

## **Working with Pain and Difficulty Resources**

Pain is an intrinsic part of being born in a physical body, as the Buddha has taught. In reality, aging and sickness begin the moment we enter the world. Yet we are conditioned to ward off all pain. We are unwilling to allow the pain simply to happen. There are some important and challenging questions relating to physical pain and our bodies.

Here are some articles that shed light on this subject:

### **Pain as Teacher: Listening for its Message, Meaning and Opportunity**

**Naturopathic Doctors News and Review**

**Dr. Paul Epstein**

<http://ndnr.com/pain-medicine/pain-as-teacher/>

### **Pain Without Suffering**

**Tricycle**

**Ezra Bayda, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Darlene Cohen, and Gavin Harrison**

<http://www.tricycle.com/onpractice/pain-without-suffering?page=0,1>

### **Working with Pain**

**Tricycle**

**Gavin Harrison**

<http://www.tricycle.com/practice/working-pain>

### **Lotus in the Fire**

**Tricycle**

**An Interview with Gavin Harrison**

<http://www.tricycle.com/feature/lotus-fire>

### **Two Kinds of Suffering**

**Tricycle**

**Phillip Moffitt**

<http://www.tricycle.com/web-exclusive/weekly-teaching/the-suffering-that-leads-end-suffering-april-15th-2009>

# **Meditation/Contemplation on Working with Pain and Difficulty**

## **Dr. Paul Epstein**

Pain and difficulties are learning opportunities. Here's a basic exploration exercise for getting in touch with what is troubling you and opening to it with wisdom and compassion that I often include in the workshops and classes I conduct.

1. Find a time when you have nothing you have to do and when you won't be rushed or interrupted.
2. Sit in a quiet space in a relaxed position. You may wish to close your eyes.
3. Tune in to the rhythm of your breath, being aware of each in breath and each out breath.
4. Notice the body relaxing and the mind becoming calm.
5. Allow yourself to be open and receptive.
6. Begin to ask yourself a few questions, and patiently listening for the response from your inner wisdom.

### **Suggested Questions:**

If my symptom/issue/pain has a meaning and a message what might that be?

Have I suffered by my reaction and response to it? What have I added?

Is it asking me to let go of something? Can I accept the things I cannot change?

Is there an opportunity and lesson in this situation? Where's the healing?

Ask one question at a time. Don't rush from question to question. Don't judge the answer. Know that you may get different answers at different times when you do the exercise.

7. When you have asked all the questions you wish send compassion to your difficulty and to yourself. Imagine opening your heart to receive and welcome your wounded parts and the burdens they carry. Embrace them with mercy and awareness by gently and slowly repeating the following phrases (or use your own meaningful phrases)

I care about my difficulty

I welcome my difficulty into my heart of compassion

I accept you, my difficulty, just as you are with unconditional friendliness

May I have courage and be free from fear

May I be peaceful with what is happening

May I be free from suffering

8. Repeat the phrases above as often as you wish.
9. Slowly open your eyes and gently move your body.
10. Take a minute to feel what change, if any, this exercise has brought about in your physical and mental perceptions of the pain or difficulty you were working with.

## **Dr. Paul Epstein**

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*“One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light,  
but by making the darkness conscious.”*

*~ Carl Jung*