

## TRANSCRIPT 1008

‘Pain Science and How it Changed My Life ‘

February 9, 2022

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[00:10:00] I'm Mo Forrest. I'm 78 years old. I'm the treasurer of the Oregon Pain Science Alliance. I have had pain. You know, one thing I want to say up front, I have had **16 surgeries**. I was on like 18 different meds and, I'm on just a few now. And, about half of them is, vitamins minerals, but no opioids anymore. As far as the surgeries, I will say what I did always to help me. And I agree. I think some of them could have been avoided, but, take the knee replacements. I **wouldn't say any negative words**. I wouldn't let anybody tell me how it hurt them. And I would just think over and over again, how good it was gonna feel, and the machine they put me in to move my leg, that was gonna be so comforting. And, when I had the surgery, they said, well, you don't have to have that at night. And I go, no, no, leave it. I like it. And so that really helped me, preparing my mind, like the doctor said for the surgeries.

[00:11:04] I had **childhood trauma**. I decided not to go into any of the details of it because I don't wanna trigger anyone, but just know that I had trauma. My dad was an abusive alcoholic, and I also saw the abuse of my mother. I was always so afraid of him. I would tell my mom that my bones shake. When I was seven years old, my uncle, my mother's brother was a Catholic priest. And he came and he asked her, he says, why don't you leave? And she said, well, because divorce is a sin. And he said, no, God don't want you to live like that. And, he says, I need a housekeeper. And I'm thinking that you can come and you can bring your kids. There was four of us. I think she needed that comfort, of being safe. So she gave us each a paper bag and said, put in, what is important to you, but I didn't wanna do that cuz I was so afraid that my dad would come home before we left.

[00:12:03] Things were better. I'd still have **dreams of my dad** that he would find us and hurt us. But living in the rectory was different. I'll tell you kind of a funny story of us, kids. We're first, second, third and seventh graders. And my seventh grade brother said that he wanted to teach us the smoke. So Saturday. And usually on Saturday we went to confession, but instead we're in the basement, lighting up cigarettes. My mom had asked if we need to go confession. Oh no, no, we're okay. So then she, pretty soon she opened the door and she says you've been smoking. You get to confession. Well, that was hard because he also the one that dealt out the punishment. So, we went and we confessed and then we were waiting for him to come tell us. He never spanked us, but it was, you know, extra work or, or couldn't do something, but he didn't say a word to us. And my older brother says, oh, he can't tell anything he heard in the confession. Well, after that, if we did something wrong, we just went and confessed it. We wouldn't get in trouble.

[00:13:09] My dad died when I was **12 years old** and, that in a lot of ways, that was a relief for me. I didn't have the dreams of him finding us and harming us anymore. When I was 14, I had bad pain. Last two years of my, eighth grade, I was sick a lot and had pain. My mom having been abused and her trauma I always felt very, very protective of her. And I always, tried to hide my pain from her.

[00:13:37] But, one day, I was **hurting real bad**, and just, me and my brother Larry were home. And, my mom was gone with the neighbor lady. And, I was hurting so bad, and I went to bed, and my brother got concerned and went and got the neighbor guy. And he came over and then he went and called the doctor. And those days they come to the house. And he said, he didn't know what was wrong with me, but definitely was not my appendix.

[00:14:02] So my mom took me to a different doctor and I could not relax and let him examine me. So they decided they would put me out for that. But my, blood count was so far off, they exploratory surgery. So that tells you how long ago? No CAT scans. So nothing wrong with my female organs. And they decided to look at **my appendix**, and he had estimated that my appendix had been ruptured for two months. I had gangrene, and peritonitis had set in. At 14 and I laid in the hospital bed, and I could hear all these people outside the room saying, she should be dead. She should be dead. And all this stress of this surgery and hearing that, I thought I was supposed to be dead. And that was a real trauma for me. And I got to where I, wouldn't talk to anyone, but, my brother Larry got really upset about that.

[00:15:03] I say I'm reading my notes. So, how did I go on for the two months with a **ruptured appendix?** I know that I missed a lot of school and everything. Matter of fact, I even picked strawberries for three of those days, but I think it was because of hiding pain

from my mother. That was very important to me and, that surgery and everything that went through that was another trauma in itself to me.

[00:15:32] My mom later, opened a boarding house and I had my family around me and a lot of people. So I was doing pretty good. But I had a lot of responsibilities, cuz **my mom** was always sick and in and out of the hospital. So I learned to cook very young, doing wash. I'll tell you one thing about doing a wash. I watched a TV show that, said the sister would charge her brothers to iron the jeans. And I thought, man, that's a good idea, but my brothers didn't think it was a good idea.

[00:16:05] I got married at 19, and I was alone at night. My husband worked second shift and then third shift and I started having **really bad pain**. I mean to the point where I couldn't move. And the doctor, he didn't know what to do for me, but he sent me to a psychiatrist. And, after working with her for a while, she says, I think your pain at night is because that's when your dad would come home. And I thought, boy, that's it. That's when he would come home.

[00:16:37] But I had absolutely no help. I didn't know what to do about it; no help, how to get rid of that **chronic pain**. So I just figured that's my life. My life was to be in pain. And about, I don't know, eight or so years ago, I was, like in my late 60s, 70. My son took a class taught by Lianne Dyche called Acceptance, Commitment, and Therapy. And he said it was a very good class and he recommended that I take it. So I did. And it was a very good class.

[00:17:14] About that time, the Lebanon hospital had started a class called **MMAPS**, movement and pain science. And, Lianne suggested that I take it, so I did take it, and it was real good. I can tell you that, after that, my life changed. I become a much happier person. My son even said that I was an complete person, and one of the things that really helped me was the **Pain Triangle**. And they would put the triangle up on the board, and they would have us say what our sensations were, and what our thoughts were, and what our emotions were.

[00:17:52] And, like the fire triangle. I learned, if I could remove one of those, I could get rid of the pain. I also learned how the brain works, and that trauma can cause pain. So doing my analysis, I thought, well, if chronic pain or neuroplastic pain is when there's **no tissue damage**, then it's up to me. I've got to practice what I'm learning.

[00:18:19] I, knew that **trauma** would cause the pain. And I had to go back and think about when was the trauma, and what started this? And, examine what I was doing. I'd learned so much during that, **deep breathing** and mindfulness at the same time. Breathe

through my nose and down into my belly and back out and to feel the air coming in and out to have my mind on my breathing.

[00:18:44] It's probably one of the most relaxing things that you can do. And Dr. Cuccaro has said it's one of the most helpful things that we could do. And you do the **mindfulness** at the same time. Me and my son were coming home from Corvallis, and the engine light went on, and I thought, oh no, I don't have the money to pay for repairs and blah, blah.

[00:19:04] And I thought, okay, Maureen, you know what to do. So I started deep breathing and got myself all calmed down, and we went into the **dealer in Albany**, and they took the car in. Pretty soon he come back out, and he said he had to replace a certain part. I thought, oh yeah, great more money. And he says, and there's no charge. And I thought, oh my goodness, does that deep breathing work!

[00:19:27] And, also I practice it. I think the **mindfulness**, is one of the most important things, too. I like the expression to keep your mind where your body is. Studies have said that mindfulness is people that practice it are very helpful. If you're doing something, even if it's a job, you don't like, keep your mind on what you're doing. It's, very helpful.

[00:19:49] In Walmart, I was hurting so bad. I thought I called my son to come and get me, but I thought, no, no, you know what to do. And so I start noticing all, everything around me, the colors, blue, yellow, a lot of that in Walmart. And I was able to finish my shopping and check myself out. And I learned not to **perceive**, not to perceive if I do blah, blah, it's gonna hurt.

[00:20:13] Pacing was another thing that helped me a lot. I could stand like maybe two minutes, and my back would just start hurting really bad. That's one of the surgeries I thought I didn't need. Anyway, so I, learned that okay, once it starts hurting, just sit a minute. They would say **go to it**, not through it. If you just keep pushing and then you're hurting for several days, but just relax and sit a minute, and then get up and do it again. And it got to where it could stand a long time and hardly sit. And when I did sit it's, very little, not very long at all.

[00:20:50] So, how did I apply all this to the trauma that I had had, as a kid? With my mom, I think I got a trauma from her because I was so protective of her. And I, in my mind always thought that I was like her, that I was gonna be paying. I would actually think how old she was at **different phases**. And I would, think how old I was and how long that was until that was my fate.

[00:21:17] When **my mom died**, she had severe you know, the shaking, the word's out of my head and, only her face moved. And the doctor said the rest of her body was dead.

And as I look back, I think if pain science was known in practice back then, her life would've been completely different.

[00:21:37] As my knowledge of it has completely **changed my life** So I was thinking I had to have pain. I was my mom's daughter. And so I telling my brain, putting that thought in there real strong, "pain" and the brain doing what it's supposed to do would send out the notice.

[00:21:54] So I would deep breathe, and I would feel the breath coming, in through my nose and out through my mouth. And at the same time, I would tell myself, I am not my mom. I'm an individual, I'm a separate person. **I am not my mom.** I'm healthy, and I'm strong, and I'm an individual. And I'd say that over and over again. And it takes a while. I call it reprogramming my brain. So as time went by and me doing that, the thought in my brain that it was supposed to be pain was not very strong anymore. The main thought in my brain was that I was okay. I was strong and healthy.

[00:22:34] And so my dad, I was doing the same thing. **When night came**, I just would hurt so bad. And, I started thinking about the night and I start doing the deep breathing and telling myself that nighttime was a really good time. It was quiet. Everything slows down. It's so peaceful at night. And what is outside is the same thing that's out there during the day. And it's just a good time. And I was able to completely take away my fear at night. I even hated to have to go out in the car at night. And my pain at night completely stopped.

[00:23:12] You can tell, by the way I explain the way it works, that I'm **not a medical trained** person. And what's good for me, what helped me, may not help you. We're all different. I really encourage you to continue coming to our meetings. Give us your email so we can send you notices. We have eight of them a year and I'm losing my throat and I took a, excuse me, I take a drink here.

[00:23:40] I'm sorry. come listening to our self care stories. Resource list that we have is very good. One thing that I would do is I would, search, pain science and search, meditation. The pain science videos that **Dr. Moseley** are just wonderful. He explains how he got into studying pain and how our brain works with pain, from his own experience. One time him not feeling any pain and one time being knocked down from the same incident with a lot of pain. But watch it. You'll like it it's really good.

[00:24:14] I have slips, of course I do, you know, and I know what to do. I learned things to do. One thing that helps me a lot is the **movement**. I got to where I could go two miles, maybe not right now, because I've been very good in the last several months. But if you can just go a few feet, do that, and then you go a little further, a little further. I

know somebody that couldn't breathe, when they walked and they figured out what their trauma was and what they were doing, and they now run five miles. I have neuropathy. I have numb legs, and I had a stroke that affected my balance. So if you see me kind of wobbly, that's it. I'm working on it.

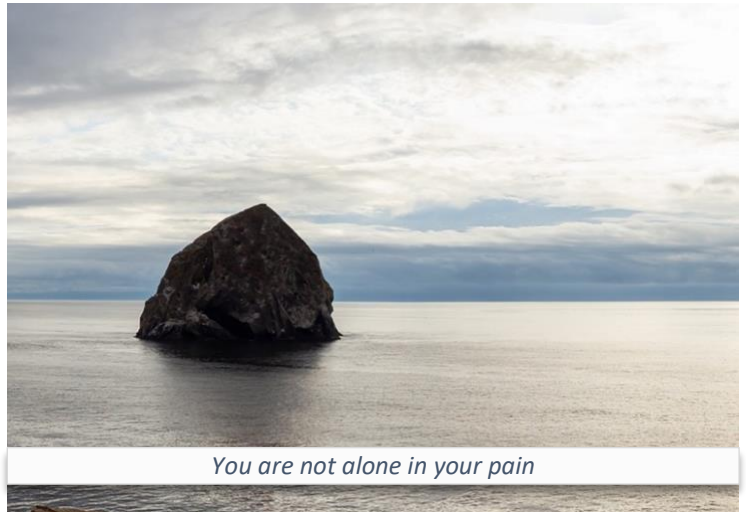
[00:24:54] One thing I did that was very helpful is I **forgave my dad**. I was asked how in the world could I have done that? But as an adult and looking at my family and, the alcoholism in my family and the stress and the anxiety in the family. We have a lot of dyslexia, attention deficit, which caused a lot of stress when you're young. Like me in school, they put me in a class, they actually called remedial. If you can believe it. And my sophomore year, I was starting to put together how I learned. And, they said that was a big mistake. I went to college, and I got a four point in accounting. Now, if you think I'm bragging, I am because I never thought that I would ever accomplish anything like that. And I did.

[00:25:42] So I realized that my family, that lot of the members were **self medicating** with alcohol. And I got thinking that that's what my dad was doing. I remember him sitting at the tables with his beer and saying he hated it more than anything in the world. And he loved it more than anything in the world. I knew that he suffered, that our problems were inherited from him. And my mom had always said that we should love him, that he was sick. She always held that love for him, but I could never understand how she could say that after everything that he had done. But you know what? She was right. And I did learn to forgive him and to love him. I am so glad to be here tonight. And I'm, so glad that everybody that has come, I wish you all the very best and take care of yourselves and be safe. Thank you.

# 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. Through community education events, health care workers describe how pain-science-based practices have changed their interaction with and care for patients, and patients tell stories about their experience with learned pain science tools used to help master chronic pain. We can now share these collected and curated stories, and other unique features, through the Alliance “story website” launched in early fall of 2022.



## How to get involved?

Do new Pain Science insights and practices resonate with you?

We welcome anyone interested in collaborating to find or produce good stories and insights, then curating them to display on our website. Sharing in our discoveries and making them broadly available is both personally positive, and mutually satisfying.

The phone number or email address below will get you more information about us; then use the website link to the Member page for the steps to become an Alliance member, if that makes sense to you.

If you have a story using pain science tools and practices, and would like to share it with the larger community through our website, please send us an email. We would love to hear from you.

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