

The Long Mile: Managing Chronic Pain

Session 9

GROUP HANDOUTS

Learning objectives

Session 9: Meaning and Purpose

- Understanding how meaning and purpose contributes to pain reduction and wellbeing
- Health benefits of happiness, fulfillment, kindness and compassion
- Discovering our passion
- Learning from life experiences

What does meaning
and purpose have to
do with chronic
pain?



Replacing threats with challenges

“Experiencing a strong sense of meaning can enhance the adjustment to a major stressor such as chronic pain by replacing a ‘**threat**’ perspective with a ‘**challenge**’ perspective”

2 year longitudinal study of 273 Belgian chronic pain patients:

- Experiencing meaning in life is an important factor for optimal adjustment
- Presence of Meaning reduced depressive symptoms, **pain intensity**, and frequency of pain medication use
- Presence of Meaning increased life satisfaction

Dezutter J, Luyckx K, Wachholtz A. Meaning in life in chronic pain patients over time: associations with pain experience and psychological well-being. *J Behav Med.* 2015;38(2):384-396.

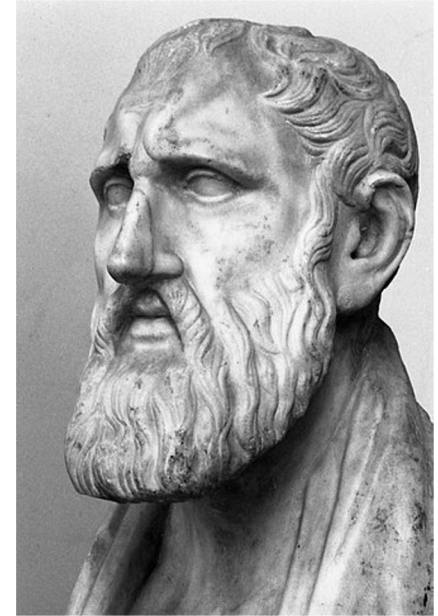
doi:10.1007/s10865-014-9614-1

Psychology

Some stages of growth and development in the field

Stoic philosophy

- Zeno of Citium, founder of the Stoic school of philosophy
- Philosophy has 3 parts: logic, physics and ethics
- Path to happiness is embracing and accepting the moment as it presents itself by not allowing oneself to be controlled by the desire for pleasure or by the fear of pain.
- Inspired modern cognitive therapy - Dr. Albert Ellis' Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) - precursor of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

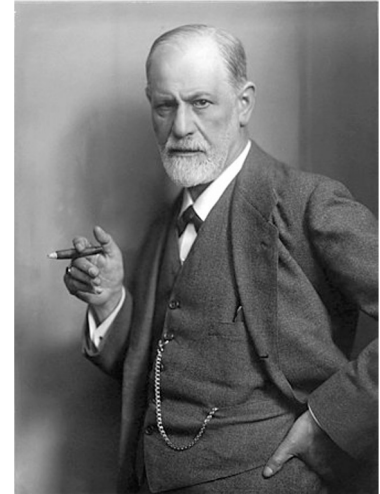


334-262 BCE

“The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts”

Sigmund Freud 1856-1939

- Austrian neurologist
- Founder of psychoanalysis
- Developed techniques such as free association
- Model of psychic structure: id, ego, superego
- Analysis of dreams as wish fulfillments



Growth happens throughout life

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) - American psychology professor

- Studied the mentally healthy focusing on self-actualizing people and their peak experiences
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs: a theory of psychological health predicated on fulfilling innate human needs in priority, culminating in self-actualization
- Maslow defined self-actualization as achieving the fullest use of one's talents and interests

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Self-actualization is not an automatic outcome of satisfying the other human needs
- Not a rigid hierarchy
- Cultural differences
- Changes with sudden challenges such as fire/floods, war, pandemics



Psychology influences culture

*Life isn't about finding yourself.
Life is about creating yourself.*

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

Can we improve our emotional well-being?

Martin Seligman (1942, age 79) American psychology professor - father of modern positive psychology

- Positive psychology focuses on what makes people happy and fulfilled as mental health is more than just the absence of illness.
- Looks at the positive side of things and how they go right rather than the pessimistic side
- Improves emotional well-being

Fredrickson, B. L., & Joiner, T. Positive emotions trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being. *Psychological science*, 13(2), 172–175 (2002).

Seligman's theory

Happiness has 3 dimensions that can be cultivated:

The Pleasant life - seeking and savouring pleasures in life

The Good life - developing our unique virtues and strengths to enhance our lives

The Meaningful life - using our unique strengths for a purpose greater than ourselves

Seligman's conclusion:

Happiness is understandable, obtainable and teachable

Happy despite pain?

RCT with 276 chronic musculoskeletal pain patients randomized to:

- An 8 week internet-delivered positive psychology program or
- An internet-delivered cognitive-behavioural program
- Waitlist control group

Results:

- Both treatments led to increase in happiness and decrease in depression
- Improvements were stable at 6 month follow-up

Peters, Madelon L et al. "Happy Despite Pain: A Randomized Controlled Trial of an 8-Week Internet-delivered Positive Psychology Intervention for Enhancing Well-being in Patients With Chronic Pain." *The Clinical journal of pain* vol. 33,11 (2017): 962-975.

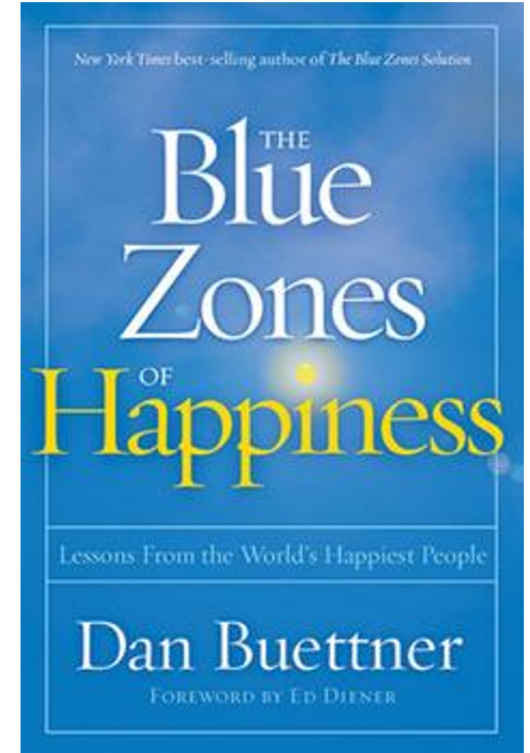
What is a happy life?

Dan Buettner, 1960, age 62

Author/explorer/educator/producer/journalist National

Geographic researcher on longevity

- Discovered the 5 places in the world, blue zones hotspots, where people live the longest, healthiest lives.
- Studied 5 places in the world where people were happiest and why: life satisfaction, meaning and purpose, and enjoyment of life
- **Happiness is affected by where we live, how we live, what we do and whether we have a community of friends**



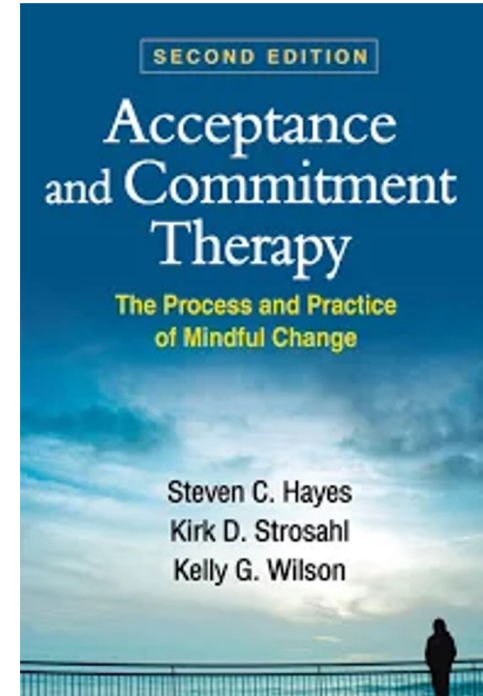
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

- Founded in 1994 by Stephen Hayes, Ph.D (1948, age 74), American clinical psychologist
- Third generation evolution from behaviour therapy (first 2: traditional behaviourism, cognitive-behavioural therapy)

Aims

- Create a rich, full and meaningful life while accepting the pain that goes with it
- Increase psychological flexibility through mindfulness and the ability to change behaviour for valued ends

Symptom reduction is a byproduct, not a goal



Summary of ACT

“Mindfulness + Values + Action = Psychological flexibility”

Russ Harris, “The Happiness Trap”

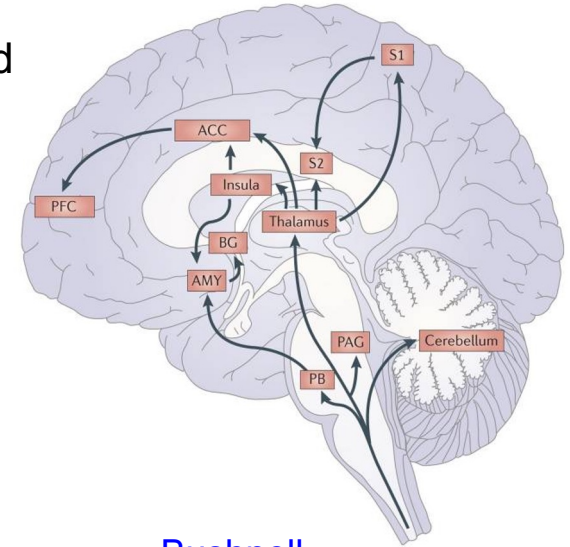
Review report on positive affect and chronic pain

Studies assessed the association of Positive Affect (moods and emotions) and chronic pain

- Affect can be improved even when pain persists
- Neuroimaging showed the effect of PA on pain is associated with activity in the acc, insula, right S2 cortex and left frontal cortex.
- **PA is integrated within a central pain modulatory network**

Some studies looked at improving PA through:

- Emotionally evocative images, humorous film clips, romantic film clips, hypnotic suggestion, guided imagery, laughter, pleasant odours, music and monetary reward



Bushnell

Finan, Patrick H, and Eric L Garland. "The role of positive affect in pain and its treatment." *The Clinical journal of pain* vol. 31,2 (2015): 177-87. doi:10.1097/AJP.0000000000000092

Summary of Finan's review of studies on Positive Affect (PA)

- PA buffers the perception and negative effects of pain (eg. reduced pain levels, improved physical function)
- PA associated with prosocial behaviour in chronic pain (increased positive social interactions)
- PA is bolstered by healthy relationships and resolution of stressful events
- PA exerts a counterbalancing effect to NA which promotes defensive responses - fight, flight, freeze
- PA increases vagal tone

Conclusion:

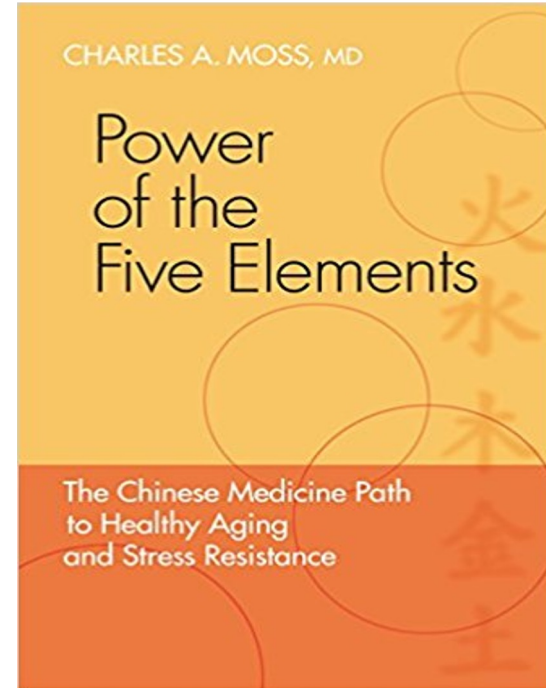
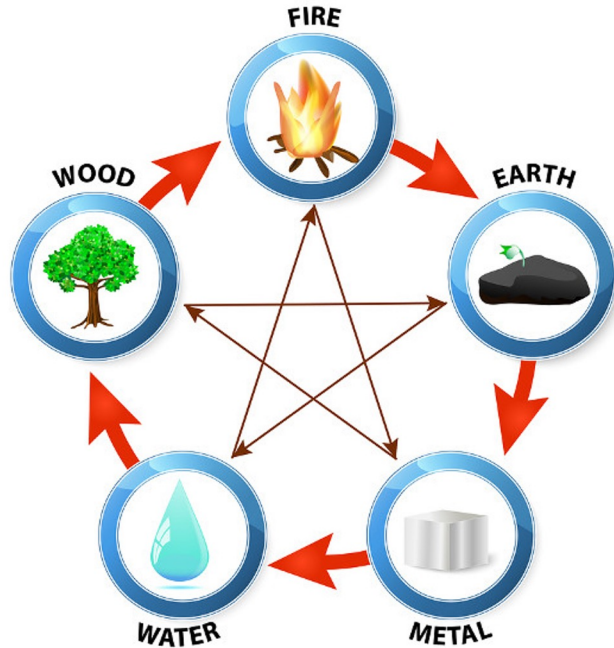
PA will buffer pain and promote active engagement in chronic pain self-management

What about eastern concepts?

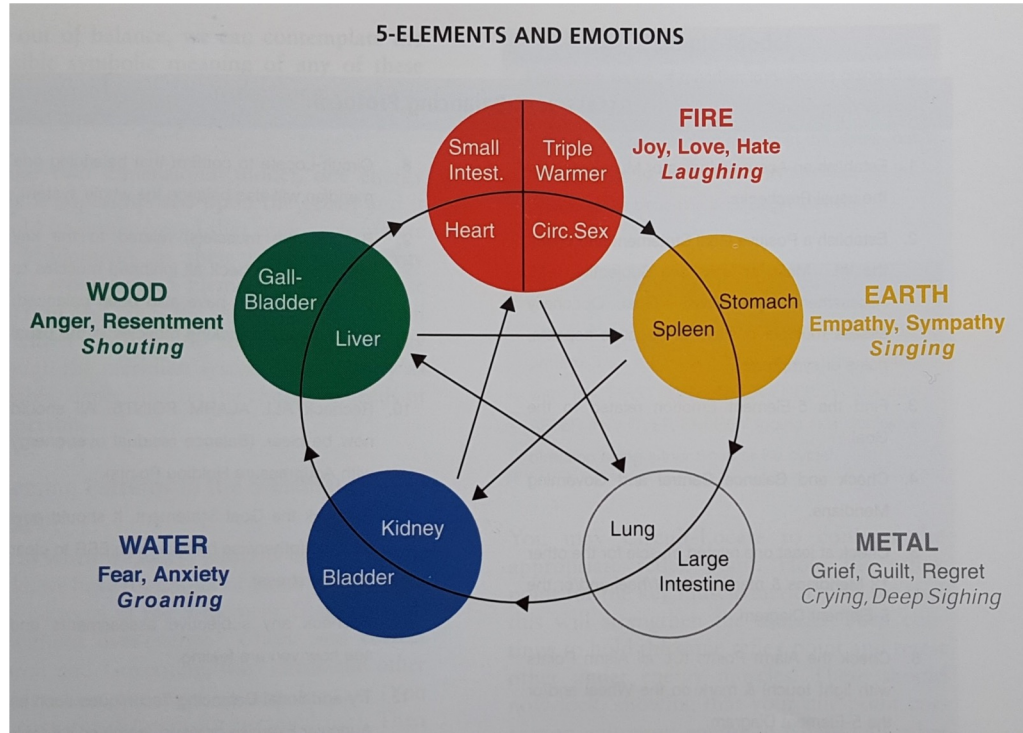
Are there alternative approaches to health psychology?

Five Elements of Nature

Ancient Chinese philosophy dating back to the Taoist era



Five Element Acupuncture and emotional well being



John Thie, "Touch for Health"

Exploring Meaning and Purpose

Discovering our passion

What do I value the most?

What do I want out of life?

How can I create the future I want?

Am I motivated to improve my health? Why?

What do I really enjoy doing?

When do I feel most fulfilled?

What brings me joy?

Richard Bolles, “What Colour is Your Parachute”, 1970

Helpful for those seeking work or volunteer work



Doing and Being

Our passion or mission in life may not be “to do” but rather “to be”

- To be loving
- To be kind
- To be compassionate
- To be a good friend, parent, community volunteer etc



Doing and being at work

Our passion or mission in life may not only be “to do” but also “to be”

Kindness benefits the giver as well as the receiver and improves well-being



1910-1997

Bryant P. H. et al. (2020). Rewards of kindness? A meta-analysis of the link between prosociality and well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*. DOI: [10.1037/bul0000298](https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000298)

Learning from life experiences

Questions to consider

- What roles have I taken on in my life?
- What have I been learning to become?
- What are some positive results from negative events in my life?
- What have I learned from my experiences with illness or pain?
- What is the purpose of my life so far?
- **What do I see in my future?**



Time to kick back

Relaxation exercise

14. Meaning and purpose



Time to kick back

Relaxation exercise

15. Wise Being visualization



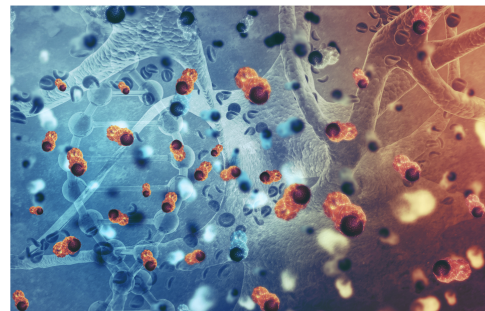
Wellness Group Medical Visits



The Long Mile: Managing Chronic Pain

Dr. Teresa Clarke

This 10-week series will help you on your chronic pain journey. You will learn how to promote healing through integrative approaches and optimize your physical and mental well-being.



Immune Health & How to Optimize Your Immunity

Dr. Teresa Clarke

In this session, you will learn integrative health approaches to promoting immune health. These approaches can be added to public health recommendations to reduce your risk of serious viral illness.



Acupressure for Chronic Illnesses

Dr. Teresa Clarke

In this series of three workshops, you will learn how Acupressure can be utilized in a self-treatment approach to improve wellbeing and symptom management in patients with chronic illnesses.



Osteopathy & Chronic Conditions

Fabio Bocchetti

In this series of four workshops, you will learn how Osteopathy can explain and treat several types of headaches, low back pain, knees or hip pain as well as digestive issues.

[Register Now](#)

Ask the Expert Webinar Series

101: Cannabis Counselling & Treatment Plans

By participating you will learn about:

- The endocannabinoid system
- The differences between cannabinoids (THC & CBD)
- Routes of administration (oral oil & vaporization)
- Symptom management using cannabis
- Customized treatment plans
- How to dose your cannabis safely
- How to monitor for symptom improvements
- Acute adverse effects
- Drug interactions
- Supply options through a Health Canada licensed seller
- Cost of medication & discount programs available
- Extended health benefits & claiming as a medical expense
- Patient safety

201: Inhaled Cannabis; Dried Flower, Concentrates & Extracts

By participating you will learn about:

- The difference between smoking & vaporization
- Is vaporization safe?
- When to consider using vaporized cannabis for symptom management
- Finding the right temperature for optimal benefit
- Types & cost of vaporizers
- Choosing the best strain to vaporize (sativa, indica & hybrids)
- How to determine your optimal dose & monitoring effects
- Where am I allowed to vaporize my cannabis?
- Safe storage of vaporizer & cannabis
- Driving & travelling
- Inhaled extracts

301: Cannabis Edibles, Oral Preparations & Topicals

By participating you will learn about:

- The difference between medical & recreational cannabis
- Potential drug interactions
- Differences between cannabinoids: CBD, THC, CBN & CBG
- Edibles: oral products, beverages, chocolates, baked goods, chews & candies
- Topicals
- Onset of action
- Acute adverse effects
- Choosing a product that is right for you
- Dosing considerations
- Patient safety
- Determine your optimal dose & monitoring effects

[Register Now](#)

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info@greenleafmc.ca



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