



Journaling

Chronic Conditions Have Emotional Roots

Chronic conditions are typically emotional in nature. Emotions begin as thoughts and experiences, which then “land” in the muscular and the internal organ systems within the body. Over time, these emotions become part of our DNA structure, which means that as cells naturally replicate, they hold the memory of the current events within the body. So, if you experience chronic pain due to emotions, the new cells will have the same emotional foundation. Our goal is to resolve the old memories of your cellular structure.

Acupuncture is a great way to balance emotions. Every acupuncture pathway in the body relates to tendons, muscles, bones, ligaments, internal organs, AND emotions. As we work on chronic long-term health problems it is typical for old emotions to surface. Over time, your cells will regenerate with the NEW patterns we create through acupuncture treatment.



Your Brain Files Your Thoughts

At the end of the day, when it's time to go to sleep, do you ever catch yourself with 100 million thoughts going through your head? Do you find that it is hard to turn your brain off?

When you go to bed at night your brain is supposed to shut down and go to sleep so your body can heal. Many patients who experience an overactive brain also have chronic pain conditions such as neck pain, shoulder pain, jaw clenching, headaches, and low back pain. When your mind is overthinking, your muscles naturally tighten up. This is how your body memorizes stress, which then leads to chronic pain.



I Something New—You Should Too

Several years ago I had a chronic health condition. My body was overwhelmed with hives. No matter what I did, I could not resolve them. I tried to change my diet, get more sleep, "be less stressed", anti-inflammatory medications, anti-itch medications, etc. Nothing helped.

An idea came to me. I had a lot on my mind. The more I thought about what was going through my head, the more my hives reacted. I had to do something. That's when I discovered "Brain Dump Journaling." I spent an entire summer sitting on my back porch, watching the sunset and literally "dumping" everything that was going through my mind. I wasn't writing beautiful life stories for my kids to read someday in a formal journal. I used the cheapest back-to-school notebooks I had in the house and I just dumped.

I wrote down everything I was thinking. Often it was in the form of bullets and lists of all the things I was thinking of.

Here's What I Learned:

- When I went to bed at night, my mind wasn't filled with all of the worries from my day. Instead it was empty.
- The worries were still available if I needed to pick them up the next day.
- The BEST part: my body began to heal.

Additional Journaling Ideas

1. This is a new kind of journaling. Remember, I'm not asking you to sit and write your whole life story. Instead, I just want you to "brain dump." When your mind is full of thoughts, fears, anxieties, to-do lists, etc, your body has a clever way of filing all of these thoughts into your body to "save for later".
2. You can trick your brain by filing all of your thoughts onto a piece of paper. This practice is especially helpful for those with anxiety and fear, or those who go to bed at night and just can't turn off their thoughts in order to go to sleep.
3. Learn to ask your body questions. What is bothering me? What am I afraid of? What am I worried about? What is on my mind? Write it all down. I find that a general topic, followed by a bunch of bullet points is a good way to dump quickly.
4. Don't be afraid to write down what you are afraid of. This is a really good exercise to help you recognize old emotions that are still lingering. Anger is another emotion that is great to write down.
5. Consider looking at OLD emotions with your new, mature eyes. A lot of old emotions were from times in our lives when we had less wisdom. Consider how you might want to look at that emotion now. Was any of it your responsibility? Have you grown? Is there someone you might reconsider forgiving?
6. Just allow the thoughts to flow. Your body is really wise. It will tell you what you need to work on to improve your health.



7. You may find that you gain inspiration through this process. If an idea comes, write it down and circle it. Perhaps tomorrow when you pick up your notebook again, you will start with that item and brainstorm.
8. Notebooks are REALLY cheap at back-to-school time. I suggest you buy a dozen of them and put them away.
9. When you are done with a notebook, feel free to drop it in the trash.
10. One final thing... If there is something you CAN do about what you are writing down, make a plan to do it. Write the answer, circle it, and do it. If you find that something which is bothering you has absolutely no solution at this time, I like to give that item a spot on the last page. On my last page I write: "Hand it over to God." You can hand it over to whatever source you want. The universe. The garbage, etc. Just hand it over to "something" besides your body.

BONUS: Additional Ways to Move Your Qi

In order to make your acupuncture treatment more effective, it is important that you take an active role in moving your qi. The goal of an acupuncture treatment is to move qi. When you are at home, you can HELP in the process.

As you create a plan to help me keep your qi moving, here are a few things to consider:

- **Thoughts are Qi.** Recognize what you are thinking about. If you have a lot of stress, go back to item #1 above and start making a huge list of your stressors. Having a tool to get these thoughts out of your body will help. I promise!
- **Breath moves Qi.** Mindful breathing is really helpful. There are a lot of really great meditations to help you breath more effectively. I suggest a FREE app called **Insight Timer**. Put it in your phone. It has meditations that will fit into the amount of time you have available, even if you only have 5 minutes! Go and explore. It has hundreds of creative options.
- **Blood moves Qi.** You don't have to do aggressive exercise, but a simple walk or stretch will do the trick. Move your body. If you sit for long periods of time at a desk, get up and move. Get others to move with you. Tell the that you are doing homework from your acupuncturist.

I'm excited to see how much wisdom your body shares with you through journaling. Using this technique to release emotions will help me help you BETTER as we work through your acupuncture series.

Be Well,

