

# Episode 10: Pain is Our Teacher

Jodi: Welcome this morning, and thank you for joining me at ConneXions Classroom Podcast. I'm Jodi Hildebrandt. Today is June 18th 2016, and we are going to talk about the concept of pain and what its purpose is.

But before we go there, I would like to let you know that over the last months we have developed a classroom called ConneXions Academy, and I'd like to invite all of you who are interested in hands-on learning these principles. Maybe you're brand new to ConneXions Podcast, maybe you've been listening for some time. If you are interested in joining me live either online or in person, go to [www.connexionsclassroom.com](http://www.connexionsclassroom.com) and click go to the Academy; it's the very first page that you come to at ConneXions Classroom. And that will bring up a list of dates, times, and locations where I will be live teaching all of these principles, from all the podcasts. I think right now we have 70 of them. All of those principles that are inside the podcasts, we're teaching in a classroom setting.

We go through and start teaching, from the very foundation—we start teaching about distorted thoughts, false beliefs, boundaries, forgiveness, compassion, surrender, drama. All these principles that you've been learning about are actually in a 12-week course that runs either Tuesday or Wednesday in the evenings or Saturdays during the day time.

Those are all Mountain Standard Times, so depending on where you're listening from around the world, I am broadcasting live from Utah, and so we're on Mountain Standard time.

So, if you are interested in being a part of this classroom, this academy, I invite you to go and get signed up for the academy, it's quite an experience. And like I said, we have people from all over the world that join us online. And so, there's no one that's precluded from being able to come and participate in that.

If you are not interested in coming to the academy, go ahead and get on the ConneXions Classroom website and sign up for the newsletter, and when you do that, you'll put in your email and we will send you information and videos, things that we keep creating, so that you can stay part of the ConneXions family. We just really appreciate your support, and so much I appreciate your willingness to pass this information along. We have many, many thousands of listeners because of you. We have done zero advertising other than our listeners have spread this word to their friends and family because they find it very helpful for them. And so, I want

to thank you from our heart to your heart for being willing to share this information because it's so powerful for you.

## **Pain**

Alright, so let's talk about this concept, this construct of pain. Pain, P-A-I-N. Pain. What in the world is the purpose of pain? So, I want to start from the very beginning which is at all of our entry points into the earth, which is when we were born. So, all of us were born, and when that experience happened, maybe you felt pain as you were being born, but you probably don't remember it—or maybe some of you do.

However, within the first handful of hours of you entering the earth, and being born into the earth you experienced pain. So, whether it was from a slap on your backside to get you to cry when you were born, or the pain of hunger, or the discomfort of some kind of bodily system that wasn't working quite right, or whether you felt the discomfort that comes from needing comfort, or validation, or warmth, or closeness. All of us experienced pain as though it was some kind of rite of passage when we entered into this world.

So, we all are in the same boat if you will, where pain is familiar to all of us. There isn't a person on the planet that hasn't experienced discomfort or pain in their life. And for all us, it came at a very, very young age.

### **[00:05:35] Pain's Purpose**

So, what is pain's purpose? What is pain here to teach us? Why is it there? Why is it a part of our lives? And what is its motive? I want to pose some more questions to you because a lot of people, as I work with them in coaching, they talk about pain as though it's some kind of bad entity. And so, I just want to pose some questions to you, and I want you to think about them.

- Can pain be seen as helpful, like a teacher?
- Can pain be seen as appropriate or even loving and necessary for us to experience?
- Is pain always bad? Is pain always something that is just a nuisance and something we want to avoid?
- What if all pain, all discomfort, all unpleasantness, any other word that you would use to describe your ill-fated relationship with pain—what if that was there to educate and instruct you?

- What if pain wasn't deemed good or bad, or right or wrong, but supportive and necessary for your betterment and your emotional growth and maturity?

Think about that. I don't know about you, but I'm not a huge fan of being uncomfortable or having pain. And there's lots of different ways that we can talk about pain. Pain from an ingrown toe nail—so a physical pain—emotional pain, spiritual pain, financial pain, social pain. There's all sorts of different presentations of pain.

And so, what if those presentations were actually there as a place of support and necessary for your maturation?

I'm going to say a bold statement. Ready? Here's what I believe: pain, any kind of pain, all of it, every part of it, any experience, situation that engenders it, pain is all for you, for your behalf, and has the power to refine you, and define you, and empower you, and create balance, centeredness and connection in you.

You might want to rewind that and listen to that again.

Every part of pain, any experience or situation that creates it, that invites it, it's all for your betterment, to give you the power to sculpt you into a being where there's centeredness and connection.

Pain could be, if you're willing and wise, and that's the key here, this is all about choice. You remember I'm a big fan of choice. So, pain could be, if you're open to that, the catalyst, your catalyst to validate your own pain and others' pain, like experiences and outcomes of choices made.

So, I make a choice, somebody else makes a choice, and the consequence is pain. The outcome is pain.

If I'm willing, and I'm open, and I'm wise, that pain, that outcome to my choice that creates pain, could be something that teaches me—if I'm willing.

I have thought of four different areas where pain, the experience of pain, can support you. And you're going to keep hearing me use could and can because that suggests that you have choice. We're going to talk about that later on in the podcast, but I want you to realize is that you always have choice. So, pain isn't going to force you, pain just invites you.

Here's the first way that pain can support you. When you feel pain, pain has the ability or the capacity to be a driver for us as humans to make right what I perceived was wrong. So, this

discomfort can invite me into a choice point where I try to rectify something that I felt was wrong.

For example, when I feel pain, when I feel like something was unfair or not just, I could move towards changing laws, I could be the president of a foundation, I could create a movement where I advocate for victims, all sorts of stuff. I could search for cures for the ailments of the body and the soul, like cancer, or doing research for diabetes, or trying to find a solution for MS, or blood diseases, or depression, or anxiety, or schizophrenia, Alzheimer's. It can move me to create all these different ways that I can create change.

Number two, pain can move us to have incredible empathy, or compassion, or validation for myself and others, for someone else's loss or someone else's sadness, and feel a really strong connection to them because of the discomfort that they feel is so familiar to me. It's like, I get it, I totally get it. So, my discomfort, my pain can invite me into connecting with another human being because I understand where they are, because I've been there myself.

For example, I was sitting in this kind of like a warehouse and a little lizard walked in, and I saw the lizard, it walked in and it started moving towards the wall, and I don't think it realized there was no way to get out, and it kept crawling along the wall trying to figure out a way to get out. And I felt a lot of compassion and empathy for it because it didn't know how to exit where it had entered.

Now, I could see how it could get out, but it didn't know how to do that. And so, I felt this amazing amount of empathy and compassion for this little guy because I could see—and who knows if lizards can feel anything—but the lizard did look distressed, it kept running along the wall trying to find a way to exit.

So, I felt some compassion and I thought you know what, I'm aware of that, I've had those kinds of discomforts in my life where I get into a situation and I don't know how to get out, and I'm running up and down the wall figuratively trying to find an exit point, and I'd really appreciate if someone would direct me towards the exit. So, I felt some feelings for that little guy.

Number three, pain can teach us how to repent and forgive—when my relationships share with me the pain that I have perpetrated on them. So, when I show up in a relationship and I have been inappropriate inside that relationship, and I have perpetrated dishonesty, and irresponsibility, and secrets, and lies, and aggression, and selfishness on my relationships, I have created pain. And when I'm willing to feel the consequences or the outcomes that my choices have created, and allow that pain to enter my soul and my heart, it has the power to

invite me to change, to humble myself, to repent fully, and connect again with God, myself, and the other person.

So, pain is a catalyst in that situation if I will allow it to invite me to humble and change my behavior.

The fourth way that pain supports us: pain tells me about loss, about grief, disappointment, sadness, loneliness. Pain comes when I feel like I'm out of control. Pain comes when I feel like something's not right, or something's amiss, or something's off, or inappropriate, or there's danger around, or I need to stop what it is that I'm doing, or it's a warning.

For example, this weekend I was making a bunch of phone calls and my phone broke, and I'd just bought this phone at the beginning of the year, it's only six months old, and I think you all know how expensive phones are, and I felt pain. I still do feel pain because I had created over the last eight, nine years a whole list of phone contacts, and all of my contacts were lost. My phone won't turn on, I don't know how to fix it, and so all those contacts are stuck in that phone, and I don't know how to access them, and I have felt pain all weekend. People will text me and I'll say, "I don't know who this is, I lost my contacts." And they'll comment, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I feel for you." They feel that number two where they feel empathy, they have the ability to feel compassion and empathy, and validate my situation because either they've had the same experience or they've known somebody else who's had a similar experience. So, they can feel my pain and go, "Oh, I'm so sorry."

I want to make an analogy here. Pain, the construct of pain, is like the cries of a child in this way. When a child cries, it means different things, and so when I feel pain, pain can alert me to different things and it means different things. Pain can be very direct, such as my bone is broken, and if my bone is broken and I try to stand on my leg, it is going to hurt like the Dickens, and so I won't be able to stand on it because the pain is so intense. There's like a continuum when I feel something really intense all the way down to something that is more subtle.

So, it's giving me a message from subtleness to intensity. The subtleness can be really hard to detect. However, when pain is direct, it feels like a heartthrob, it's demanding, it demands our awareness.

As I ask you these questions and I pose these different positions of pain, what do you think of pain now? Can you appreciate how pain can help you see? Can you appreciate that pain could be an ally, a friend, a comrade in life, to alert you in all of your experiences and all of

your relationships, in all of your opportunities, and circumstances—it can give you information about your human body and your spirit, and the human spirit and body of others?

For example, if someone says, “I’m in physical pain,” then because I’ve had physical pain, I know how to connect with that person. I have a friend of mine who actually broke three of his toes. He was doing a pirouette and as he spun around on his toes, his first three little toes broke in half. He had to have pins in his foot because it wasn’t a fracture, it was like a break.

Anytime I would think of his foot, I would feel such empathy and pain for him because I couldn’t imagine those little tiny bones breaking in half. He’s kind of a big guy, he’s like 6’2” or 6’3”, and when he went up on his toes and tried to spin around, his toes were just not strong enough to hold his weight. And so, I felt pain for him, and so because I know what my body feels like when I have pain, I can connect to someone else who has bodily pain.

My hope is that you’re realizing that pain is not good or bad, that good and bad are words that are way too simplistic, because pain has the ability—pain can, if you’re willing—mature you, sophisticate you, rebuild you, and remold you.

Pain is one of the most powerful energies that all of us experience, and most of us run from it. We avoid it, we deny it. We hide from it. We drug it. We try to dodge it. Because we don’t understand—emotionally, spiritually, physically—we don’t understand the healing power of pain.

My guess is that if we did, chances are you would invite pain into your life and sit down and have it teach you.

Pain has an assortment of meanings. If you want to relate to pain with wisdom, The Truth, and humility, you must be willing to experience the ways we as humans interface with pain. And then, allow pain to sit there in you, and learn from it.

What I mean by that is it’s not just about sit down with pain and just let it sit there and hurt, it’s more about asking questions.

## **[00:21:50] Learning from Pain**

Here’s what learning from pain looks like. You ask a question that says what does this pain mean? How can I better manage this pain?

Another question: I want to wring all the wisdom out of this experience, so what more do I need to experience? And I will do my best at understanding this pain. So, you’re asking questions that say, “What does this mean? Why is it here? What am I to learn from it?” And

you're trying to stay as open as possible, because here's the thing: even though you have pain, like you're hurting around something, like my phone is broken, so I'm feeling pain around that. But I could still have the experience of feeling the pain, and the loss, and the disappointment around my phone, and then try to hide, or deny, or blame it away somehow, so that I try to minimize or lessen that pain.

But the Truth is, it doesn't go away; my phone is still broken. And so, me trying to hide from it, me trying to deny that it's really present, all it does is create more pain, because the phone is still broken, and so now not only do I have a broken phone, but now I have all the lies and the minimization of lying about it.

In order to learn from pain, you can also make statements to yourself of affirmations. This is a way that you'll allow pain to sit there and teach you. So, you could say things such as, "I'm being instructed to have compassion for myself." Or I might say, "I can do this. I can do this. I can hold this pain." Or I could say to the pain, "Help me see and understand the gems that are in this incredibly uncomfortable experience, and teach me what I can learn from it." Or you could say, "I accept and surrender this pain, and I will be responsible for what I can actually do to change. Help me bear this pain with compassion, and empathy, and love. Wake me up to becoming conscious, to be present in my own and others' lives."

So, any kind of statement of empowerment that says the pain's here, I can't control it, I'm going to let go of what's not mine, I'm going to do all that I can to manage it—not control it—but manage it, and then I'm going to let go of the rest.

Someone once said, and this is a great, great quote, "Not expecting pain in your life is like expecting a bull not to charge because you're a vegetarian." I think that is so funny. "Not expecting pain in your life is like expecting a bull not to charge because you are a vegetarian."

That pretty much sums it up. Stop trying to control pain, and let's learn how to recognize it and interact with it in consciousness, in wisdom, and in Truth. When I use the word Truth, remember I'm talking about be honest, be responsible, that's what Truth is. Honesty, responsibility, and humility—Truth.

So, instead of trying to control it, let's understand it, have wisdom around it, and live in Truth around it.

One of the most common ways pain shows up in our lives is by our own doing. Now, that's kind of provocative. Like, I'm creating much of my pain? Yes, you are. Now, don't turn me off. I just want you to listen to what I have to say and see if there's not some Truth in this.

It's absolutely by our own choice, and usually unconsciousness, that pain presents itself to us as an option—it's an option for us to choose it. We have experiences which are inevitable—we can't stop experience from happening—and then in those experiences that are inevitable, we choose to distort the Reality, we choose to distort the experience, we choose unconsciously or consciously to exit the Reality of the experience, and enter into distortion and denial. This outcome of those choices to distort Reality will always produce pain. Always produce pain.

So, what I'm saying is, is that experience is inevitable, and distortion is optional. So, when my phone broke, if I would have gone into a place where I started blaming, or started getting aggressive, or went into the phone company and slammed my phone on the counter and said, "Fix this, this is not fair, I just bought this and I can't believe it broke." And got really aggressive. Or if I went into a place of self-denigration that said, "These things always happen to me. I don't mean anything. This is evidence that my worth is less than others." Any kind of distortion around the experience.

Because the experience was this: I was using my phone and I noticed that it started heating up, and it got really hot in my hand, and then it kicked off. That was it. That was it. there wasn't any big dramatic experience, it heated up like it had an electrical issue, and then it kicked off. That was it. That was the whole experience. There was no distortion in that.

So, I had pain around that experience because I lost my contacts. However, if I start going into self-denigration or self-adulation around the experience, then I'm going to produce more pain.

So, remember, pain—every type of pain—can be a teacher. Even this optional kind of pain—this optional pain that says, "I'm going to distort the storyline." That kind of pain can teach you as well, because it invites you to look at yourself and your situation, and be honest and take accountability for your choices that you've made.

So, this kind of pain can invite you to be vulnerable and seek for validation.

It can drive you to seek for the Truth, the Reality of the experience, so that you can enter back into clarity or Truth.

So, if I go into distortion around an experience, the pain of the distortion, the pain of the denial, the pain of the lies, the pain of the secrets, can teach me that I don't want to stay there and I can change.

So, it can drive you back to find the Truth, the Reality, and enter back into the clarity of Truth. Or your experience that you distorted, and this experience that you aren't willing to seek the Truth around, you can continue to misinterpret, you can continue to believe your distorted thoughts, you can continue to go in denial and stay stuck. You can sit in lies and false storylines that you and others have created because you are desperately trying to cover, or hide, or control your pain. Does that make sense? Think about that.

So, I can either go into distortion and then feel the discomfort of the distortion and let it drive me back into the Truth. Or I can stay in the distortion and keep misinterpreting the experience, and stay in denial, and stay stuck, and keep telling myself a false storyline, and attempt to hide from the pain of 1) the story, the experience, and 2) the pain that now I am additionally creating because of all the lies and the distorted thoughts that I'm telling myself.

And so, what this unnecessary pain creates is drama. If you choose to distort experiences, you will live in a space of drama, and you will continually be in pain. Isn't that sad? It's so unnecessary, but that's where you'll go, because drama is the behavioral outcome of distorted thinking.

And so, I'll be caught in a mess of distorted thoughts, of my own creation. This type of pain, even though it is still optional can teach you daily, hourly, if and when you are willing to be open and humble, and be taught to see clearly. If you're willing to be honest and take responsibility, it's your choice always, but please know that the pain you are experiencing is not bad, so even these distorted thoughts, it's not bad, it's just painful because it's full of things that are not the Truth.

And so, in this kind of pain, you will be being taught. The whole point of the pain is trying to teach you to come back into the present, but it is your arrogance, your pride, your unwillingness, your denial, that's the direct cause for pain's presence. You have opened the door to it and you have invited it into your bedroom, so don't bellyache about it being there if you aren't willing to slam the door on it and get honest and get responsible about what it's doing—what you're doing—because there is pain that is optional and there's pain that's inevitable, and the optional pain is always about me choosing to distort the Reality.

So, I want to go down another angle here. I want to talk about the word can. I keep using that word can or could like you can, or it can. I use that word can because the very nature of pain doesn't just teach you what it wants you to know; you always have a choice in this matter. Pain is there as an opportunity for all of us to learn from. Every presentation of it. If we choose, then the pain that we feel can be a catalyst for change.

I keep saying pain can invite you or pain can teach you, but you have to choose it. You have to choose to accept it. Now, when I have physical pain, there really isn't any way to get around that. I have it, but I guess I could drug it away, I guess I could use pills or alcohol or something to take the pain away, but the Truth is that if body is having pain, then something's wrong. And so, if I just drug myself it doesn't take away the fact that still there's something wrong.

So, I get to choose how I'm going to respond to this experience of pain. I get to choose: am I going to engage it? So, pain is there as an opportunity for all of us to learn from every presentation of it.

Choice is always the catalyst for change. Choosing—your ability to choose—is always the thing that must come first in order for you to change. And we don't just choose one time, we have the opportunity to choose over, and over, and over, and over again. We're all given an opportunity to make any choice we want, yet whatever we choose we will have a corresponding consequence attached to it. So, don't be alarmed or surprised, be wise as to what you're choosing.

For example, when I saw you get to choose again, and again, and again, and again, I don't just make one choice and say, "Okay, I'll accept the fact that my phone's broken and that's it." Because the next minute, I may not be okay with the fact that my phone's broken and I might start going into blaming. So, I have to keep using this ability of choice to keep holding myself in a centered spot.

So, when you experience pain in your life, which you will, which you do, interact with it in Truth. Now, remember, Truth is honesty, responsibility, and humility. So, interact with pain and Truth. Be very cautious not to react to it, but respond. Be deliberate and conscious. Ask lots of questions about the pain—like, speak with those who have wisdom or a history of managing pain maturely. Stay open, that this pain is not here to harm you or injure you; rather, the pain is here to awaken you and invite you into the present, into being present, into being in Reality.

Pain is there so that you can connect to what it's trying to teach you, so don't go into distortions about it.

Here's an example of pain. Last night, my nephew, his name's Jordan, and he was helping me with a project, and I had hired somebody online, somebody that lives in another country, and we gave him a task to follow through with, and he presented the task to Jordan and said,

“I’m done.” Jordan looked through it, and just scanned it and said it, “Looks good.” And then, paid him the money.

And then, as he looked at it more closely, he realized that there was a handful of errors, and so Jordan started feeling pain, started feeling pain like, uh oh, he didn’t do this very thoroughly and I just ended up paying him. And so, he felt pain, and so when I got home, Jordan was telling me about it, and he was feeling pain about what he had done. And then, I started feeling pain because it’s like wow, you paid him without thoroughly looking through the project, and so now I have the pain of paying somebody that wasn’t thorough about their commitment of completing this task.

And so, both of us were feeling some level of pain and discomfort. Jordan was willing to take responsibility and be honest, and he said, “You know what? I will contact him through email and ask if he will correct the things that he didn’t do the first time.” We’re just hoping that he will do that to be honest, like he’ll be honest, he’ll be responsible. And if he doesn’t choose to do that, I will need to let go of the inability to control the situation and just experience the pain, and be willing to surrender the outcome, because that’s what’s presenting. The outcome is, we have an incomplete project, and the man’s already been paid. That’s just the reality of it. I may not be able to control that. So, feel the pain of it, learn from it, don’t pay somebody until you thoroughly look at the project, so that we can avoid this particular experience of pain in the future.

So, that’s what learning from pain can look like.

So, if you feel—and you will—if you feel rejected, lonely, sad, abandoned, fearful, any kind of emotion that’s really uncomfortable that you would say causes pain, pause, just pause, and become aware that your soul cannot be abandoned or rejected, your soul. Your body can. Someone can reject your body, but your spirit cannot be rejected.

I know those feelings, and they are very real, the feelings of loneliness and sadness, and abandonment. Those feelings are really real, and the Truth is, you as a spirit cannot be rejected and abandoned. So, that feeling of pain, it is real, however there’s a distortion attached to it because feelings don’t equate to Reality. Just because I feel something doesn’t mean it is the Truth. So, go to someone and get validated and heard. Talk to somebody so they can understand where you’re at and validate those emotions, and help you reframe the experience that feels so uncomfortable and painful.

So, when you experience pain, when you experience fear, when you feel the pain of being impulsive, the pain of being entitled, the pain of being angry, vindictive, the pain of loss and

grief, when you feel the pain that your boundaries are crossed, when you feel the pain of isolation or gossip, or someone else's judgements—I mean, there's a thousand-million ways to feel pain. When you feel those things, I'm going to introduce you to a five-step process that you can use to help yourself ameliorate, to lessen, to minimize, to accept and surrender the pain that you're experiencing, and keep it in the Truth.

## **[00:41:14] The Five-Step Process**

So, the first step: think. Think, think, think. Get curious, become thoughtful, like what is happening here, and if you can't figure it out then get someone on the phone, or go over to someone else's house and say, "I need help. I need help thinking through this. I don't understand what's happening. Can you help me frame this experience back into the Truth?"

Number two, you must be honest about what the experience is and was. You need to be willing to tell yourself the honest Truth, the facts about what happened or what is happening, and if you cannot do that, you need help. So, either you ask yourself to do it or you get ahold of somebody else who can help you with that.

Number three, once you identify the facts and the Truth, you must learn how to take responsibility and account for your part in the Truthfulness of that experience. So, if you're in a bad relationship, and someone is being emotionally abusive, you have to take responsibility for the fact that you keep putting yourself in the relationship to be abused. At a minimum, you've got to own at least that. There's probably other things that are your responsibility.

Now, I'm not suggesting you're to blame, we're not talking about blame. We're just talking about what you can do to be responsible for the outcomes that you are experiencing, because if you're an adult, you do have responsibility here.

Number four, be willing to see the Truth and let go of control. So, what that means is, when you see the Truth of what's happening, the Truth doesn't have any control in it, but when you're in distortion, the whole outcome of distortion is all about trying to control things.

So, when you see the Truth, you will have to follow the Truth, which means you'll have to let go of trying to control stuff. If that doesn't make any sense, then listen to the surrender podcast (episode 11), and also listen to some other podcasts that I've done on control.

Number five, be willing to feel the pain of the surrender. Surrender that pain, basically the pain of you trying to control things. When you let go of that control, it is going to hurt. So, pain is there trying to teach you that you're trying to control something that you're not supposed to. It's not appropriate for you to do that.

So, that is a five-step process of how you can recognize and move yourself through painful experiences.

1.1. Think; get curious.

2.2. Get honest. Tell yourself the Truth.

3.3. Be responsible for the fact that you have told yourself the Truth.

4.4. Be willing to see the Truth, and let go of control.

5.5. Be willing to feel the pain of the surrender—you need to let go of the control and surrender.

Pain is wisdom. Pain is wisdom if you are willing to be a humble student, if you are willing to be a humble pupil and allow yourself to be taught by a master hand called pain.

[ENDS]