be treated like less than a used car salesman.

It's my years in roofing that led to a lot of pain in my life. But it was also the extreme conditions and learning to be a preacher that molded me into the man I am today, both pain-free and spiritually strong.

Now back to my cousin and getting paid. As I stood waiting, all I could feel was the pain getting sharper and sharper, striking at intervals like hot glass cutting to my bones. I had to sit down and try to get rid of the pain. That was the problem. No matter if I worked less, I still hurt, and if I didn't work, I hurt. If I lay down, I hurt. Basically, I was hurting 24 hours a day. Something had to give.

The guys I worked with that day mentioned that they had back pain, but I would listen for the cues. If they didn't say it felt like a knife being twisted in their back, then they were more than likely just making talk. On the ride home in my cousin's truck they drank cold beers and talked about how strong they were and how many women were crazy about them.

It was a spectacle to see and hear these guys. Their reality was getting high on thoughts of women. My reality was getting my back better and moving toward a more promising career. I didn't want to be stuck in a trailer telling all the young boys one day how I could get any girlfriend if I wanted to. That kind of life blew right over my head, 'til this day I still don't see where those guys were coming from.

All I could think was how they weren't hurting. They were forty to fifty years old and Mother Nature had beaten the hell out of them and they were still moving, twisting, standing. Rough looking characters with skinny bodies and no muscles.

Here I was at fifteen, built powerfully, but oh my God, the pain. I never mentioned or showed it, but it was killing me. I had to come up with an idea. Here it is...

Here is the visualization I discovered that got me back on my road to recovery.

Skill is needed to attain and hold a healing, so the sooner you learn to affirm and visualize while under meditation, the better. We develop skills over weeks and weeks of practice. One of my favorite skills is affirmations mixed with meditation and imaging or visualizations.

I start my 15 or 20 minutes off with the affirmation "I forgive and let go easily. It helps to forgive myself and others." Repeat three times.

Next step, after I start to feel forgiveness releasing tension from my body. I then say "I'm calm, relaxed, patient and confident." This helps me to calm down my inner tension and has always been highly effective. Say that three times.

Step three, I count from ten to one into a relaxed calm meditation. I wait and feel the relaxing of my voice command as it moves through my body to each number.

By saying Ten, “My mind is relaxed.” Then Nine, “My head is relaxed. Eight, “My face is relaxed, then Seven, “My neck is relaxed.”

I’ll continue to Six where I say “My back is relaxed,” then I’ll feel my back as it relaxes. Now as my head, mind, neck and back are relaxed I’ll move to Five and say “Now my chest is relaxing in harmony.” Then Four, “I am relaxed from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet and through my toes.” One, “I’m totally relaxed now and in complete control.”

While I’m in meditation I imagine myself being immersed in a white light that is covering me with calmness. In an instant, the white light becomes white silk linen. As it flows over my body, I feel the silk linen as it touches my skin, so soft. I feel complete calmness and relaxation as the silk sheet covers my body in complete healing light flowing through my body and letting any access tension flow away.

As the white silk linen flows against my skin and I feel the healing white light continue to flow through my body, then the linen dissolves healing liquid through my body.

Now, as I’m in eyes-closed meditation, I repeat to myself, “I am completely healed from all pain or anxiety and I am made whole and complete.”

I imagine the painful area in my body healing with the healing white light aglow all over my image of the painful area fully healing every part of my back, knees and neck, fully healing my heart and mind to optimal performance.

I see the area heal in my mind’s eye and I feel the warm healing liquid flowing into every part of my body.

Now I count from one to five for the wake-up. One, I’m becoming fully awake.” Two, I’m seeing my surroundings. Three, I’m more awake and full of energy now. Four, my mind is fully awake and I am alert. Five I’m awake and fully alert, ready to take on my day...

I had started these sessions many years ago and they really worked wonders. They work even better now and completely heal me of any tension built up in my body.

If I knew back when I first felt back pain to stick with this visualization, I would have passed around a lot of the rocks I still had to walk on. But I didn’t stay consistent and went back to alcohol. The quick one-night fix as in alcohol or pain medication always seems alluring, but it isn’t the permanent fix you can get through steady practice of the above-mentioned formula.

I think I took every side-road a person could take to not receive a healing while I was constantly looking for the magic combination. Little did I know part of it was already practiced and thrown to the side for a bottle of liquor. Keep in mind I had no mentors except rock bands, so I just followed many of them in their use of alcohol or drugs, and I soon forget my portion of the magic potion for healing a better way.

School was starting back after the summer. I was feeling better again, enough to walk, anyways. I had gotten used to drinking alcohol to numb the pain by this time during spring break. The rock band Guns N'Roses was just on the scene with a song about a cheap wine called Night Train and if anyone didn't know how influential that hot group was, well you just had to hear them. I'd buy a bottle of Night Train for about \$2.98 and it would help edge the pain considerably. Not all the way, just so I could deal with it.

I don't recommend alcohol for pain relief. It was just what I found helped for me, for a while, until I discovered the techniques Walt and I write about in this book for becoming free of pain without any "crutches."

I re-entered Pepperell middle school in eighth grade because I wanted a better life. I was ready now to sit in class and learn. Roofing was an awful experience and I knew if I was going to make any money in this world, I was going to have to do it with my mind.

I worked hard at my studies, did my homework, and the teachers would come by and pat me on my back telling me how proud they were of me. The pat hurt physically, but also made me feel good since I'd dropped off doing anything but good since sixth grade, two years prior to the time my back pain began.

I became ecstatic and ready to use all my mental capabilities. I loved learning. It was like a hobby of mine. I started reading books at the age of six about Presidents Washington and Lincoln. It astounded me how they had so many trials (did they have back pain?) I could be a president one day or whatever I wished. All I had to do was keep at how I studied.

The year ended and I fell off the second half as usual with my studies worrying if I was going to amount to anything.

Here I will inject another Dr. Sarno element about our pain and healing. It has to do with our personality.

I am a Type T personality, which many who suffer from TMS are. We tend to take risks, be introverted, and creative. We crave new and novel experiences and excitement. We can be positive and successful entrepreneurs.

We want to be good people and want the best for ourselves and others. We're trusting people and that cost me in the past, and probably you, too, if that's your personality type.

It's good to keep all the loving attributes of the type T person, just keep a watchful eye on the way we use them to be so free at helping others. We even get anxiety towards others because we think folks are out to get us because of our kindness, and this turns into tense thinking.

I've been told I care too much and I have too good of a heart. I always attributed that to being a good thing, but when I look back now,

this is the area that has let me down so much. In retrospect, it has also been God's greatest gift.

I had to understand I was a "goodist," and just by knowing that I have that trait I can now be a good person, but at the same time be watchful, shrewd, and aware of the evils that a loving personality can attract. We only attract these losers (or projective thoughts) to us at times because they see our kindness as a weakness, or we feel that we've tried so hard and no one cares.

My conclusion is, always be loving. It's a healing in itself. But learn to not get tensed if you think you've let someone down. See, I've been so kind-hearted in the past that my giving was even tense to me because I could never give enough or be good enough.

Two other major personality types are A and B. Type A people are perfectionists, ambitious, rigidly organized, very status conscious. They can be sensitive, care for other people, be truthful, impatient, always trying to help others, and obsessed with time management. They are often workaholics who multi-task, push themselves with deadlines, and hate both delays and ambivalence. Walt says most of those shoes fit him and his boss of ten years.

Type B people generally live at a lower stress level and work steadily but do not overwork. They enjoy achievement, but do not become stressed if they do not achieve their goals. When faced with competition, they do not mind losing and either enjoy playing the game or back down. They are often reflective, thinking about the outer and inner worlds.

If you see yourself as any of those personality types, consider how the traits may contribute to your TMS pain, and make any adjustments you can.

Back again to the story of my pain.

I remember the first day back at school. This pretty girl kept flirting with me. She gave me a gentle love punch on the back, and it nearly floored me. The pain was so intense just to have her give my back a love tap. I hadn't had tears come to my eyes very often, but I felt like it then. Afterward, if I was to lift my arm wrong, I'd hurt. Something was wrong. It was bad wrong, and I had to take more time out of school.

Now even though I was keeping my hopes up, I was looking at no more walking, no more playing sports outside with friends. If I couldn't find out about the pain and make it ease up, then I was not going to have any fun.

The meditations I was doing now were helping me along a lot. But I didn't understand their power as I should have.

At the time, I had to wait in pain and see. We start with an understanding, an assurance of hope. We try everything that doesn't work, and then we stumble upon the truth. It still baffles me how well-

hidden this cure is. It works, and it's working today with thousands of people.

As time slowly passed by and Mom knew I wasn't getting any better, she made an appointment for me to get an MRI. Dr. Sarno describes that as "an advanced diagnostic procedure that is capable of producing an image of body soft tissues allowing one to detect the presence of such things as tumors or herniated discs."

I went to the hospital for the MRI, but could barely roll and turn as the doctor suggested, but I did the best I could. After the MRI, I had to get the medics there to help me to my feet. I could lie down, but getting back up was almost impossible without help, and was still very painful.

I didn't know about pain medications then, but the doctor didn't give me any. In a few days Mom called the doctor for a report and he said I was fine. No physical problem, no structural damage showed on the MRI.

But the pain was even worse now. I fell into a deep fear mode. (You reading this book know what that's like.) No more walking, no more playing outside with friends. No more even going to school.

The doctor then said I needed to see a specialist. He said my pain could be caused by a number of different things, but healing was out of his hands. Well, the main thing that somehow kept making me feel better (mentally) was that the doctor couldn't find anything structurally wrong with my back. So I thought I'm just going to have to be a man, tough this out, and in time (I figured) if I work and keep at it, then my back will heal.

The more allowing you can be of yourself, and the less you try to recover, the less internal resistance you will cause yourself. I practiced that.

Sitting quietly for a few minutes to be mindful or meditate in the *now* (the present moment) can help you cope better with your reaction to the day-to-day stresses, stopping them from building up, or they can potentially result in symptoms. This strategy also can be a helpful tool to use when your pain escalates or changes in some way, even if you are not sure why, because it allows you to take time out to acknowledge how you feel.

### **Try this exercise. It helped me tremendously.**

1. Sit somewhere quietly with as few distractions as possible, then
2. Begin with three or four slow deep breaths to get your nervous system to calm things down.
3. Sit quietly and allow your focus to rest on your body and how it feels generally.

4. If fear, negative or worry thoughts come into your mind, acknowledge them, but let them pass on by without becoming attached to them.
5. Scan your body from head to toes, noting how each area feels, and consciously let go of areas that feel tight.
6. Now allow your attention to go *inside* your body, observing how you feel in your chest, abdomen, and pelvis.
7. Don't try to change anything, just notice any area that feels tense or different in some way, and allow your attention to settle on that area.
8. Observe the hurting area as you would look at a bird in a tree, allowing it to be there without any resistance. If an emotion bubbles up, allow it to evolve and welcome it, even if you don't know what it is relating to.
9. It's helpful to allow the emotion to flow out of you each time you breathe out.
10. Finally, finish by developing a feeling of compassion, and allow this to expand to fill your whole chest and abdomen.
11. While doing this, imagine a clear, bright, positive white light surrounding you which gradually penetrates your whole body as it flows into you each time you breathe in.
12. This is about acknowledging the emotion, understanding it. Doing this can be effective to let up on pain within just a few minutes.

There has to be a balancing ratio of conquering fear and gaining calmness in one's life, not just an "ask now" dialogue of the rage part. The calm part is hard for most of us, but the rage part is easy!

Have you ever thought or journaled about what is calmness to you, and are you taking more time in your life to act on what is calmness? I know this may not be easy, but it must be done. Some call it a "happy journal." It reminds me of golfing, living in the *now*, and being happy.



## The Fear Factor

One of the things many people who have TMSD pain have in common is fear.

They fear their pain will stay with them their whole life. They fear because it spreads to various parts of their body. They fear their pain will get worse if they exercise, or just walk, stand, or sit. They fear they are going to be crippled and spend the rest of their life in a wheelchair or nursing home. They fear they're going to lose their home in a foreclosure because they can't pay the mortgage. They fear they're going to die.

Members of TMSWiki.org help each other each day in forum postings. They tell about their pain symptoms and how they are treating them. The healing techniques are often helpful to those reading the posts, especially those people who post in the success forum. Those are inspirational and offer hope to those still working on their TMS symptoms.

A recent post by Mermaid on the TMSWiki gave an excellent example of conquering fear. She tells how it's best to face your fear, not run away from it:

“A few years ago when we moved to our house I discovered that to walk anywhere I had to go past a neighboring farm. In the yard there are two Rottweiler dogs which went absolutely nuts every time I or anyone else walked past. They would go berserk barking and growling, in a real nasty way, I was absolutely terrified of them and wouldn't walk past on my own for fear that they would somehow get out and attack me. I had been bitten twice in the past by farm dogs, so it has some basis.

“After a while I got tired of this and wanted to be able to walk past them without my heart hammering. I devised a little plan to get over my fear. I decided to look at the situation from the dogs' point view. They were probably just as frightened of me as I was of them, so I started walking past more slowly and making eye contact with them. I know it sounds silly, but I started to just smile at them. As got more confident I would I just call to them when they started barking. After a while we must have gotten used to each other and I lost my fear of them, and now they hardly notice when I go past.

“To get to the point (finally), I remembered this just recently and thought if I can lose my fear of the dogs, I can lose my fear of my many TMS symptoms, by understand-ing them, making friends with them (myself) and therefore letting them go. It's starting to work, too.”

Another member of TMSWiki, Lily Rose, replied: “I found this particularly interesting. It reminds me of how Dr. Sarno often says that your symptoms are just trying to protect you.”

Forest, host of TMSWiki, replied: “Mermaid, this shows empathy towards the fear, towards the object of fear, and towards yourself. It shows... the essence of your heart.”

Another TMSWiki member. Sanghagir182, posted: “I am accepting my fear, allowing it to be there for a bit, and then letting it go. Trying to ignore it is not helpful.”

Forest replied: “This is so true. I don't think ignoring our fear is a great approach. The key is to recognize when your fear is getting out of hand. Then, as you mentioned, you can accept it, allowing it, and then let it go. We have fear because we focus on the future, and about the bad that could happen. Often, we think of the worst, which is ‘catastrophizing.’

“Combating this requires that we turn our attention to the present, and part of any present-based approach involves recognizing and allowing any emotion that you are feeling. So often, we don't even recognize when our fear is getting out of control, and once you do identify the emotion you can then begin to think psychologically about it.”

See how we help each other? Often we share healing knowledge that we read in books or magazine articles from specialists in Mindbody-Spirit healing. Here is an example of that:

### **Fear and How to Overcome It**

Balto, a frequent new visitor to *TMSWiki.org* posted these words from health practitioner Sonya Green: “Fear is the most destructive force in life. Fear can have many faces and most of those faces are in disguise. Fear can be so deceptive that we rarely recognize or define it. Therefore, we fail to challenge it when it sneaks up on us. Fear is the most lethal weapon and the most toxic poison known to man. Fear is highly contagious and self-destructive. Fear can be spread by word, suggestion, imagery, innuendo, or intimidation.

“I say, yes, fear is very contagious and can be conditioned in just a second to your Mindbody. I really would like for everyone to be able to catch fear in its tracks that we catch like a flu bug from people we know or what we watch on television news. Balto, that's how slick it can be, and then when you feel that emotion of fear because your niece said she heard something weird on TV or the Internet, then often we agree with it. We accept it unconsciously by default, not even thinking twice that I need to check these sources and make my own decisions.

“Fear is thrown at us in so many ways it's hard to keep up with all the thoughts and choices. We need to learn to defeat this tyrant and eventually know that the sweet emotions of love and faith in the Lord are more powerful to overcome fear.

“I know fear isn't the opposite of love, but I know love is behind fear, waiting on you to make the right choices to find it. Fear is a chameleon and will most often show up as something completely unexpected. Fear is the core issue behind anger, depression, hatred, insecurity, jealousy, bigotry, obsessive worry, violence, greed, and other core issues that can cause TMS pain.

“Good fear, as I like to call it, can keep you safe because it is a built-in emotion. Good fear as I like to call it will keep you safe, its a built in emotion -- the reason for the default. I believe when we get that feeling in heated arguments and seeing terrible images then we put the emotion of faith with that emotion we often call anger. Then anger eventually develops this negative fear that can paralyze you and often when you have just been mistreating yourself and getting angry at yourself well you just give more power to the emotion of fear and soon we wonder why were fearing so much or feeling nervous.

“Appropriate fear is also an effective decision making factor. Most, if not all, of our choices are based on predicting pleasure or pain. We are predominately motivated by pleasure and pain, that is, gaining pleasure or avoiding pain. We all like to kid ourselves that we operate from intellect, and that we make decisions by using knowledge, logic and experience. If we just scratch the surface a little we will almost always find that our motivations are emotionally based. Pleasure is easy to comprehend; we choose and maintain our careers, relationships, homes, hobbies and possessions because they please us.

“Decisions based on avoiding pain may include any or all of the above, but from the flip side. Avoiding pain is extremely motivating and many of our decisions and reactions have a fear base. Pain avoidance is what fear is. Fear of physical or emotional harm, poverty, abandonment, violence, humiliation, loneliness, disapproval, disease and ultimately - death.

“It is vitally important to discern what appropriate and inappropriate fear is, as appropriate fear can and will protect us, and inappropriate fear can destroy us. Most of the time we don't recognize it at all, so, it's impossible to name it, let alone challenge it.”

Balto had some thoughts on this: “We are always doing the pleasure or pain principle and often what causes some pleasure, like my pleasure from smoking cigarettes. The pleasure becomes some of our worst habits. I know I need to stop smoking, but I equate it with pleasure. If we can turn this around and relate pain to smoking, we can eliminate the pleasure that causes us pain. Pain avoidance is what fear is.

Dr. Sarno writes a lot about fear in his books. Topics include fear and emotional repression, fear of losing someone, fear of physical activity, and the physiological response to fear.

About the role of fear in TMS, he writes in *Healing Back Pain*: “Severity of TMS is measured not only by the intensity of the pain, but by the degree of physical disability that exists. What things is the person afraid of or unable to do? Disability may be more important than pain because it defines the individual’s ability to function personally, professionally, socially, and athletically.”

Dr. Sarno says that fear and preoccupation with physical restrictions are more effective as a psychological defense than the pain itself to achieve the unconscious mind’s goal of distracting attention from repressed rage inside us. The fear of pain, physical activity, injury, or spinal abnormality is enough to perpetuate TMS, even in the absence of pain. The mind is interested only in keeping our attention on the body. The fear of any of the phenomena will accomplish that as well as the reality of pain itself.

A severe attack of pain may be over in a few days, but if the person is afraid to do things for the fear of inducing another attack or because he or she has found that the activity, such as walking, standing, bending over, sitting at the computer, will invariably bring on pain, even if it not an acute attack, then the preoccupation with the body is continuous and the defense is working all the time. In the majority of patients with whom I work, this is the most important factor. The degree of preoccupation with symptoms is a measure of the severity of the problem.

We must avoid conditioning ourselves to expecting pain when we are engaged in daily activities at home or at work.

TMSWiki host Forest posted about Dr. Sarno’s thoughts on fear: “Every time I read them, I realize that what kept me from being active and living a full life because of my TMS pain was not the pain itself, but my fear and obsession with my symptoms. Yes, when my symptoms caused so much pain, I could not walk distances or type on a computer. But my fear kept me from doing these things even when my symptoms were not present. Addressing my fear helped me overcome my TMS, and regain my life back.”

More good examples of facing and overcoming fear are to be found in books by Claire Weekes such as *Simple, Effective Treatment of Agoraphobia*.

You can overcome your fears of anything by facing them and telling yourself positive mantras, affirmatives such as “I can do this. I can do anything I set my mind to do.” Walt says one his favorites is one that his great friend Larry says: “I can do this; it’s a piece of cake.”

And it’s always good to remember what the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said about fear: “That which does not kill us makes us stronger.” Fear seldom is fatal. When we overcome a fear, we know we are stronger. We can feel it.

We might pray that our lives were without fear or anxiety, but both are there from the Lord for a purpose. I like to think President John F. Kennedy got it right about that when he said, “Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men [and women].”

Back again to my story. Another year passed and I decided to give it one more try at school. I wanted to get to high school so bad. The teacher really didn't know what the problem was with me, but I was going to try again. As time passed, I would do well, come home, do my homework, then hit the bottle of Night Train I had stashed under my bed. It seemed to really be a fix for the pain. It also would be my downfall as the school year came to a close.

I'll close this chapter with some thoughts and statistics about TMS healing.

I was always amazed at how some people say they became pain-free shortly after just reading Dr. Sarno's book, *Healing Back Pain*. They got it right away: our pain is not caused by anything structural but psychologically, by repressed emotions.

The good doctor in 1987 did a follow-up study of his TMS patient cure rate. He found that 88 percent of his treated patients were successful in being pain-free, and ten percent reported that their pain had diminished. Some took a little longer to heal, but only two percent were unchanged.

Why did some heal fast, some take longer, and a few not heal? Dr. Sarno theorized that some patients believed and practiced his philosophy that their pain is from TMS generated by repressed emotions. Others were slower in accepting that philosophy, and two percent never accepted it totally.

Walt tells in one of his chapters how he was one of the doubters but finally healed when he became a complete 100 percent TMS believer. Those who are still in pain for one reason or another can hopefully find one or more ways to become pain-free by the healing techniques in this book. He starts to tell his story about pain and recovery in the next chapter, and we take turns thereafter, sharing our personal stories and suggestions for healing.

## Walt's Journey

### Chapter One: I, Too, Get Clobbered

Dr. Sarno says that our type of personality has a lot to do with our TMS pain, so you should know right from the start that I am a lot more like Donald Duck than I am like Mickey Mouse. But over my 84 years I have repressed a lot of the Donald who flies into a rage when frustrated and that probably caused a lot of my TMS.

My painful story began about a year ago when I tried to save \$5 by buying a case of 48 cans of beer on sale at a supermarket. Okay, you can laugh, if you want to. You probably can guess what's coming.

It didn't hurt when I lifted the heavy pack into my shopping cart, but when I lifted it out to put over the scanner in the automatic check-out, I felt like someone in line behind me just plunged a big, sharp knife in my back and then began turning it. I looked, but no one was there. I had just stabbed myself. And I like myself, so why would I do a thing like that?

Lifting the case of beer off the conveyor belt and putting it back into the cart, the same nasty invisible someone who had stabbed me in the back before did it again. I felt like screaming, but I remembered where I was, and have sometimes asked mothers if they would please ask their screaming little girls joy-riding in their shopping cart to shut up.

So I repressed my scream and got out of the store fast as I could. Maybe I should have driven right to the nearby hospital's emergency room. The thought did occur to me, but I decided to drive home instead. I hate hospitals. They're full of sick people.

Somehow, I managed to get the heavy case of beer and groceries into the trunk of my car and drove home. By the time I put the groceries away and set the case of beer down on the floor in my pantry, I felt like my back was full of stabbing knives, on both sides and lower.

It hadn't dawned on me while shopping that an 82-year-old man had no business lifting a case of 48 cans of beer. I had even done it before, at least once. But now I realized I had done it once too often. And, of course, I didn't lift by bending my knees. I put had all the weight on my back. It isn't easy to put anything heavy in a shopping cart. But some people never learn. I was one of them. (LOL).

About a month later, I learned that my unconscious mind did it to me, for reasons I'll tell you about soon.

You may be asking, "Who is this guy?" I'm a former *Chicago Tribune* crime and general assignment reporter and feature writer, freelancing fulltime for more than 40 years, writing books (see [walteroleksybooks.com](http://walteroleksybooks.com)). That alone would give anyone stress and financial insecurity which can cause TMS pain, but despite that, I love what I've been doing.

I also am bachelor who lives alone with a darling dog, a big black Lab mix I call Annie. She was abandoned when only a few months old and so I call her my Little Orphan Annie. She's ten now (you know how time flies, although it can move slower, when you're in pain).

My (our) ranch house is small and all on one floor so when I'm in pain, I don't have to walk up or down any stairs. Over the years, I haven't had to go to the hospital much, except to visit relatives or friends. My pal Tim said the popcorn I sneaked in to him in the hospital, which was a no-no, actually saved his life.

And I had to get a double hernia repaired. My doctor said I either had the largest hernia he'd ever seen, or I was pregnant. I wish I had been pregnant. I'd be famous and a very rich man now. But rich can mean different things. I tell Annie, when I drive the car on Sheridan Road along Chicago's north side lake front and we pass mansion after mansion, "We are rich. We just don't have any money."

Oh yes, I was hospitalized two days because of a bowel obstruction. That came on after I did something else stupid... I lifted my bicycle up over my head to hang in hooks on a rafter of my garage. I learned the hard way that bicycles belong on their wheels, not hanging from ceilings. And did I really need the space I saved? Of course not.

So in more than fourscore years, I never had an illness. Weight-lifting with the beer cans, I just hurt. "Just."

I grew up in Chicago during the Great Depression (not this one, but the 1930s) and World War II (remember that one, in the 1940s, so many wars ago). Those years gave me lots of TMS repressed emotions and I wrote about them in a book called *Down the Alley and Over the Fence*. That was an old beer-drinking song my father and his brothers used to sing after poker games that lasted over weekends.

The book is at my blog: [www.walteroleksybooks.com](http://www.walteroleksybooks.com).

After high school I worked in a factory without knowing what a left-handed wrench was, and went to the two-year Navy Pier Illinois of Chicago, then got a degree in journalism from Michigan State University (1955). That was two years in a heaven in the Midwest.

Afterward I was a reporter on newspapers in Plymouth and Fort Wayne, Indiana and served two years in the army as managing editor of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division newspaper in Fort Knox, Ky., and Frankfurt, Germany.

After the army, I became night rewrite man at the City News Bureau of Chicago for Mike Royko who later became a popular columnist. I wanted to work on a newspaper but he said, "Walt, you ought to go into television news." I asked why and he said, "Because you look normal." He was rougher-cut and more of a character than I, but he became a millionaire with his caustic humor, mainly against Chicago and Illinois politicians including mayors and governors. They are a very colorful lot, especially those who have gone to jail. But I digress from the subject of faith and healing from pain. In a later chapter, I'll tell

about my year at the City News Bureau and the repressed emotions it left me.

I then became a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* for seven years (1958-1965) covering more bad news which left me more repressed emotions.

On the good side at the *Tribune* when I was assistant television editor and interviewing movie and TV stars, beautiful red-haired Rhonda Fleming kissed me four times. Or was it only three? I remember it well, even forty years later. That was sure not a repressed emotion.

Since then I have been freelancing for the past forty years with about as many books published.

I'm not going to spend the whole chapter telling you about my back pain on a day-to-day or even weekly basis. You know what that's like. It can be excruciating, and mine was. I wonder if whoever first came up with that word really knew what it means to anyone suffering from that kind of pain.

I didn't tell my doctor because I didn't want to get any strong pain killer or an MRI or CAT scan. I was in very good health otherwise and in the past if anything like pain reared its ugly head, I would just tough it out with an Advil and wait for my bag of bones to heal itself.

Two weeks passed and the pain was just as severe, so I e-mailed a nurse friend living in Hawaii and asked what she would suggest. Without hesitation, Ruth told me to get a copy of *Healing Back Pain* by Dr. John E. Sarno. She said a psychologist friend we both knew healed of back pain shortly after reading it. It's about how our pains are not caused by lifting cases of beer or any structural damage but from our repressed emotions about people or bad things that have happened to us, from our childhood on up to today.

My mother used to tell me, "Wally, you're too quick!" I always jump to it, when it comes to doing anything. Its part of the perfectionist in me, and now I'm working on modifying that part of my charming personality because among the things I learned from my painful beer lifting adventure is, perfectionism can cause physical pain. A perfectionist is said to have a Type A personality, someone who wants to do everything perfect and wants themselves and everyone else to be perfect.

My friend Tim was such a perfectionist it drove his wife and kids and everyone else crazy. Probably even his cats. He would tighten a bolt on a nut so tight it could never be taken off. He had terrible back aches and blamed it on injuries from being too small to play football in prep school. But he wanted to prove he was strong and tough like the big guys, and paid a life-long price for playing Macho Boy.

Now I believe Tim's terrible back pain was from TMS and repressed emotions, which Eric wrote about in the previous chapter.



Before I go into that, let me tell you how Tim and I met and why we became like brothers. We met when we were both young cub reporters on the *Chicago Tribune*. I thought he was very handsome and looked like a 23-year-old F. Scott Fitzgerald, my favorite author. I think he first liked me because I was tall. He wasn't short, but he wished he was at least six feet tall and was about four inches short of that.

As I said, Tim and I became like brothers. He wished he had had one growing up, and I loved my brother but never felt he even liked me, except when he always beat me at golf.

Tim married a girl he loved but I think part of that was because she was tall and he wanted to have tall children. They had a handsome boy and two beautiful girls, all who grew to be tall and they still call me "Uncle Walt." I became like a close member of the family, invited to their home for dinner almost every Saturday. One day his wife called me and asked, "What do you see in my husband?" I didn't hesitate and said we were like the brother each of us wished we had had, and that he might show a gruff exterior but inside I saw a gentle soul.

Tim came from North Shore Chicago wealth, but as I've learned several times in my life, money doesn't mean happy. Tim almost never seemed happy. He was a perfect candidate for TMS back pain because he grew up without a father and with a love-smothering mother who may have loved her son too much. His father knew how to fly a plane in 1940 so he escaped his overpowering wife by joining Chenault's Flying Tigers and fighting the Japanese in Burma before World War II. He'd rather do that than face his wife after work every day as a stockbroker. So Tim grew up from back pain that lasted his whole life. At dinner he drank a whole bottle of wine himself, to put his back and himself to sleep.

I wished Tim had been a perfectionist who could bend, but he was like made of brick or iron. I wished he had been more like a tree, bending in the wind of adversity. That's good advice for me, too.

Other Type A personality people are those who are compulsive and feel they have to do everything this instant, super conscientious hard workers, people-pleasers, including pleasing their boss, and worriers. That's all a perfect portrait of me. I can worry a hangnail into losing an arm. I am very good at the bad habit of catastrophizing. Every sniffle can mean pneumonia and getting a priest to give me the Last Rites of the Catholic Church.

I think a lot of people today have a Type A personality because they have, like most of us, fallen into the habit of multi-tasking, doing more than one thing at a time. Few people today can just sit quietly and read a book. They have to have an I-Pad or cell phone or other handheld electronic gadget in their hand to fill their eyes and mind while they watch television, go shopping, walk the dog or baby stroller while they jog, or eat in or out. They don't seem to find time to relax and do one thing at a time, if that.

A few days ago I pulled my car up to a stop light and saw that the driver of the truck next to my car was listening to rock music while on a cell phone and text messaging with his left leg out the driver's side window. All he wasn't doing at the same time was watching television, checking out Facebook or Twitter, or paying attention to driving. I let him get ahead of my car. Way ahead.

I just watched a commercial for a satellite service that offers viewers an opportunity to watch twelve live football games on their television set at the same time through picture-in-picture. Jock heaven? I say viewer hell.

Young adult Americans, aged 18-33, are suffering from stress, an anxiety disorder, or depression, and the numbers are rising, according to a February 2013 report by the American Psychological Association. Among the main causes are money worries, work or no job, and the economy.

Kids can't seem to relax these days and some say it's because of being on the computer so much, playing games and e-mailing friends or social networking.

When I go to any library, I see young people from preschoolers to high school students playing video games on computers, not reading books. Most books, except maybe graphic novels (comic books with a fancy name), may be too slow-moving for them. Young people can't sit still anymore.

Psychiatrists prescribed calming medication for a boy in the first grade diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder even before they met him. One psychiatrist said he would not even see him until the boy was medicated. The boy was given Ritalin, then Adderall and other drugs but they didn't help.

Two years ago, when he was a 21-year-old college student, he was found on the floor of his dorm room, dead from a fatal mix of alcohol and heroin. The boy's father partly blamed himself for going along with a system all too common today that devalues therapy and rushes to medicate, sending the message that self-medication is perfectly acceptable.

But pharmaceutical companies make billions of dollars each year selling drugs and prosper from the off-label uses of drugs that are often not tested in children for the many uses to which they are put. Some high school and college students use drugs in the classroom as performance enhancers, just as athletes they worship use steroids and other drugs for the same purpose to win gold medals and lucrative product endorsements.

If a child in emotional or physical pain is too young to understand or practice TMS healing, the parent could do it for them, with them. The journaling alone could help their child or young adult to heal.

So I had bad back pain and got on my computer, looked up Dr. Sarno's book *Healing Back Pain* on amazon.com books, and found a used copy. There's not much money in writing books mainly for preteens and teenagers as I am, so when I buy anything I always look for bargains.

I haven't been able to sell any new book for several years because publishers today reject everything that doesn't have at least one vampire in it, and I don't care to write about them. That's why after forty years and almost that many books published I can still call myself a starving writer. Anyone want a file cabinet full of as-yet unpublished book manuscripts, just email me.

Did I tell you my back pain was *excruciating*? I'm not forgetful and don't have Alzheimer's. I repeat it for emphasis, and maybe a little sympathy. We all like some of that, don't we? Dr. Sarno says back pain is about the most painful thing, but he probably never has had a double hernia repaired. My older brother, who always was great at cheering me up, told me that would be the worst pain I would ever experience. It came close.

I read that some people claim they were cured of back or other pain as soon as they finished reading Dr. Sarno's book. Others may take weeks or months to become free of pain. I'll keep you in suspense about how long it took me, but assure you I did and am, largely to books by Dr. Sarno and a few others I'll tell you about later in this chapter.

Now back to my back pain:

Before I bought the Dr. Sarno book, I read some reviews of it by people who said it really helped them to be free of back or other pain. I'd like to share some of those with you now. I've changed the names to assure their privacy.

Howard said, "Over the years I have tried almost every treatment available for my back pain. The end result always being more pain. I have spent thousands of dollars on 'alternative treatments' with little to no success. I became addicted to prescription pain medication, doped up half the time feeling drunk and unaware, and in total pain the other half of the time." He said the Sarno book "worked to eliminate the majority of the pain in my back. Not instantly, but over a couple of months. I noticed the pain diminished more and more as I used more of the techniques consistently. Reading the book, paired with observation and awareness of my mental and emotional states, the pain has become more manageable in recent months."

Great!, I thought. He didn't say reading the book got rid of his back pain overnight. I might not have believed that. Anything worth having takes time, I've found.

Similarly, Stan wrote "It took about three months of chronic back pain for me to buy Dr. Sarno's book, after I had read very positive reports of it on television shows. When I first started reading it, I didn't

think this would ever work since mostly I think mind over matter stuff is a bunch of nonsense. Fortunately I was pleasantly surprised.

“The more I read and the more I reflected on my real feelings, the more the pain went away. My pain was gone within a week, and it’s been gone now for over a year. I never even finished the book. Every once in a while I’ll feel some pain in my back and going back to the book gets rid of it. Just be honest with your feelings and this book will work to get rid of your pain.”

That sounded like good advice. My godmother (the aunt who felt like dancing on a meat counter) had told me, “Wally, you’re too good for this world.” Maybe she was right, but now I wonder if maybe my perfectionist personality and desire to please and be liked by everyone was actually hurting me. And really, only one person was ever too good for this world, and He was nailed to a cross.

Jerry wrote, “I discovered this book after four years of severe and nearly debilitating back pain. I was a college athlete at the time and suffered through severe pains throughout college. I tried innumerable different approaches to improving my back pain without any success (yoga, acupuncture, chiropractics, massage, physical therapy). I had a MRI scan of my back at a world-class medical center by an orthopedist who found three bulging discs. His recommendation was that I refrain from really any sports except brisk walking!

“I came across *Healing Back Pain* at the same time. Dr. Sarno’s approach is completely different than everything anyone has ever suggested about back pain. Within three weeks of reading the book and practicing his exercises I felt ninety-five percent better, and since then I’ve been almost completely pain free.”

Good, Jerry. “Almost” is good enough.

Millie wrote, “I bought this book after my husband heard great reviews on a radio talk show. I’ve suffered severe back pain all my life and read everything out there about it. I’m only half-way through reading and am already suggesting this book to everyone I meet who suffers back pain. It is all about changing the way you think about your pain. I am a yoga instructor, and from what I have studied on the mind-body connection, Dr. Sarno’s approach to healing back pain makes complete sense. Even if you are skeptical, read the book and give it a try. I can’t describe in words what it has already done for me. I no longer walk around with back pain controlling my life, and that really feels good.”

Millie sounded sincere and knew about mind-body healing.

I don’t think I really need to include more testimonials, but you may gain confidence by reading more of them.

As hungry *Oliver Twist* said with his empty porridge bowl, “Please, sir, can I have more?”

Ken wrote, “I’ve been a life-long athlete who loves to run, play tennis, ski, play soccer, even run the Boston Marathon, and only occasionally suffered tight hammies (hamstring muscles). Then it started

when I was forty... over a year of blinding knee pain a doctor called tendonitis that put me through doctor visits, treatment plans, exercise programs, physical therapy, chiropractors, cortisone shots, deep tissue massage, and was told 'No more tennis or running, no more bending over to tie your shoes.'

"One doctor even suggested I get a disc replacement. Another doctor suggested I read *Healing Back Pain*. I did, and after just a few pages I felt like another healed case study out of the book. A month later, I was pain-free. That was two years ago.

That sure was a Sarno success story, but I read more:

Rudy wrote, "I was a skeptic but had nothing to lose after eight years of on-and-off recurring back pain. I'd had every kind of therapy known to man and was advised to get surgery but was not keen on that. It took me about four months of reading the Dr. Sarno book and re-reading and convincing myself about its theory that repressed motions cause our pain, it suddenly just disappeared and I have been virtually pain-free for three years now. When I do feel a twinge, maybe twice a year, I just think about the emotional causes and the pain disappears."

A very convincing endorsement, Rudy.

Julie wrote: "This book helped me to get rid of back pain. It taught me that my pain was more psychosomatic and not any mechanical/physical problem with my back. I'm pain-free and highly recommend the book to anyone who suffers from back pain. It works."

Dennis wrote: "I was in severe back pain ten years ago. Had to lie on my back for hours at a time. A doctor diagnosed I had two herniated disks in my back. I was given steroid shots and went through two years of physical therapy. All the exercises failed to help me. A friend bought me *Healing Back Pain* and soon as I started reading, my pain began going away. Within two weeks of realizing the pain was my mind's way of diverting attention from emotional issues, I made a full recovery.

Over the year since then, when I do get occasional pain, I re-read the book and get my mind right again and am able to make the pain go away. The book had a profound effect on my life. Without it, at age thirty I would have been an old man. My wife and I have three young children and now I get to run and play with them. My quality of life has been given back to me."

Phil, a dentist: wrote: "I am a people-pleaser with a heavy conscience and saw myself on every page of the Sarno book. I had back and neck pain since my high school years and am now 30. I was convinced I had mild scoliosis and whiplash from a car accident. I also developed debilitating tennis elbow pain from using a mouse on a computer several hours a day. The back and elbow pain kept getting worse and worse.

My doctor prescribed ibuprofen, but that didn't help much. An MRI exam showed no structural damage, but the pain in one elbow

moved to the other. My orthopedic doctor was close to suggesting surgery when we came upon this book. After a week of reading it, 50 per cent of my pain went away. It's been about three months now and my pain is reduced by 90 percent. My life is completely back to normal and I feel better week by week."

Enough? Almost. One more:

Paula wrote, "I had chronic back pain but it went away after reading this book. Don't be turned off by the concept that part of your pain is in your mind. The mind is very powerful."

It sure is, Paula.

President Barack Obama just asked for a new ten-year study of how the mind works. I hope it includes TMS and the mind-body-spirit technique for becoming pain-free.

It probably won't. Most doctors and pharmaceutical companies wouldn't like that getting around.

I had already bought the book after reading just a few endorsements, and read it in one evening. I had hoped to be free of my awful back pain before I finished reading, or at least by the next day. But it took about three months. I think I would have healed faster, but I kept resisting Dr. Sarno's concept that my back pain was caused entirely by repressed emotions. I kept holding on to the thought that I was 82 years old and bound to have some structural damage in my back since it and I were aging.

But I kept at the 12 daily reminders in *Healing Back Pain* and decided to stop fretting that I was taking longer to heal and just let it take as long as it needed. The reminders say to ignore the pain and go about normal activities.

For a bachelor living alone it meant doing my own household chores which included cooking, doing the dishes, mowing the front and back lawns, keeping the house clean, walking Annie, and driving to do my grocery shopping and other errands.

I also found advice from other pain sufferers helpful by going online several times a day to [www.tmswiki.org](http://www.tmswiki.org). In the forums I soon saw postings there by Eric (posting as "Eric"), and found his advice very helpful, especially because he told how the TMS theory of Dr. Sarno rid him of ten years of severe back pain only a few months after putting it to practice.

The TMSWiki web site also offers two excellent (and free) programs to relieve TMS pain: the Structured Education Program and Dr. Alan Gordon's TMS Recovery Program, as well as a terrific video in which Dr. Sarno lectures on TMS.

Eric and others posting recommended two other books that elaborated on Dr. Sarno's theories and I bought them: *Pain-Free for Life, the 6-Week Cure for Chronic Pain – Without Surgery or Drugs*, by Scott

Brady, MD., and *The Great Pain Deception, Faulty Medical Advice is Making Us Worse*, by Steven Ray Ozanich. Dr. Brady offers a free six-week program in his book which also encourages readers to add a religious element for a mind-body-spiritual approach to healing. Ozanich tells his very painful personal journey from 27 years of debilitating pain to full recovery in little more than a year by following the principles of TMS and repressed emotions causing our pain.

Both authors encourage, as does Dr. Sarno, going on with our normal daily activities despite any pain. If we didn't, our unconscious mind could use that against us and keep the pain because it felt it has the upper hand over us. I had not been taking Annie for her daily walks for about a month, since my beer-case-lifting back pain began, so I bit the bullet, and began walking her each morning.

The first morning, the back pain was so severe; I only walked her past about one house. Then it was back home and sitting at my computer to do work for a book publisher.

I found that the pain was really bad if I walked, but was much more tolerable if I sat.

But I took frequent breaks away from the computer because that too created pain. When I wasn't sitting at the computer, I did the house chores and driving in the neighborhood because I felt little or no pain while driving.

Each morning I walked Annie a few houses farther up our *cul du sac*, always telling my unconscious mind that I didn't feel the back pain or if I admitted it, telling my unconscious mind that I knew it was one or another of my repressed emotions so it got the message and should stop the pain. Sometimes it let up a little on the pain, and to my amazement sometimes the pain stopped entirely, or close to it.

After about a week, I was walking Annie a full block and then back to our house, most of the time in pain but feeling it lessening a little. But I kept believing that part of the back pain was from my age, maybe arthritis. After all, neighbors I sometimes walked with complained they had back pain and they were younger than I.

Then it dawned on me that maybe their back pain also was caused by their own repressed emotions. I became sure everyone has them. They include anxieties and fear for one reason or another, or even many. Who today doesn't worry about not having enough money to pay the mortgage, get needed medication for themselves or family members, or paying credit card debt, losing their job, keeping their job but doing their regular work plus the work of someone else who was laid off, or maybe losing their house because of a foreclosure from not being able to keep up with monthly mortgage payments? You can probably even add more examples of TMS that cause your pain.

I began to feel my back pain go away when I finally stopped thinking anything physically was causing it and it was 100 per cent from repressed emotions. I began to believe this more and more as I did the

daily journaling all three TMS authors suggested as vital to becoming pain-free.

Journaling became so important in my healing that I will go into greater depth about it in my next chapter (Walt's Journey-Chapter Two). I often read that people say that journaling helped them a lot, but few tell what the repressed emotions were that they journaled about each day. I don't mind sharing mine with you, personal though they are, because I hope they will help you in healing.

In other chapters of my journey I will also tell you what I found to be most helpful in the three books I read on TMS.

The three authors all agree that much of our aches and pains can be traced to repressed emotions and that, sadly, most doctors do not know that or prescribe it to their patients. Instead they prescribe pain killers or suggest surgery.

While I have never read Deepak Chopra write or speak about TMS and repressed emotions causing our pain, he has said, "Modern medicine, for all its advances, knows less than 10 per cent of what your body knows instinctively," and, "Preventive medicine isn't part of a physician's everyday routine, which is spent dispensing drugs and performing surgery."

You may be a mother with fibromyalgia, back or other pain and a shopping cart full of screaming little angels and thinking, *Yeah, but he's a bachelor with only a dog to take care of.*

One of Dr. Sarno's patients was a thirty-year-old wife and mother of three little girls who felt no better after his TMS lectures and still had her back pain and felt harassed and tired.

She admitted she was a Type A perfectionist but didn't think she could ever stop being one.

Sarno told her the secret of getting over TMS was not to change oneself but to just recognize that the combination of anxiety and anger she felt were causing her physical pain, and then it would go away.

I guess I could still get married. Women my age look at me like I would make a good second or third husband, maybe just because I'm not walking with a cane or walker for support or am not in a wheelchair.

My twice widowed mother was 94 and still checking out men at the hospice as a possible new boyfriend.

As tennis champion Arthur Ashe said about perseverance, "Never give up, no matter what the score is."

I think it's what kept Mom young. She never forgot she was a 1920s Flapper, dancing at the Aragon ballroom in Chicago where she met her future husband, my father. It probably helped her live with a lot of physical pain in her work life. More about that later, and my Dad's back pain. I bet most of it was caused by money worries. Like father, like son.



My parents' pain was, I believe now, largely the result of repressed emotions, and it's a shame they didn't know it before they went to that big poker game in the sky.

I could probably get married and adopt some kids to put in my shopping cart, but kind of think I missed the boat for all that. Not that I never had an urge to get married. I came close to becoming engaged to three different young ladies at three different times. I just didn't feel like dancing on a meat counter with any of them; at least not walking up a church aisle.

Was I writing about pain? I forget.

## Eric's Journey – Chapter Two

### Acceptance, Affirmations, Awareness, Re-framing and Re-conditioning.

I went to the bowling alley with some friends and as usual had this pain that followed me where ever I went. The Night Train wine went down well that night since getting used to the taste wasn't hard anymore. I did the usual and drank the whole bottle.

My friends started to wrestle outside and see which one could pick the other up while high on some wine of their own.

Then we had a visit from a local police officer. He said the station got a call from the owners of the bowling alley who thought we were fighting.

As I began telling my story, that the guys were only having fun, the officer asked, "Have you been drinking, boy?"

"Oh, no sir," I said. "Not me!"

He came up with a handy dandy breathalyzer and the next thing I knew, I was phoning Mom from the Juvenile Delinquent office in Rome, Georgia. The charge was under-age drinking, and I was guilty.

Mom wasn't very happy about it, but she came to my rescue, as usual. She got me out of a year's probation. I only got a few months.

Monday morning I was back in school, but I was 15 and on police probation. Man, it wasn't supposed to be like that.

I had restitution to do for the probation fees, and we probationers all gathered on a Saturday at the Rome City Hall building. A huge muscled policeman in street clothes told us how we were to conduct ourselves as good citizens and work for the day.

Our high school coach, Mr. Honeycutt, was there, too. I figured he came to keep us probationers in line.

We were put to work cleaning an embankment about 400 feet from top to bottom, and then we were to landscape it. It would take about four days in all. We got our cleaning bags and went to work.

First we had to get all the garbage off the hill. It was a very, very steep hill, like walking a flight of stairs. It took ten trips each time we got a bag full of garbage to throw into a dumpster.

My back was killing me, but I knew I wasn't going to let anyone out-do me at the work. It was my perfectionism to be a leader, and pain or no pain, this I was going to do even if it killed me, and it practically did.

The more I bent and the harder I worked, the more the pain struck again and again. But that had to be put aside because I was fighting to be the best clean-up boy out there.

By lunch time, I was about to pass out from the sciatica and burning. I was glad the officer called lunch. I needed to sit down, or I'd

pass out. The lunch break was like round one. I sat and ate a banana and peanut butter sandwich.

Another reason I worked so hard was so I could finish and get off my feet. Also; I was raised to never let anyone out-do me. My strong Mom would say my Dad was a man's man. I couldn't tell you how many men looked up to him as a leader. So it was in my DNA. I was like them, my father and mother.

I want to take a minute now to talk about pain and remind you how to rid yourself of it by following the TMS method. If you're in pain,

1. You can heal if you keep focusing on TMS repressed emotions being the cause. It can take time, but you can start to heal in two or three months. Some heal even sooner
2. There may still be pain symptoms, and they may move around, from your back to an arm or leg or shoulder, or you get dizzy or vertigo, which Dr. Sarno says can happen "often."

Back to the lunch break, we were eating and I was trying to get this hot flash heat in my face to cool off by wetting my face with cold well water that was being pumped out of the spigot.

I came back to finish my sandwich and I heard the officer talking about how he was a Regional Arm Wrestling Champion, and he'd let us off the rest of the day if one of us could beat him in arm wrestling. Now, this was a blessing to me.

Although I was hurting, I was also thinking about the rest of the day off. And I was pretty good at arm wrestling. I started working out when I was six years old and I'd never been beaten in arm wrestling,

Could I do this, and get us all off for the rest of the day without having to do all the landscaping work?

I said, "I bet I can beat you in arm wrestling!"

He laughed and asked, "Are you serious?"

I said, "Yeah, man, I'm serious."

So we put our arms up, and at that very moment I remembered a friend of mine who had been a State Champion Arm Wrestler and what he had taught me just a year earlier, so I knew exactly what to do.

Once the arm wrestling started, I pulled with not just my arm, but my whole body weight. I pretty easily put him down in the match, and I think he got mad. After all, I was only a teenage boy and had just defeated him in front of everyone, including the school coach.

He said "You cheated!" so we agreed to have one more match, and I beat him again. All the probationers yelled with excitement.

I was in such relief that I was going to get the rest of the day to go and lay down and relax my back, or at least get a bottle of Night Train

and tell all my friends how I had won a competition in arm wrestling against a Regional Champ.

But those thoughts soon came to a halt as the officer said we weren't getting the day off after all. He said he would get in trouble if he let us off, so it was back to the garbage hill for me and my friends.

At this point I'd like to talk about **acceptance**. That's the ability to take information, whether good or bad, and think about it. Then decide the best possible outcome in your mind. Let that thought become your perceived remembrance.

You can accept anything in a better light if you make a conscious choice to do so without letting the negative emotions override your decision-making ability.

Recognize a negative thought, worry, or anxiety in your mind. As you do this try to turn it into a positive. Or just notice it and observe, but don't judge. It's not easy at first, but you'll make a habit of this and then you'll start to catch the stressors and conditioned thoughts whether by habit or just by getting used to observing but not judging what's troubling you.

Also at this time you need to know some **affirmations** that are excellent for relieving anxiety to make your mind and body calm and relaxed. Just say one of them at a time until you get used to them, then add more as your mind lets the words sink into your body.

## **How to Reduce Anxiety**

Tell yourself these affirmations:

1. I accept myself as I am.
2. I am a good and loving person
3. I forgive and let go easily.
4. I am calm, relaxed, and confident.
5. I am the head and not the tail
6. I'm above and not beneath
7. I'm blessed in the city and I'm blessed in the country
8. I'm blessed going out and coming in
9. Everything I lay my hands to is blessed.
10. As you say these words, feel forgiveness, and the releasing of the tension or anxiety, or just that bad feeling releasing from your body and letting go.

Back to my story, after the arm wrestling, the other boys and I picked up our bags with a new vigor. After all, we were just lied to, and the varsity coach witnessed it. We went back to work pulling weeds, digging dirt, cleaning an embankment that hadn't been landscaped in

forty years. Within four more hours that 400-foot hill was scraped and we were done.

The coach was rooting us on. He said the one who loaded and unloaded the most bags would get a free pass to his varsity team, since most of us were eighth graders about to make the leap to high school.

I won again, having packed and loaded those bags like they were a piece of cake. I liked the coach. He had a heart. My main drive, though, was the pain and getting done because the sooner we finished, I could get home to lie down. I wouldn't need any Night Train. I was so tired.

On the way to the bus to take us home, Coach Honeycutt said that with my drive and will to finish the job, he could really use me on his varsity team for the next football season. I didn't want to tell him I have extreme back pain and it was hard just to walk. The thought of being hit from behind by a corner man was not registering in my mind.

It broke my heart. I always wanted to play for Honeycutt, the best coach in our region. Pepperell High School football was close to having a perfect season, and I could have been part of that. I had to let that go. I was in too much pain. It pounded in my heart, the defeat of a dream.

I'd like to interject something now about **awareness**, so you can understand how I was starting to learn and use it.

I was aware that I was not going to be able to play on the football team for the coach. I know now that pain is a habit. I feared for my future and well-being -- I could have played with will power, but I had to also get to those **repressions**, and it would be awhile before I knew that powerful secret.

I told the coach that I had no way to get to practice, and my family was poor, so I'd never have the money for a ride or the uniform pads and helmet. I

I didn't tell the coach the truth, but I knew the truth from awareness. I was aware that I wanted to play high school football, but was also aware that I wasn't in the physical shape to do it. I accepted that. This is where awareness and acceptance work well together.

This is some wisdom for the mind, as you read slowly through this book and do all that's recommended, you will understand how to direct your mind to healing. I learned acceptance on that day of decision.

I had a loss of peace. Then I learned problems in life weren't only external but even more internal.

Now after learning acceptance, I learned a fine piece of the puzzle. I was unaware of it at the time, but I was learning in my defeat. I didn't know that I wasn't calm in my spirit. This was a huge reason for my TMS.

I'd love to see the joys of life in others, but when the emotions of fear, anger, loss, and distress lingered, I fell victim to it, but didn't know why. I'd meditate, yes, but there was a missing point. I had to catch myself doing these worries while being aware of them, and then take

charge and start controlling them. You know, the worries you have unintentionally out of habit or belief.

When I'm at peace on the inside, other factors tend to be at peace, too. That's a great step in the journey to TMS healing ... learning how to be at peace with ourselves again. Then the secret responds, and even nature is more beautiful and more colorful. If a person has survived the TMS war, they learn to live again.

There is a feeling of peace running through your body when you take control of your thinking. Truly feeling peace and love emotionally by your own thought patterns will help heal you.

The **reconditioning** will take time. It takes whatever time your body needs, to recondition after you get that "ah hah" moment when you believe in TMS, that repressed emotions are causing your pain.

We have to work our systems hard to maintain this peace. It becomes easier as we learn to use the gift better.

It sounds too good to be true, but really it is! You have been freely given this power. Just think of peace and enter into it now. It's only a thought away.

We say things in anger because we're mad at the pain or anxiety. It's those factors that create rage in the unconscious mind that in turn cause us pain.

There have been a lot of healing techniques since the 1990s. New systems, new styles to add to a better life. Dr. Sarno has been the man who pointed us in the right direction toward Mindbody-Spirit healing.

I salute anyone who has learned to walk and heal from TMS. They have learned to rid themselves of inaccurate thinking. They are on the walk to the cure.

I believe prayer helps. Say the prayer: "Give me power, Oh High Providence. I ask not for more riches but for more wisdom so I can achieve any goal want or need that my heart may desire."

You will understand it is your thoughts that are causing the pain, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Back to my dreams of playing high school football:

"Listen," the coach said. "I really know you have what it takes. I've seen it in you while you worked. Nobody works like that. You're born with that work ethic, and we really need you. I can get you suited up, no problem, and I'll come by personally to pick you up. What do you say?"

I was so grateful for his offer, I said "Yes, I'll do it!", knowing in my heart I was lying to him because with this back pain going on three years, there really was no way I could play football. But I just couldn't tell him or anyone, how bad I really hurt.

On the other hand, I was so excited about what he had said; I felt I was on cloud ten. It was the best inner feeling I'd felt in a long time.

So back to the doctor I went. A specialist this time decided I should lay on my side for the MRI. The other MRI's were done on my back and stomach.

About three days later we got a call from the doctor's assistant saying they had found the problem causing me back pain. It was Spondylolisthesis, and I needed to make an appointment as soon as possible so he doctor could explain to me about the best procedures to take care of this issue.

### **The "Ignore Method"**

I want to sidestep again here and write some about the "Ignore Method" that Dr. Sarno tells us about. He and others tell us not to pay any attention to our pain, to just ignore it. You probably ask, "How can I ignore the pain when that's all I think about all day and night, and overnight?"

Then we're taught other lessons that sound contradictory to that approach. One of those thoughts is to work on being healed from the pain. If you're not to think of the pain, then how are you supposed to work on being healed of the pain?

The answer is, we ignore the pain by not focusing on it. Then we practice all the techniques, concepts, and insights of mind-body-spirit constantly, until we are healed.

If you do think about the pain, think about it in an accepting way. Like the person who has a broken leg. They know they will heal, so they don't worry if it's going to get better or not, or how long that takes. Does it hurt? Yes. Will it heal? Yes.

Now see we can ignore the pain before we're healed. But we're still organic. We're still going to have pains even after we heal all the way. The point is, we hurt even sometimes after we heal. We just don't act like it's that big of a deal. It wasn't a big deal before the TMS struck at us... You hurt before you got hurt. You just didn't know it, because it didn't bother you. It wasn't a big deal before you got hurt, when you had pains in your back, shoulders or legs etc.

The reason it's not a big deal after we heal is because we feel better. We're healed. Now when we hear a pop or a crack sound in our body, we know it's nothing. It's just like your knuckles cracking. No more serious than that. Nothing to worry or stress about.

Like Dr. Sarno says, structural or aging issues do not cause the pain in your back. You hurt in your back because of emotional issues. The structural abnormalities that show up on the MRI's and X-rays are what he calls "graying hairs of the spine." Just like you get gray hair on your head and they don't hurt, it's the same with the arthritis, degenerative disc, the slipped disc, and so forth. They will not cause you

pain. Your repressed emotions do. Have I said that before? It's worth repeating.

It's emotions of anger and anxiety that cause pain. We have to learn how to stop thinking that we're hurting because of any structural abnormalities. Pay no attention to what your unconscious mind comes up with. Your back is strong and powerful! Know It! Feel It! Be Free!

## Reconditioning

We learn over the years how to be like our mom or dad or siblings. If your parents or older sisters and brothers thought a certain way or did something, then probably you will think or do it, too. Like cussing, fighting, ethics, and even dating. We're conditioned to react the way they do.

If you grew up in a family that wrote the book of cuss and you always felt like it was okay to cuss, then you'll probably cuss, too. The same with dating, If your brother and sister dated at 15 or 16 years of age, then you'll probably also date at those ages. The examples can go on and on and we start to see what conditioning is.

"Oh," you say, "but I grew up in a family of drunks, and I never drank." Well there are exceptions to the rule. The abstainers saw how hurt and frustrated alcohol made people they knew, and they developed a different perception of what drinking is. This is called a belief system.

Through re-framing our thoughts we can heal the bad belief system issues most of the time in a matter of minutes. It's just how strong the conditioning is and how strong is the belief system.

Part of conditioning we see as being okay and part we see as not okay. The not okay conditioning is to be dealt with through awareness, acceptance, and releasing or letting go, and then re-framing.

We usually learn the conditioning at a very young age, but as we get older we still get conditioned in the same way. We just don't know that we're being conditioned like this.

Most of us don't care one way or the other, but when this conditioning starts to wear on us, as in the form of alcoholism, then we want to break the conditioning, but we don't know how. That's called a "loop."

On top of this there's unconscious conditioning to pain, and we have to learn to break these conditioned patterns. We can break them through awareness and acceptance and other forms of psychology.

The most important part to re-conditioning is the will to learn how to re-condition. This will be explained further as the story of my pain and its healing unfolds.

If we keep putting in the right ingredients, eventually we will heal. Those ingredients are **belief, hope, awareness, and re-framing**. And let's not forget the power of **re-leasing** through **acceptance**.



## **My Main Repressed Emotions**

Back to my story:

Sometime later I found I wasn't going to high school. We can want something with all our heart, but if you don't know how to get the results you want, then you have to go with what you've got. Maybe call it compromise.

The great thing is, we don't know how wide the world of opportunity really is. We just stumble upon truths until we find our way. Sometimes we never do, others do and write books about it. It's my hope to convey to you the control you truly have that is living inside of you.

My whole life appeared to be leading to total peak performance, and then it went downhill, out of control. How bad does it get, when you've got pain?

I know where you've been. I can hear your questions jumping in my head. It's my hope that most of your questions will get answered.

There are many sides to TMS, hence the books we recommend to read so you understand the complete theory of mind-body-spirit healing.

We hope to explain our part of that theory. We have to see the hard knock life at times, so we can know what we want to come out of.

I never liked roofing, although I started a business in it. I had depression associated with roofing. Roofing really isn't a bad business, that's just how I associated it or anchored to it. For years it helped put money on the table. But I associated roofing with darkness, selfishness, and loss.

We have to look beyond what our eyes see. We have to see with our hearts. So I made the best with what I had to work with. A lot of repression went down in those years and I'd like to share a few stories so you can get a better feel of this process of acceptance, awareness, releasing, and re-framing. I will do that in my next chapters. I believe those steps are a huge part of the journey to healing pain.

## Walt's Journey- Chapter Two

### “It Woiks!”

I posted this on TMSWiki.com more than a year ago when I began to feel almost completely free of back pain after about three months. Shortly after that I became entirely pain-free.

Dr. Sarno's TMS theory of becoming pain-free really does work. Follow his 12 Daily Reminders in *Healing Back Pain* and you **will** be free of pain, wherever it is. It may happen in a day, two to four weeks, maybe longer, but stick with it and you will come out the pain free end of the pain tunnel.

A few months ago I was in excruciating back pain, read about TMS, and knew I had it. When I went to TMSWiki.org forums I posted about it and Steve Ozanich replied that from just reading about the boyhood memories I posted about parents divorcing, remarrying, moving almost annually, living with very little security and lots of family anger, I was a “perfect storm” for TMS. He didn't know the half of it, as I learned over the next two months through journaling (writing down thoughts of repressed emotions).

I read Ozanich's book, *The Great Pain Perception* about his recovery from TMS following the Sarno plan, and also began following Dr. Scott Brady's TMS plan in *Pain Free for Life* and began programming my unconscious that my pain was not structural (although I am 82) but from repressed emotions.

I am now 90 percent pain free, sometimes less. I believe I would have achieved

that earlier but kept thinking that some of my back pain is from aging and structural deterioration. Dr. Sarno says we must not do that but instead attribute any and all pain to repressed emotions.

### Journaling

Journaling is so important to TMS healing, a way to find our repressed emotions, that it deserves a good chunk of this chapter. You can start writing about emotions you have now and other emotions and feelings will likely to your mind. You may end a journaling session writing about feelings and thoughts you never knew you had.

It is important to write down anything and everything that you can think of. Something you may not think is important or is related to your TMS symptoms could give you insight when you review it later.

Do not replace symptom obsession with journaling obsession. Journaling should take only 20 to 30 minutes when you first start, and then even less later on. The main aim of journaling is to help you to understand some of your repressed emotions and to get you in the routine of connecting emotions to pain.

Some people feel some pain after a journaling session. This may happen because our minds do not want us to feel and express our emotions. If this happens, tell your unconscious mind that it is healthy for you to express your emotions, and realize that your pain is just your mind attempting to repress your emotions. Before you finish a journaling session, it is a good idea to write about something pleasant you remember. Or when you finish, laugh. Journaling can be a very emotional process, but necessary so you get all your emotions out. It is okay to be emotional in journaling, and to remember that expressing your feelings is a good thing.

How do you journal? Some methods include making lists, writing paragraphs or free writing as in a diary, write letters to those you may have anxiety when thinking about them, but do not mail the letters.

Some journaling practitioners find that making lists allow them to uncover all of the stresses, triggers, and personality traits that bring on their symptoms. In writing lists, take three pieces of paper, one for each list, and write as many things you can think of, whether it is connected to your TMS symptoms or not.

The three lists can be about past or childhood events, current stressors, and personality characteristics.

We are all shaped by our past and our childhood. To uncover repressed emotions it is important to list past traumatic or stressful events. This includes any event or past action that has resulted in negative emotions such as hurt, pain, anger, humiliation, fear, guilt, worry. Include any event that comes to your mind, even if you don't think it has anything to do with your pain.

Our daily lives are filled with stressful situations and interactions with people such as those in our family, friendships, and work environment. The list of current stressors is designed to allow you to uncover your present stresses and triggers in your daily life. These events and stresses can cause hurt, pain, anger, humiliation, fear, worry, or any other negative emotion. List them all. Again, list every current stress that comes to mind, even if you don't think it is connected to your TMS symptoms.

The third list helps you to recognize what personality traits you have that may be contributions to your TMS symptoms. List any traits such as perfectionist, "goodism" in which you obsess about being and doing good, low self-esteem, worry, anger, holding onto anger and resentment, guilt, and isolation. It is important to write down every personality trait you can think of, especially those that were developed or learned in childhood and that you currently possess.

As has been said, there are several ways of journaling. Fast writing is like it sounds, a way of writing about issues in a fast and constant motion. By writing faster than normal, a person tends to forget to censor their thoughts and write honestly about how they are feeling. It helps the person uncover the deeper issues behind their physical pain or emotional suffering. Fast-write as long as you want, but it can be helpful to do it for a specific time period, such as 10 to 15 minutes.

If fast writing, choose a topic or issue from a previous entry in your journal or from a list, and write about it. Write in a meditative environment, allowing your thoughts to freely move onto the page. Don't cross anything out, even if you didn't mean to write it. Don't worry about correct spelling, punctuation, or grammar. What you write is meant to be read only by you, and hesitating to write without errors will only hamper your ability to freely write.

Write down any and all thoughts that come to your mind, regardless of whether you think they are relevant or not. Try to avoid writing about daily events, and instead focus on your emotions and whatever relate to your emotions and feelings, such as specific events, issues, and personality traits. Allow your emotions to pour out onto the page.

End by writing that is helpful to you to express your emotions and feelings. It also can be helpful to write down several things for which you are grateful that day.

**Unsent letters** is another good way of journaling. Dr. Howard Schubiner suggest in his book *Unlearn Your Pain* that writing unsent letters to other people can be especially good for those who have difficulty expressing their emotions to other people. By writing to them expressing how you feel about certain events or issues can help to release emotions and gain understanding about your feelings.

In writing unsent letters, choose a person, group, or entity to write to. You can write to anyone or anything and about any topic. Some find it helpful to write to those they are angry with, while others feel the need to write to those they wish to express gratitude, love, and thanks.

Others find it helpful to write a letter to themselves, as a way to write to their unconscious mind.

Spend from 10 to 15 minutes free-writing the letter. None else will read it and you won't mail it or e-mail it, so write uncensored and let your emotions about the person or group flow onto the page. After writing the letter, it is good to reflect on how the person affected your life in a positive way or how you may have grown through having a relationship with the person.

If journaling can feel too personal to you, try writing with an altered point of view. Susan Derozier suggests in her book *Therapeutic Journaling* that writing in the third person can be very helpful for some. For example, instead of writing with phrases such as “I am feeling,” use phrases in the third person such as “He/She is feeling.” This can be especially helpful for those having trouble writing about a traumatic or difficult issue. It also helps a person to see their situation from a different point of view, which can provide insight into a person’s life.

Journaling also may be writing a dialogue between yourself and another person. This can help to understand the actions of other people and release bottled-up emotions. They also can ease a person’s mind and allow them to investigate a way to handle certain situations.

You can write out a dialogue between any person, group, entity, or even a body part that may be in pain. Start a dialogue on paper by writing a simple statement or question and let your mind, heart, and writing hand respond in any way it feels like. Respond for the other person or group in a way that you think they will respond. This can help the writer to begin to see events and issues from another perspective.

Write the exchange of dialogue for 10 to 15 minutes or longer if you wish. When finished, meditate and reflect on what emotions you expressed and what you learned through the dialogue. Write these down and affirm that it is good and healthy for you to look into your feelings and relationship with this person.

Journaling with your younger self. In the book *Journalution*, Sandry Grason suggests that a person hold an imagined conversation with their childhood self. This could help a person to recognize factors about their life that they may have been avoiding or repressing. It also is a way to receive feedback from the person you were as a child, so as to uncover past emotions and events you may have repressed for a long time.

In this way of journaling, imagine yourself when you were a child and at a specific age. Reflect back on your home and the room you lived in. Try to recall smells or sounds you experienced at that time. Then start a conversation with your childhood-self. Start with remembering what you did on a typical day. Respond however you think your childhood-self would respond. After doing this for 5 to 10 minutes, notice what age you imagined yourself at. Write briefly about why you chose that specific age and about that specific day.

One person who practiced this technique wrote afterward in a post to TMSWiki.org: “When I did this, taking the time to really sit and bring up the 5-year-old in me, I really felt the feelings I had back then. It is amazing what memories do come back! It’s important to keep in mind responding and feelings as the child did at the time, not the adult looking back or any other person with any judgments.”

Cluster or “spider writing” is a quick way to write down several short thoughts and emotions that are connected to previous or current events or personality traits. It is a form of brainstorming that gives a person a quick road to self-discovery.

This journaling is done by putting an issue or topic in a circle, or nucleus, in the center of a piece of paper. Write one to four-word phrases about the topic. This only takes about five minutes. In his book *Unlearn Your Pain*, Dr. Howard Schubiner suggests the following:

1. Choose an issue, topic, or event in a list you make and put it in the nucleus.
2. Spend five minutes on this journaling.
3. Relax and breathe deeply.
4. Write down your thoughts and feelings about the topic in 1-4 word phrases. Draw a circle about these thoughts and connect them to the center nucleus by drawing a line to it.
5. Write about any circle on the page. Write about the nucleus or another circle connected to it.
6. After writing a new thought about a circle, connect it to the circle that prompted it.
7. Continue this process until the 5 minutes are up. The page should have enough circles or clusters to make the page look like a spider.
8. Do this as many times as you want, but try to choose a new topic each time because it is not beneficial to journal about the same issue time and again.

Dr. Brady’s plan suggests daily journaling and through that I discovered I had a lot, I mean a **lot**, of repressed emotions (rage, anger, anxiety, fear, worry, guilt, etc.) and I also have a perfectionist personality and work for a super perfectionist. I’m a freelance writer and editor and he’s an author and book publisher. He’s very difficult to work for and my work is all on the computer which creates back pain.

Journaling not only brought the repressed emotions to the surface but I practiced forgiveness, and the list of those to forgive was long, including forgiving myself. At the same time, I followed Dr. Sarno’s advice and did not let pain stop me from living my regular daily routine. So I walked my dog as always, lifted things as usual, cleaned the house and did my cooking, driving for groceries, mowed my lawn, snow plowed my driveway, etc. I felt pain, but when I yelled at my unconscious that it was not structural but from repressed emotions, it was tolerable.

## If You Have Trouble Sleeping

Getting to sleep and staying asleep all night was a problem for me, and I'm sure it is for many others. A friend who is a retired advertising executive says he has no trouble falling asleep but wakes up during the night and can't get back to sleep. There are many web sites with advice on how to get a good night's sleep, and I have gotten advice and help from many of them.

I find it helpful to breathe deeply and say a positive mantra such as "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." That was the optimistic autosuggestion introduced by Emile Coue (1857-1926), a French psychotherapist and self-improvement innovator that has since then been used to inspire some of the world's most successful businessmen and women. It works great in reducing anxiety and stress in any situation including trouble sleeping.

Another aid in getting to sleep I use and find very helpful is to count from 100 to 1 backwards. Sometimes it takes a few laps but usually I fall asleep at least into the third lap.

Also, calming visualizations can help you to sleep. Imagine yourself on a sunny beach or floating in water or air.

I've also read that what we eat and when we eat it affects our sleep. Foods with tryptophen help us get to sleep, including hot milk or hot chocolate (when I was a little boy, my mother used to give me hot Ovaltine at bedtime and I slept like the proverbial baby). Sleep-inducing foods include almonds and popcorn, without the oil, butter, or salt). Tryptophen also is present in turkey, and we all know how we want to take a nap after a roast turkey dinner. But the jury is still out on chocolate, light or dark, but I am allergic to caffeine which is in chocolate, so I stay away from it in the evening.

Last night I could not sleep because of some moderate back pain and was close to taking an Advil (I almost never take it or aspirin or any pain killer) but resisted and firmly told my unconscious the pain was from repressed emotions. I wasn't sure which one it was last night, so I told my uncon to pick out whichever it wanted from my storehouse. The pain went away and I slept. So I *finally* do know my pain is not from aging or structural deterioration, it is from repressed emotions.

I see elderly neighbors and others younger walking with back pain and no longer think it's from aging or back deterioration, they too have pain from TMS. But they may not know about TMS.

Another concept that helps toward being able to forgive is **perspective**. I began to rethink and in some cases relive relationships and experiences that caused me emotional distress. In most if not all instances, by putting myself in others' shoes I was able to see their side of whatever caused me distress. Often, the person may not have meant to cause me distress or they may have taken their own distress out on me because I was handy. Of course there may well be situations that others intentionally caused you great harm or distress, then the only way to lift that burden on yourself is to try to forgive them. If necessary, just forgive them for being psychologically sick.

Briefly, another thing... I recently began to dream about people including my parents and situations that brought to the surface some long-repressed emotions. I journaled about them the next morning and through that came closer to being pain free. Dreams of my mother and father gave me great peace. It was as if they were telling me to let go of my anger or guilt regarding them. I realized I've never been a parent so I don't know what a big job that can be. To be a perfect parent or a perfect son or daughter? Impossible!

On the subject of peace, I agree totally with Dr. Brady who adds a third element to Mindbody healing. He suggests adding the spiritual element. I did that early in my TMS journey and believe it has been helping me greatly.

"Ask and ye shall receive" is important toward becoming pain free.

When you are in pain, while telling your unconscious mind it's not physical but psychological, remember to practice **deep breathing**. Most every book or web site about relaxation and meditation – bringing peace to one's self – stresses the importance of deep breathing.

### **Deep Breathing**

To practice deep breathing, sit still and tall somewhere comfortable. Close your eyes and begin breathing through your nose. Inflate your stomach like a balloon for a count of 2. Hold the breath for a count of 1. Exhale gently through the mouth, deflating the balloon while counting to the count of 4 and then say "I am at peace."

Some people prefer to breathe in longer, holding the breath to 4, and releasing the breath at 6 or 8. The most important thing is that the exhale is longer than the inhale, not the absolute length of the breath. Repeat the deep breaths for at least five minutes. You'll notice a big difference in your mood as it changes from angry or anxious to having a profound calming effect.



While deep breathing in bed to hasten sleep, forget the balloon and just slowly, calmly, think of a pleasant place like a beach in the sunlight or imagine yourself floating, on water or in the air. The deep breathing really helps to calm the mind and relieve anxiety and tension. Even if it isn't done exactly as some suggest, it is very helpful. I do a variation of it when in bed and can't fall to sleep. Just concentrating on breathing and saying a calming, positive mantra helps bring on the sleep.

Also, while deep breathing or anytime, practice thinking positive by sending your mind affirmations such as "I feel calm," "I feel at peace," and as I mentioned earlier, I like saying over and over again the old mantra "Every day in every way, I'm feeling better and better."

Another calming thing to do is practice a yoga technique called "the valley point" for relieving stress in the mind: use your thumb and index finger of one hand to massage the fleshy place between the thumb and index finger on the other hand (the valley point). Then switch and massage the same place on the other hand. Repeat a dozen or more times. You could combine this with a mantra.

Be at peace with others, with yourself, with the Lord, practice forgiveness, keep positive, find ways to laugh or at least smile ("Put on a happy face" from *Bye Bye Birdie*) and also to meditate, and you will be free of pain.

I stopped watching news on television and just keep up with the main events by online news sources, because it's easy to overdose on bad news. And I also suggest stop multi-tasking and spending a lot of time on those handheld electronic devices. Tune out electronic gadgets and you give yourself a chance to tune in to quiet and calm.

Early in my pain free journey I did quite a bit of posting on TMSWiki.org and met some wonderful people, mostly fellow pain sufferers or those who healed from pain through TMS techniques they share.

One of the most helpful is Eric who posts on TMSWiki.org as "Herbie." Although now pain free, he continues to help others who are in pain. Forest and others who run the Wiki web site are also very dedicated to helping those still in pain. Like them, I encourage you to keep working at and believing in the Dr. Sarno Pain Free process and you will be pain free. It just takes longer for some than others. That may have to do with how strongly you believe in the Dr. Sarno process or how many repressed emotions you have. But **it does work!** -- Dec. 30, 2012.

As I said, shortly after posting the above on TMSWiki.org, I was completely free of all pain.

“No two people will recover from TMS exactly the same way,” says Dr. Alan Gordon in the free TMS Recovery Program at TMSWiki.org. “This is predominantly due to the fact that each individual has their own unique experiences, which fuel their symptoms in an unique way. One person may find journaling to be helpful, while someone else will find affirmations to work better. There is no right or wrong way to recover from TMS. The key is to find the right way for you to recover from TMS.

“Experiment with the different techniques. Try journaling, affirmations, meditation, and other approaches. The only way you will find out what works is by trying different things. This can mean doing different techniques, as well as different styles of the same technique.”

Dr. Gordon suggests that if you find that a lot of emotions are coming up when you are journaling, then it may be a good idea to keep doing it. But if you journal for two months and find nothing comes up or you find journaling to be overwhelming, then you may be better served using another technique.

“If one approach does not resonate with you, don’t worry about it,” says Dr. Gordon.. “Just because one technique does not help, does not mean that the TMS approach will not work. The more you worry, the more you will feed the TMS cycle.”

I’d to add here that another thing I learned before I healed was to **laugh**. Laughing really does relief stresses and pain, as I will write about more in my chapters. There may be nothing to laugh at, but pretend there is and laugh. Your unconscious mind doesn’t know the difference between real and fake laughter, so it’s okay to fake it.

“Laughter,” as Steve Ozanich writes in his book, “suppresses the release of the stress hormone and immune system suppresser, cortisol, that boosts the immune system’s power. Laughter also releases endorphins and natural pain killers into the spinal canal. The endorphins generate a sense of peace and happiness and pleasure, an analgesic effect that alters mood, relieving depression and boosting disease fighters.”

Laughter, too, works.