

E X P E R T

Q+A



▶ **Meet Our Expert:**

Steve Ozanich, a mindbody writer and health-consultant, penned *The Great Pain Deception* based on his own experience, the work of pioneering pain-physician John E. Sarno, MD, and 10 years of intensive research. Over the years, Ozanich has helped to heal thousands of people, and his book has recently caught the attention of two filmmakers, magazines, world-renowned marketing experts, clinical pain scientists, and several celebrities; including an Oscar winner. *The Great Pain Deception* was twice honoured in the International Book Awards (IBA) as Runner-up in both Best New Health Book of 2012, and Health Alternative Medicine.

In addition to being a mindbody health consultant, the Ohio-based Ozanich is a health blogger with *JenningsWire*, health lecturer, engineer, certified personal fitness trainer, acoustic guitar player, and golf swing coach.

Q. COULD YOU HAVE TMS?

A. Tension Myoneural Syndrome (TMS) is the most common disorder you've never heard of. Everyone has experienced it to varying degrees; it's universal. TMS is a mindbody syndrome that was first discovered by Dr. John Sarno in the 1970s. The basic concept behind TMS is that repressed emotions reveal themselves through the body with things such as chronic and acute back pain, hand and foot pain, knee and shoulder pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, irritable bowel and fibromyalgia, as well as, the skin and immune system.

People often get upset and feel insulted when told about TMS, because they only hear, "it's all in your head." However, that's not true. No one is saying that. It's a very real mindbody disorder that often gets blamed on defects in the physical body. Personally I threw Dr. Sarno's book across the room when I first read it. Now I'm so happy I opened my mind to it later on. I'm free of pain for the first time that I can remember.

The pain is very real, however, it's rooted in the unconscious mind. The mindbody connection is immensely powerful and responsible for almost everything physical that we get, not counting injuries of course. However, medical systems are set up to only treat the body; ignoring the cause of the symptoms altogether. Thus, epidemics are rampant because we're looking at the wrong things in healing. The body is the effect not the cause of pain. The cause is the emotions that the sufferer never realizes she's repressing.

With TMS, the pain exists to protect you from experiencing a difficult and painful mental state. The brain creates the symptom to distract you from anger and anxiety so that you'll be forced to obsess on your body. It's diverting your awareness away from the true cause of your pain. Your brain is actually doing you a favour by reducing blood flow to an area to create a painful sit-

uation, so that you don't have to think about emotions that are too sad, too powerful, or too threatening. For example, instead of feeling extreme anxiety you feel back pain. For some reason, the knowledge of what is truly happening begins to heal people. It's as though the covert action of the brain is uncovered, ruining its strategy of deceit—and healing begins.

The typical TMS sufferer is a type T personality (T for tension) is a perfectionist with higher levels of anxiety, and often depression in their life. They're usually gentle and nice people who place high demands on themselves to please others.

If you think you may be suffering from TMS, the first thing to do is to get a physical exam to rule out anything life-threatening. Then, you need to reject the current diagnosis and all the abnormalities as seen on the imaging, and accept that your pain is initiated by your mind. Sometimes just accepting this and understanding that you can be healed through your thoughts is enough to make the pain go away. However often it takes more hard mental work.

On occasion, TMS sufferers will need counseling to try to understand why they repress at such high levels, and to link the symptoms to their emotions.

Overall, "belief" is the most important thing. If you believe your body is broken then the chronic symptoms linger because that's exactly what your brain wants you to believe! If you believe your body is healthy then healing often begins immediately. The problem is that we're constantly being told by doctors that our body is flawed, when it rarely ever is. We are far stronger than we think, and the abnormalities seen on MRIs and x-rays mean little to nothing; they're simply there from normal aging. The proof is in the fact that virtually everyone heals from TMS despite the dire medical diagnoses. **VM**