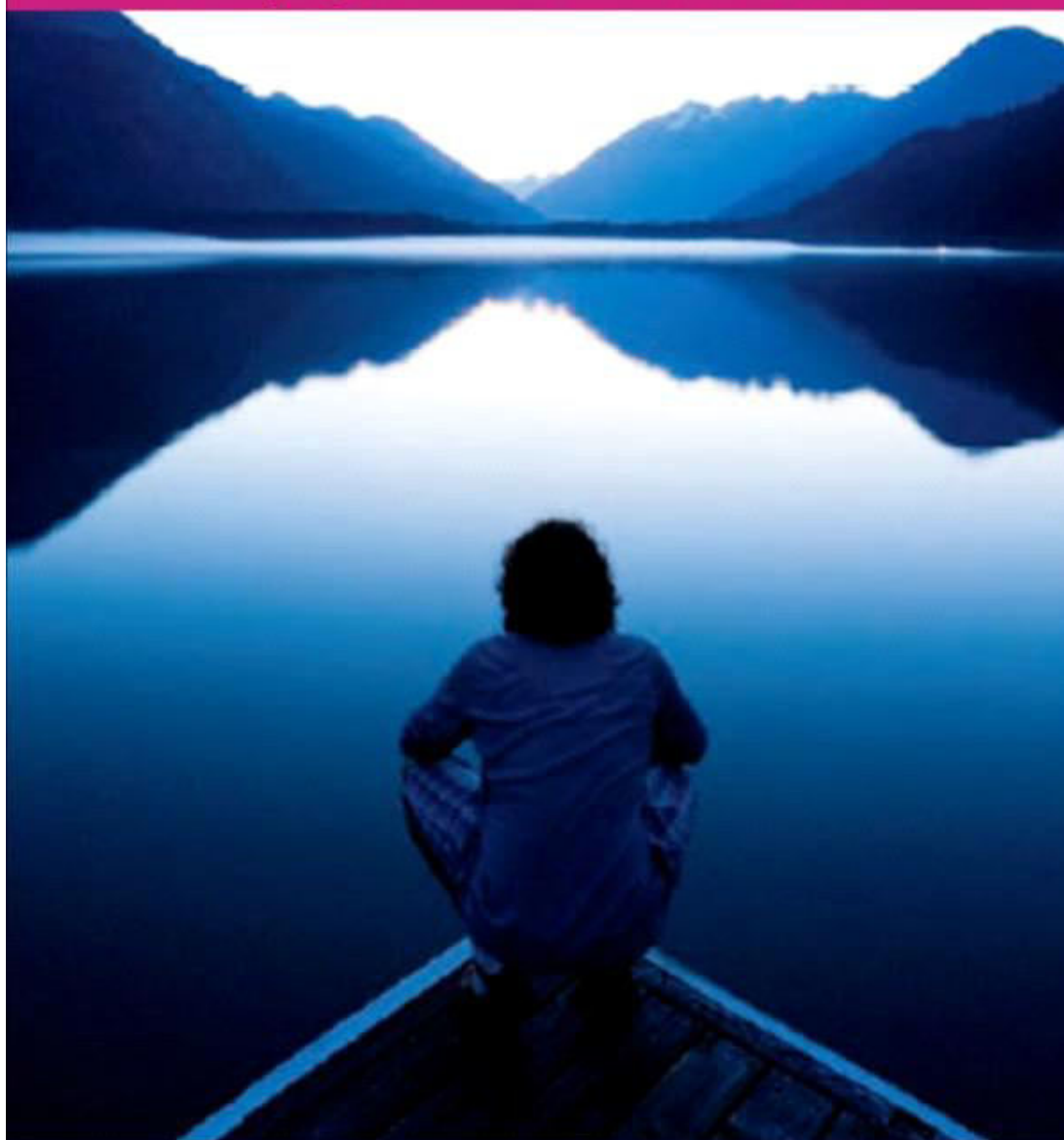


Pain

Enjoy It While It Lasts



ILAN BENDELMAN

We've all been there before.

Something comes up. And it doesn't feel "good".

Our immediate reaction: Go away.

Or maybe even: Not now.

We try to suppress it.

We try to make it go away.

If we can't block it out of our experience, we may even try to distract ourselves from feeling it.

Maybe we'll do it with food. Maybe with alcohol. Maybe it's with television shows.

We all have our own ways of going about blocking out that which is "uncomfortable".

But at the end of the day, all we are really doing is denying what we are feeling.

Interestingly enough, if you really examine that which you are feeling, you will come to the conclusion that beyond your perception of it, fundamentally, it's all really just **SENSATION**.

That's right.

No matter what your thoughts or opinions are on the uncomfortable sensations in your stomach that some may call anxiety, when you get to what you're actually feeling, it's just sensation.

You may call it anxiety. You may say it doesn't feel good. Okay, that's fine, and you're totally allowed to have your perceptions. But that doesn't stop the sensation from being exactly that which it is: Sensation.

We've been conditioned to not like pain. Or better yet, we've been conditioned to not embrace the sensation that most of us would usually CALL pain.

Pain is just a label we attach to a sensation in the body that we can't handle. A sensation that "hurts".

And we try to avoid it.

But there's a difference between avoiding a tiger coming at you through a Starbucks-café window-seat glass, and avoiding feeling the sensation you get in your body when you are at a social event and you feel very uncomfortable.

Yes, avoid the tiger with a sudden movement to the side.

No, don't avoid the sensation at the social event with alcohol.

Why do you think most people drink?

You think it's because the vodka tastes good?

Let's be honest here.

People are always trying to find ways to "loosen up".

What do you think they're loosening up? It's the tightness within them. It's uncomfortable. It's hard to breathe. Drinking, for example, eases their social tension.

And what about all those times we eat because we want to over-power our uncomfortable feelings, and replace them with the feel-good chemicals that get released from eating. Doesn't last too long, does it?

It's a quick fix.

It's all a quick fix.

Some of these fixes just last longer than others. There are those we do sometimes, and then those that we do constantly.

If you really take a good look at how you go about your day, and how you respond to your thoughts and feelings, you may notice a certain degree of discrimination.

Sensation discrimination.

You are always seeking to have “pleasurable” sensations.

No-one in their right mind would ever *want* to feel “un-pleasurable” sensations.

But herein lies the problem: People have labelled and decided that certain type of sensations are good, and others are bad. Humans are, and for good reason, always trying to do what’s best for themselves. They’re always trying to bring more good into their life.

And that’s great. Nothing wrong with that.

But it becomes a problem when people start pushing away certain types of sensations and trying to avoid experiencing them under the pretense that they are “bad.”

Here’s the thing: You can’t control what thought or feeling arises in your body-mind.

All those negative thoughts that you’ve experienced in your life, did you call them into your mind? No. In fact, you probably tried to actively “not” think those thoughts instead.

In other words, you tried pushing them away. And if you dealt with them, it was only because you had no other choice. They were so persistent, how could you not face them? Or try to, at least...

But who says that we have to dislike one sensation over another?

What happens when we forgo the need to label our sensations as good or bad?

What if we just experienced the sensations as exactly what they are: Information.

Now, information is not inherently good, or bad, it's just data.

Our body is an incredible sensory tool, picking up information from our environment 24 hours a day. It never stops. Not even when we're sleeping.

We are constantly sending out and picking up information to and from our environment.

So when we experience sensations in our body, that's really just us processing information in a very noticeable way.

Some information gets absorbed without us even noticing, like road signs. We take in the data with ease and without much thought.

Some information gets processed more noticeably, such as when you are reading a book and new thoughts or feelings arise based on what you are reading – you may or may not notice the subtle body sensations that come with this.

And then you have the times when information is processed much more noticeably, so much so that it may start distracting you from whatever you were doing just a moment earlier. An example of this would be a sharp pain in your back, or suddenly getting a phone call and hearing bad news.

Information is always coming into our field of awareness in an infinite amount of ways, and each piece of information has its own level of intensity.

And it's usually the intensity that will determine how easy it will be for you to absorb the information.

You can't control the intensity of the information coming at you, but you can control how you will interact with it. The impact it has on you entirely depends on your attitude towards it.

Whether you're getting good news or bad news, you always have the free-will as to how you'll take the news.

But we've been conditioned, from early childhood, to have very specific reactions to so many of our experiences.

When is the last time you felt depressed and actually embraced the sensations coursing through your body?

Why are so many people under the impression that "unpleasant" sensations are bad and that we should try avoid them?

Avoiding that which is already there just blinds you from processing information that is trying to tell you something.

How you feel is not just random.

There are always reasons as to why you are feeling what you are feeling. The last thing you want to do is push away the feeling because it's "unpleasant".

If anything, what you want to start doing is actually **feel the pain as fully and as deeply as you possibly can**, and even try to enjoy the experience of even being *able* to feel that which you are feeling.

You're already feeling it, and you can't "not" feel it, so you might as well accept that you *are* feeling it. And even go beyond accepting it.

Embrace it.

And not with the intention of just feeling it so it may soon go away, but really allow yourself to fully experience that which you are feeling. Let it merge with you. See it not as something separate, but as a part of you. And then take the final step: Allow yourself to become grateful for it...

Embracing and being grateful for pain brings forth so much clarity, so much understanding.

What you used to avoid looking at now provides you with a new range of information.

Now pain isn't something to look away from, but something to look at deeply and learn from.

When your arm is stretched out and your elbow can't bend anymore, are you not grateful for the pain you feel that lets you know you have to adjust?

Pain is your friend. It teaches.

Our only responsibility is to listen. The actions will take care of themselves naturally.

There's also one more thing that I'd like to share with you, all I ask is that you keep an open-mind: www.evolvinghumans.com