

TRANSCRIPT 1002

Forgiving Gave Me Freedom

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[00:00:10] My name is, Maureen Forrest, better known as Mo. I'm 78 years old. And I've been in pain since I was 14 years old. I have **Crohn's disease**.

Childhood trauma

[00:00:24] I'm gonna talk about **my father** tonight. I know before I've talked about the pain from my mother, her pain, but my father was an abusive alcoholic. I watched him beat my mother. I remember him chasing her down the street with a butcher knife, trying to kill her.

[00:00:46] He would whip my three brothers and me. I remember him holding me up by one arm and whipping me with his belt. And it wasn't spankings. It was whippings. I was so **scared of him**, I used to tell mom that my bones shake.

[00:01:05] And, I hated the **nighttime**. I just hated it. When it started to get dark. I was so scared of the night. I never wanted to be out in it.

[00:01:16] It got to the point that if my dad didn't come home for dinner, we would take three different buses and go to my grandmother's house. And one of the bus stops that we had to wait at was by a **tavern**. And I just hated taverns. I remember sitting in the car, waiting for him to come out. And, I saw my neighbor, our neighbor, go in the tavern. And it wasn't, but a few days later she was visiting my mother, and it was lunchtime, and she was helping to make lunch and gave me a sandwich, and I refused to eat it.

[00:01:56] And it was, "Why won't you eat? Why won't you eat?" Well, I wouldn't say why wouldn't I eat. But I wouldn't eat because I saw her in a tavern, and taverns were evil, and they were bad, and they hurt you. And **she touched it**. I couldn't eat anything that somebody like that touched.

[00:02:14] **My uncle** was a Catholic priest, my mother's brother. And he asked her, "Why don't you leave?" And, she said, "Because it's a sin to get a divorce." And my uncle said, "God does not want you to live this way." And he said, "And I will help you." She became his housekeeper. So I lived in a rectory for a few years. And, life was better. It was a lot better.

[00:02:46] I was seven years old when we moved. So everything that happened before, I was pretty young. But I still felt that **danger**, that night could hurt you. Night was a bad time. And, um, At one time, then my dad found us, and he came. And my mom always would move way back when he was around. And I heard my mom say, if you quit drinking for a year, we can get back together.

[00:03:23] And, I would have **nightmares**. I'd have a nightmare that he would find us, and that he would kill us all. I remember before we left him being passed out on the kitchen floor, my mom says, "I have to give him his insulin shot, or he'll die." And I went around into the other room, and I prayed to God that she wouldn't give him his shot. I feel kind of guilty about that now, but I know I shouldn't.

[00:03:57] But my pain and my suffering was for my **fears of the nighttime**. And I know that, um, chronic pain is often there's been a **trauma**. And my childhood trauma, that was what did it for me.

[00:04:17] I was 12 years old when he died. My mom got a phone call and she, she yelled and then cried. And my first thought was, "Daddy's coming. Daddy's gonna come and get us. Oh no." And I was scared to death. And my oldest brother said, "No, Daddy is dead." And once he died, then **my dreams** did stop. I quit having those dreams of him.

[00:04:48] The doctor-- and this in my twenties, and because of my **constant pain**... I can remember being on the living room floor and in so much pain that, I couldn't move. And my husband had to pick me up and take me to the bedroom. It hurt so much at night. And I got thinking, well, maybe it was because of dinner. I shouldn't eat dinner at night. I didn't know what it was, but my doctor sent me to a **psychiatrist**. and after having talking to for a while, she said to me, I think that your pain, or I think your problem with the night is, because that's when your dad would come home. And I thought, "**Bingo**, that's it."

[00:05:38] But I had **no instructions**. I had nothing telling me how to handle it or what to do with it. So my thought of pain was you just live with it. It's something that happens. This is your fate in life. You just live with it. And there was no way out of it or nothing that you could do to get around it. Then my son had taken some, **ACT classes** from Lianne Dyche. And she suggested that I take them, and they really help; they help the nerves and the **calming**. But Lianne suggested that I go to the Lebanon Hospital with the Physical Therapy Department take the **MMAPS classes**: movement, mindfulness, and pain science. Well, the pain science really, really got me because I'm, um, always been interested in that type of thing.

[00:06:36] So I went. The doctor approved me to go, and I went. And then **my life changed**. I can't tell you how much it changed after that. I learned that **chronic pain** is when there's **no tissue damage**. I never knew that. I thought it just meant it was bad pain. So if there's no tissue damage, then, how in the

heck am I to expect a doctor to fix me? You know, there's nothing that he could do for my body physically.

[00:07:10] And so I had to work on it. And I learned that **I have a powerful brain** and we all do. You do, too.

[00:07:23] **The brain controls the pain.** And, I put it not as very professional, but I start understanding what I was doing. I knew that I had so much anxiety and stress, and negative thoughts, and my emotions, and my fears. I was so afraid of the night, and I hated it if I had to be out in it. It just scared me to death. I just sure there was danger in the night. And, I learned that chronic pain comes from a trauma that you've had and, especially **childhood trauma**. And so that, that made sense to me. But, the important thing I learned was that I could **reprogram my brain**. Yeah. I call it reprogramming my brain. But you know, how did I do this?

Reprogramming my brain

[00:08:30] Well, one thing that I learned and I practiced a lot on was the, the **mindfulness** and, **perception**. I learned that if I perceive pain, I'm gonna have it, guaranteed. There are no doubts. If you think something's gonna hurt, by gum, it's gonna hurt. So I learned, with all the different tests and stuff I had, to perceive it. Just being fine. Nothing hurts.

[00:08:59] When a couple of times they put, needles into my spine and, I would visualize it beforehand, and **visualization** is very helpful for me too. And I would visualize the needle being just covered with Vaseline, and it just slides right on in, and there's no pain. Everything's just great. And the doctors are always amazed about how I handle it.

[00:09:24] With the night fear and my **increased pain during the night**, what I did was **deep breathing** for one thing. Dr. Cuccaro says that's the most healthy thing that we could do. And I would breathe. I'd close my eyes, and it's very relaxing. And I would breathe through my nose, **belly breathe** into my stomach, would expand. And then I would come back out and through my

mouth and I could feel the breath coming in and out. And while I'm doing this, I was **visualizing** that I was very peaceful. And that I was very strong, and that I was a good person. And that the nighttime was a very peaceful time. It was a quiet time, and there was nothing out there in the dark that wasn't there during the day, the same trees, the same houses, the same roads. Everything is good, except for that, it was more peaceful at night. And I would do this maybe 10 minutes, a couple times a day, at least.

[00:10:30] And it takes a little while. But what happened was my thought in my brain, I had a strong thought that said, "Nighttime is danger. You're gonna be hurt." And we know that **pain is a protector**. So it sends out the message, "Hurt. You're in danger, you better do something." And so my something it was pain and was to stay home, to stay out of it.

[00:11:01] And so by doing the mindfulness and the meditation, I was able to make the thing in my brain, like the attachment, I don't know what to call it. That was making me think that it was danger and was able to weaken that and not have that be my main thought. And I was able to **make peacefulness my main thought**. And it's nice outside. The darkness is a peaceful time. And I was able to change that thought. I have absolutely **no fear of the night anymore**. I don't cramp up at night. I don't hurt worse at night. My Crohn's... I can be off the toilet at night. Because my Crohn's is better at night.

[00:11:50] It takes a **long time** to do it, but it's sure **worth the trouble**.

[00:11:54] There's many things that can help you. What helps me may not help someone else because we're all different. But, I suggest that you work on some things, the **perceiving of pain**.

[00:12:12] Mind on something else

[00:12:14] I was in the **Walmart store**, and I was having a hard time, and my son was in the car. And I thought, "Boy, I can't do this. I'm hurting too much." And I thought, "Maureen, you know, better." And so I start noticing all the colors. So I was saying all the colors to myself, red pink, green, everything that

I noticed. And I was able, **because I wasn't thinking of my pain**, I was able to finish my shopping and check out. You know, we've all had a bruise. We don't know where it came from because our mind was on something else.

Better life

[00:12:53] I am happy now. I feel more **peaceful** than I ever did before. I feel that I've, overcome my childhood and the past.

[00:13:04] At one time I was on 18 different medications, including opioids. I now have six medications. I take a lot of, but three of them are vitamin minerals, and I take turmeric and other things, plus the medications. I've had 16 surgeries. And I really feel that if I had known this, **I wouldn't have had so many surgeries**, especially the back surgery.

[00:13:34] But probably one of the most important things that I did is I **forgave** my dad. And how did I do this?

[00:13:46] Well, you know, I looked at my family. I have three brothers. Two of them are **alcoholic**. It was headed for three, but one decided to quit drinking. My two sons, one was alcoholic, and my brother's three children, two were alcoholic. My brother was alcoholic. My other brother had a child that was alcoholic.

[00:14:08] My family has **dyslexia**, bad cases, some of us and, **attention deficit**. And sometimes it's hard getting along in this world with that. We're smart people, but, people don't realize it. like one of my problems is the speech and pronouncing words correctly. But I got looking and I got thinking, you know, their drinking is not because their father was an alcoholic. They're drinking to **self-medicate**. It's the dyslexia and attention deficit and, uh, trying to get things going for themselves in this world.

[00:14:58] And, In those days, there wasn't help for that. I had one brother that after his freshman year of high school, they decided he **wasn't educatable**. I mean, how sad really? And there wasn't much help in my dad's age for somebody, especially for the nerve part, the part that he used to drink

for, to calm himself down. My mother always said, "**Love your dad.** He's sick." But I never could understand how she could say that. That just seemed crazy to me that she could say something like that.

[00:15:34] But she was right. He was sick, and he was **self-medicating**. And so I have his picture out. I wish that I had been able to know the him part first, the part that my mother fell in love with. But, those are more the things that I think about.

[00:15:57] I'm not scared anymore. **My life** has really changed. My pain is so much better.

Resources

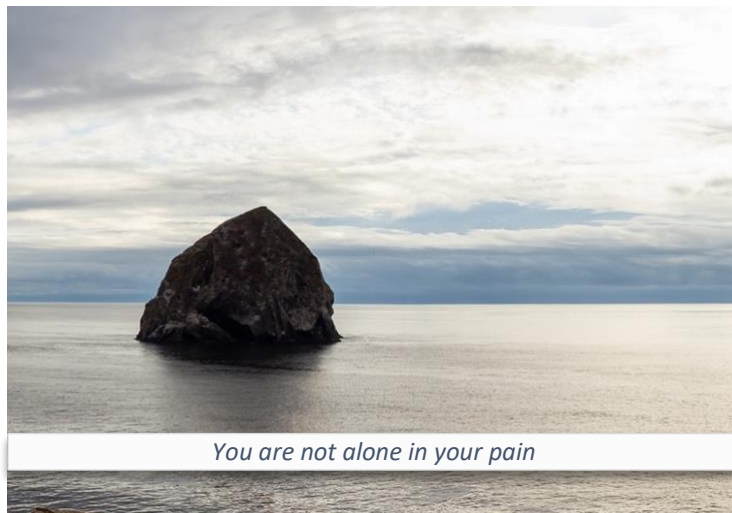
[00:16:03] I have been going through a thing with my back pain lately, but, I read a book, and it went right out of my mind. Oh, Rolly, you know the name of the book we all talked about.

[00:16:14] **Rolly:** Yeah, that was ***The Way Out***.

[00:16:16] **Mo:** Yeah. *The Way Out*. And that got me going in the right direction again. And I **learned some new things**. And I really encourage you to study. We have a resource list. I encourage people to go on Facebook and, search, pain science. Dr. Mosley. He's great. He has some wonderful things. And there is help for you out there. Don't think there's not . It's wonderful. And, and think about a time when your pain started, and were you having trauma at that time? And if you were, you know, there's so many things that you can do. And, I just gave you a few of the **things that helped me**.

About Pain Science Life Stories

Formed in 2018, the Oregon Pain Science Alliance (the Alliance) is an all-volunteer nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation. Our members come from the health care community, their patients, and others who follow pain science research. We seek to share current information on how pain experiences are formed in the brain and influenced by biological, psychological, and/or social factors, along with practices we have found helpful and consistent with pain science concepts.



The PainScienceLifeStories.com website provides access to our video archive featuring community member's and clinician's stories

describing their journey to embrace the insights of pain science research, and how their practices changed. Also included are links to other pain science explanations and practices we have found useful. We curate all archive resources with features to aid the user in finding answers to their questions.

The archive is not exclusive to stories we produce, so if you know of, or have a pain science life story, please use the contacts below to collaborate with us.

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