



DRPAWLUK **PAIN** **SOLUTION** **SUMMIT**

Dr. Pawluk: This is Dr. Pawluk. This interview for the Pain Solution Summit is about spirituality. I originally came up with this title for this particular segment because I had heard from people over the years who I've talked to about pain who questioned their spirituality. So the title says, Does God Really Hate You? God must hate me to give me this problem of my chronic pain. We know that that's not right. And to help us to resolve this issue or to delve into this issue, we have Dr. Christina Bjorndal who is a naturopath. She's a wonderful person, a wonderful doctor, and a very lovely person to bring onto our interview stage from her home. And she's got this brilliant light behind her. You see that light? Brilliant. It's wonderful. It's like the spirit talking to us. So thank you. Welcome Christina, if I can call you Christina, and let's start our discussion.

Christina: Thank you. It's great to be here. Thanks for having me.

Dr. Pawluk: It's my pleasure and hopefully the pleasure of everybody that's going to be listening and watching. So the question for the interview, again, the title question and there are others that will eventually evolve out of that. One question is does God really hate you for doing this to you?

Christina: Hopefully this will come as no surprise to people that the answer is no. You know, God does not hate you and I know that it can feel that way sometimes. You know, when we're going through some seemingly tough times and we can feel it can feel like God is against us. But that's just not the case. And we want to understand that everybody is born inherently good and kind. And what can happen through our lives is through the experiences that we have, whether we endure trauma, whether it's the big T trauma, like you know, abuse or neglect on a very difficult and severe levels or little T trauma, which is just accidents and things like losing your job and just the daily stuff that life throws at you. We can get a bit jaded and we can lose our way a little bit in this connection with God. But really what we want to understand is God is always calling us to close this gap between this side of ourselves that might become a bit bitter and a bit angry and a bit upset and moving towards love and compassion and back to connection with yourself ultimately, and then ultimately back to connection with God. But at the end of the day, God doesn't hate anybody. So I hope we can put that one at rest for people.

Dr. Pawluk: Yeah. I think I to also share as part of that is it God does not hate you, but God doesn't get angry at you. And firstly, my belief system is God does not even judge you. We do a great job of judging ourselves. This is right, right?

Christina: Yeah. I mean, no one, you know, the reality is no one is going to judge you more harshly than you judge yourself. And a lot of us walk around in fear that people are going to judge us and we're concerned about the judgments of others or we're concerned about



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

perhaps the judgment of from God. But at the end of the day, God is love and there is nothing but love and compassion there for you. And this judgment is usually self-judgment. And the criticism that we think is happening in our heads is, and that we think is happening, that other people are thinking perhaps about us. It's not, it's not there, it's coming from within us. So that's what needs to be looked at.

Dr. Pawluk: Well, we use the word God, right? And I know that there are probably a lot of people who might be watching these interviews who don't like that word, right? Who may be adverse to the word, So we don't have to use the word God. You could substitute whatever you want for that term. What are some of the terms that you would substitute for the word God?

Christina: So God, Creator, Universe Maker. I've heard some female versions of that. We were talking to you earlier mentioning that my husband is first nation. So this term, you know, the creator is one that I hear a lot in that culture. Mother Earth, Gaia, I mean, there's all kinds of different words. I think I like to just simply use love as the word, and remember it's just a word. So, if you're triggered by that word, that's also something that needs to perhaps be looked at within you. I know some different faiths can be challenging for people. And then there's some people who have been almost perhaps scarred by their experiences, to ultimately understand that that's not God's doing, that's man's interpretation. And ultimately coming back to this word that, the Universe or again, whatever word floats your boat, just pick a word that floats your boat for you, but you can feel good about. That's the most important thing. Don't get hung up on the semantics.

Dr. Pawluk: Let's compromise and we might offend some people for compromising. Let's compromise and let's use the word the Creator.

Christina: Sure.

Dr. Pawluk: Well, there is no feminine version of Creator. I suppose there is a feminine version of God as we say Goddess right? I had never heard a word Creator-ess.

Christina: No, I haven't heard that one.

Dr. Pawluk: We use it a lot, somebody will say, well, that it should be Creator-ess. Okay, whatever.

Christina: Let's just keep it neutral.

New Speaker: I like your idea that God is love and the absence of God is the absence of love is?



DRPAWLUK **PAIN** **SOLUTION** **SUMMIT**

- Christina: Well, some people could say emptiness. You know the absence of love is emptiness or loneliness or isolation. Some people might say hate, but that's the opposite of love. That's not the absence of love. So you know, in my mind the absence of love is emptiness.
- Dr. Pawluk: And can there really be absence?
- Christina: I am going to say no, because God is or the Creator is always loving you. It's just that we may not always be looking in that direction. Perhaps there's a, yeah, there's this poem that so just for the listeners is to understand my sort of journey here. I had a lot of mental, emotional pain and I've struggled a lot with mostly my mental health and I had a suicide attempt a long time ago now, 1994, but it left me in a coma with kidney failure and I was on dialysis and I was told that I would need a kidney transplant. And when I was recovering from that suicide attempt, a colleague of mine brought me this poem on a bookmark that I have here still all these years later. And it's the footprints poem.
- Christina: And basically the gist of the poem is this: man is talking to God and saying that, you said you would always be there for me. You would always be walking beside me. You'd always be supporting me in my life and my journey. And when I look back on my life, during my darkest times, I only see one set of footprints in the sand. Where were you, God, what's going on? You said you would be walking beside me because most of my life I see these two sets of footprints in the sand and then God says, it was at that time, I've always loved you. And it was at that time, during those darkest days, the reason you see only one set of footprints was because it was then that I carried you.
- Christina: The Creator is always with you. So I found that very powerful for me. So powerful that I still have the bookmark all these years later and all these travels and I've moved lots of times in the last 25 years. It was significant to remember that.
- Dr. Pawluk: Well, and you're still sharing it with us.
- Christina: Yes. Yes.
- Dr. Pawluk: As I'm sure you have shared it with many, many people.
- Christina: I haven't brought that poem up, surprisingly enough. It's just when I was preparing and thinking about this Summit and this interview I was going to do with you it was one of the questions that you had asked me. It reminded me of that poem. And so I thought, oh yeah, I'm going to bring that up, I'm going to mention that. And sure enough, I went looking in my drawer and it was still there. I still have the bookmark. I kept that.



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

- Dr. Pawluk: You might want to consider buying a bunch and giving them out to people in their darkest times. Right?
- Christina: Yeah, that's right.
- Dr. Pawluk: And as a naturopath, as a doctor, you see a lot of people who would need that kind of help as well.
- Christina: I do. Yeah. And I'm working mostly with people who have a lot of mental, emotional turmoil or pain; depression and severe struggles; anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia. Those are the types of people or the conditions that I am working with primarily.
- Dr. Pawluk: Good. And there's going to be very apropos of what we're dealing with today, which is chronic pain. And chronic pain is not just pain. Chronic pain is pain at many levels, but we're talking about physical pain most of the time; neurologically perceived pain, but any physical pain is always accompanied by other kinds of pain. Other aspects of pain. So, you know, it's emotional pain, it's spiritual pain. It's cognitive pain, cognitive dissonance, the list goes on and on about the different kinds of "pains" we say somebody who's a pain to you that we have to sometimes be very careful about the term, the words we use. If somebody is going to be a pain for you, your subconscious may say, well, you want pain, you're so preoccupied about calling somebody else saying they're pain for you, then you may be inviting pain for yourself; for you to be able to have that experience. I would like to get to another question related to this. So we cleared up the idea of what we might name a Creator. Then let's talk about the spiritual role of pain. What is your idea about what the spiritual role of pain is? Whatever the pain might be.
- Christina: I think for me, one of the main spiritual roles of pain is for you to turn to the present moment and to really look at these aspects of your life, all aspects of your life, and to figure out maybe what is the source and what is the root of this? And if, because a lot of times, especially with chronic pain, there is this emotional piece that you've mentioned or this cognitive piece that you're at war with yourself. And what happens through our life is we don't often have the right container or opportunity or time to process difficult emotions. And these difficult emotions can be frustration or anger or betrayal or self-abandonment. And so because we don't process them, we end up stuffing it within us or we swallow it or we just don't want to look at it.
- Christina: And eventually it's like when the body says no, eventually this pain signal can get louder and louder and stronger and stronger until it's calling our attention. And I know for myself, I know I look at my suicide attempt really was a spiritual crisis or the spiritual



DRPAWLUK **PAIN** **SOLUTION** **SUMMIT**

turning point for me because up until that point I was at war with myself and there's another friend gave me a book to read when I was recovering from that and by Marianne Williamson in the book is called A Return to Love. And there's a quote in that book on surrender. And the quote goes, surrender is not about breaking out of anything. It's a gentle melting into who we really are. So we let down our armor or we take off the mask and we discover that all God needs is one sincere surrendered moment when love matters more than anything and nothing else really matters at all.

Christina: And so the key light bulb moment for me in that reading that passage was this word love. Like, I certainly didn't love and accept myself and as soon as I got that diagnosis of bipolar disorder type one, what I did with that is I shoved at deep down dark into a dark spot within myself that I dare not look. And I just continued marching through the world wearing this overachieving mask that, you know what, I've got it all together and meanwhile I'm struggling on the inside, but I did not want to let anybody know because I've got it all together. Thank you very much. Right? And you know, eventually these things need to be looked at. And so Dr. Gabor Mate has a great book called When the Body Says No, and you know, he's sort of reframed physical pain as this call for attention, this call for checking in with yourself; what is there underlying this that needs to be looked at? So that's what I think is one of the spiritual with chronic pain is, what is the body trying to talk to you about? Or what is the body trying to release that needs releasing that you haven't been able to process completely

Dr. Pawluk: And pain in different parts of the body have those kinds of meanings as well. Right? A pain in the neck?

Christina: Yeah.

Dr. Pawluk: What's a pain in the neck?

Christina: Right. So you want to be asking, you can be asking what is it that you're carrying there that you're not willing to look at. Is there a weight that you're holding? Is there something that you're, a lot of times we're carrying things from when we were in our childhood and so we've been carrying this for 20, 30, 40 years and we just need to set it down. We just need to set it down and I think move into it with the breath and allow whatever that signal is to give it some attention, some compassion, some love.

Dr. Pawluk: The same applies to any pains anywhere in the body. So if you have a pain in your neck, is it because somebody else is a pain in the neck? That's a term. It's a term that people use frequently. So and so was a pain in the neck. You could also say so-and-so is a pain in the derrière.



DRPAWLUK **PAIN** **SOLUTION** **SUMMIT**

- Christina: That's a thought that just popped into my mind.
- Dr. Pawluk: When you deal with this person and you feel more tight, you feel more pain, then again, it's a signal.
- Christina: Yeah. But also you might want to understand that that person that you think is a pain in the neck or pain in and wherever for you, is there a mirror for you for what you may not be willing to look at within yourself? Ultimately, it's not necessarily about the other person. It's about the disowned aspects within your own self that you're not willing to look at. So that's another sort of flip on that is what are these, because a lot of times we're projecting onto other people these aspects that we don't want to look at ourselves.
- Dr. Pawluk: That's key. It's a projection.
- Christina: Yeah.
- Dr. Pawluk: And so rather than sort of blaming that this other person's causing my pain, they are in your circle and a circle is whole. It's a complete circle. So you're both in that circle. It never stops, never stops. It never ends. So we have to break that circle if we want it to stop. But you can't just break it, can't just smash it. You have to resolve why you're both in that circle.
- Christina: That's right. Yeah. That was a hard one for me to learn this mirror concepts. I had a hard time with that at first, but you know, the more that I've worked with it, the more that I keep asking that question to myself. What is it, Chris, that you're not willing to look at? Or is there something within you that you're not willing to look at? Especially when I'm feeling triggered or I think somebody is a pain in the neck, you know? Thankfully I'm not there as often as I used to be, but it's all here for your growth ultimately is also an important spiritual lesson too.
- Dr. Pawluk: So hate, fear, pain, all the opposite of basically love, peace, no pain go in a sentence. Pain is a call for love.
- Christina: That's right. That's right. Yeah. And actually that's what that was going to be. The title I've written a book called Beyond the Label, 10 Steps to Improve Your Mental Health with naturopathic medicine. And when I was coming up with the title, one of the working titles I came up with was A Call for Love because I feel like that is a piece, a key piece. I know for myself it really wasn't until I learned how to love and accept these dark parts of myself that I clearly did not love and accept, especially the labels that I have been given. It wasn't until I did shine that light of love on these aspects of myself that I



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

feel that I've moved into the most healthiest space that I have moved into in the last 10 to 15 years of my life.

Christina: I really do feel that a lot of illness is a call for love. I'm not in the counselor realm, but I mean obviously we encounter people who we all know, somebody who's dealing with cancer. And a lot of times hopefully cancer can just be that a wakeup call, right? It call for love for somebody. And I think that we really want to understand that there's four aspects to us as people. It's not just about the physical level. So we are complex beings and we have the, yes, there's the physical side, but there's also the mental, the emotional, and I think the spiritual side. And I think if you're really going to get to true healing or we're going to adjust people's health in that circle way, like a holistic way, we have to look at all four aspects and be open to the idea that the root issue could lie in one of those four areas. It's not just always about the physical level. So that's a really important message for people to hear.

Dr. Pawluk: And the spiritual is always there. The spirit. What comes first? The spirit comes first. And the spirit goes last.

Christina: I always say to people, I teach this aspect of this technique of working with your thoughts. It's called the seven R's of working with problematic thoughts on breaking the thought emotion cycle. And when I talk in the seminars basically just if people are interested, that first you want to recognize what you're thinking, refrain from following it, and then relax into the breath and then resolve to repeat the process. Then we want to rephrase. What we recognize is the fifth R reflects is the sixth and reward is the seventh, but this relaxation piece, which is basically the breathing aspect, I say to people, what's the first thing when a baby's born, what does the first thing that doctors are concerned about is not their first heartbeat, right? It's the first breath. And then what about at the end of someone's life?

Christina: What are we concerned about? We never hear about, oh, they took their last heartbeat. No, we hear about if they had their last breath. But somewhere between the first and the last, we forget how to breathe properly, right? We're all breathing with the top little bits of our lungs. But our lungs go all the way down to our diaphragm. And when we fully engage that diaphragm, what's lying? What's sitting right underneath it? On top of our adrenal glands is on top of our kidneys is our adrenal glands and it's our adrenal glands that can respond with hormones. One of them being cortisol in response to these thoughts that we're thinking. So there's this field of research called psycho-neuro immunology, which is just a fancy word for your thoughts can affect how you feel.

Christina: I struggled with this concept for a long time because I felt like people, if you said to me hey Chris change your thoughts change your life I probably would have rolled my eyes at



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

you and walked out of the room because I thought that you were implying that I was intentionally causing my depression with the thoughts that I was thinking. But the reality was I had very little self-awareness about what was going on in my head. I just was really immersed in it. That's what depression does to you. And I know the cloud descends upon you and it's hard to see your way through it. So I have really learned to not be at the mercy of my mind anymore by managing this thought piece. But a key piece of this, as I've gone off on this tangent, so I apologize, is understanding the role that the breath plays. And so our soul or our spirit, I mean, what's the difference between me and you and a cadaver? Right? It's life force. It's this breath, it's the soul, it's the spirit. And that's the difference between life and death. And so the soul and habits, I believe the body and that is just everyone seems to be just disconnected from having these types of conversations. But I think it's really, really important that we're having--

Dr. Pawluk: They are often disconnected for other reasons too. Because often what people do, and I have to be cognizant of this and aware of this myself all the time, is I don't want to lock somebody into my thoughts system, right. Or my belief system. We want to keep this as open as possible and you have to recognize your belief system. But you know, as you said, people don't really know what their own belief system is and the only way you find out what your belief system is to talk about your belief system with somebody else's belief system. That's the mirror. And even maybe the same religion and we may go to the same church. We are still different. We still have a different belief system because of our life experiences, because of our genetics, because of our families and so on. So, not all Catholics are the same Catholic, exactly the same. It's not like a cup coming off an assembly line. It's almost always exactly the same as the one before it or the one after. We're nowhere near like that.

Christina: No, I mean we are all and I use this word and we're all programmed by the people who raise us. We're programmed by society, by teachers, by friends, by colleagues, by the environment. And I don't necessarily mean programmed in a bad way. I just want people to understand that at some point you want to stop and pause and say, you know, does this really fit for me? It's kind of like, you know, trying on a pair of shoes. You might walk in them for a while and then you realize, I've got a bunion grow in there, so I'm going to change my shoes. So, it might be the same with your form of spirituality. I find for myself when we're sitting in that clinician's chair, we have to be a blank slate that we're not there to promote our whatever our viewpoints may be. We're there to be a guide for them and to lead them back to themselves ultimately.

Dr. Pawluk: Not to be perceived as being judgmental.



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

Christina: That's right. But it's interesting. I've had patients who will ask me and actually my husband, people will say, well, are you this religion or that religion? And if we're not, they won't see us because we're not of that same faith. And that's fine. You know, that's their prerogative. It's interesting, it comes down to, I think we just want to be aware of the judgment, right? We do want to be aware of the judgment

Dr. Pawluk: Judgment is a prison.

Christina: Well, people get quite locked into their beliefs. And this is why we have wars. This is why we have these big problems, right? If you look over the course of history, a lot of these challenges have been in the name of very fixed and rigid beliefs. I think that we want to, I think whatever you're fixed in something like really hard and not, there's not a lot of pliability or flexibility. You, the ego is involved and we want to, I think, take a look at that.

Dr. Pawluk: And we may be able to make the leap of thinking that if you have a lot of arthritis in your body, then is that person likely to be rigid? They're asking for rigidity. Their joints don't want to move. They're kind of locked in a sense. That's one aspect of that self-talk. You know, I can't stand this. So what do you do? You break an ankle. Or again, I don't want to let go. You're going to have tendinitis. You're going to have arthritis. Your spine is going to get locked up, right. Pain. Your pain is going to do what you were asking it to do.

Christina: That's right. That's right. Yeah. And it's interesting when you have that insight, right, as a clinician, if you can bring that kind of insight and ask those very gentle questions to people. Some people want to just accept that their arthritis is because perhaps that they have an inflammatory diet and just give me some omega threes and turmeric and off I go and that's it. That's all I need. And I, you know, I think in some cases and most cases there's, again, there's these other layers, other levels that we need to be looking at, sort of peeling that onion, so to speak.

Dr. Pawluk: Go back to the point you made before about spirit. You know, it's down to the physical, spiritual, emotional or cognitive, emotional and physical, right mind, body, spirit, et cetera. So we bring in stuff as spirits and we can get to get to some difficult spiritual thoughts here about where we come from.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Dr. Pawluk: And whether we have other journeys outside this body and what are we, a body with a soul or a soul with a body. But even as spirits, we bring in a design pattern to work on. So in a sense, it's like playing chess or playing gin rummy or playing checkers. We decide



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

this is the game, right? And then we play the game. So we can, we transcend the game. Can we ever stop playing that game and play a different game?

Christina: Yes. One of the things I like to educate people about if, again, if depending on if they're open minded or not around this idea of this concept of soul contracts. But before I do, I do want to just, I want to reframe what you, how you just, so I just want people to understand in a sense, and this is maybe just getting hung up on semantics, but the spirit is the center then the emotional than the mental, than the physical. We're going to do it right that way. With this idea of the game perhaps or the lessons that we come to learn on a spiritual level. So, a lot happened for me in that hospital room where I had a lot of time to contemplate when I was recovering from the suicide attempt and I was on dialysis for a while.

Christina: And anyway there was a book I read by Colin Tipping called Radical Forgiveness and actually Colin Tipping just passed away this year. It's also illustrated in a children's book by Neil Donald Walsh called Little Soul in the Sun. So basically, the idea behind this, and this is what has helped me understand why my suicide attempt did not work because even my nephrologist said to me that I should not be here. You know I mean he was just stunned. He even said to me, you to me are a miracle. At that point, I was still somewhat in the throes of depression, so I wasn't really too receptive to that because I was still feeling pretty angry that the ER doctor, did extraordinary measures to save my life and happened to be the only ER doctor in the lower mainland of Vancouver that knew this particular technique.

Christina: So anyway, here I am still, despite my best efforts and the explanation I have for that is this idea of soul contracts. So basically as a soul, and you can take this or leave it, you know, if anything I'm saying doesn't resonate just leave it. Then just like I said, it's not like you're trying on a pair of shoes, doesn't feel like it's the right fit. Then just try on another pair of shoes. But for myself, my interpretation of this is as a soul, we talk with God about what is it that we want to learn in this lifetime, and we decide that we want to learn forgiveness on a deep level. So the Creator may say to you, well, are you sure? Like you're going to have to go through some really difficult things.

Christina: You may have to lose a child or you may have to endure a loved one being murdered, I mean really horrific stuff. And the soul is like, yes, I am up for this. Then we inhabit the body and we forget that we make this contract and we go through our life and we wonder, you know, why we're getting hit on the head by the pebble, and then the rock and then the boulder, and then the whole mountain has to come crumbling down before we get the lesson. And so for myself, what I feel that perhaps I have succumbed to suicide in a previous life as a soul, and that my journey in this life is simply to learn how to love and accept myself and others. And that if I succumb to suicide in this



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

lifetime, because I have tried three times and I'm still here and now I'm getting emotional, but because I feel that I'll just have to go through this again. I don't want to go through this again.

Christina: There has been a lot of pain and suffering already in the 52 and a half years that I've been on the planet. And you know, I have made that since 1994 that has been my sole mission. How do I figure out how to love not only myself, but accept and receive love from others? And not only, you know, I mean, so I was just about to say the Creator gave me a difficult condition. I'm going to rephrase that. That as a soul chose a difficult condition to love and accept, which is bipolar disorder type one. That's a tough condition. But you know, I want the message for people listening to this to understand that it is manageable and you can live a wonderful life if you follow, you know, I think that's follow some of the steps that I talk about and work with practitioners that can guide you to learn how to manage your mind so you're not at the mercy of it.

Christina: I think we're here in spiritual university. I don't really feel that we're here to, you know I'm sure some people think we're here to win Nobel prizes and discover cures for diseases and that kind of thing. And I think that's great too, to use your time wisely while you're here on the planet. But I also think what's the spiritual lessons that I'm here to learn? And so for me, it's as simple as that, love and accept myself and others because some people are really good at giving love, but they don't receive it. I know for myself, I've not been very good at giving it or receiving it. So I think ultimately it starts with you though. And, so the question does become, what are your soul contracts?

Dr. Pawluk: What is your soul contract? And Carolyn Myss, we talked about this before, the interview Myss, M Y S S wrote a book about this called Sacred Contracts and it's a great book. I recommended that people listen to her CD. If you can find, fortunately I have the first introduction I had to, this idea of soul contracts was through her CD and she's a great storyteller. So Carolyn, C A R O L Y N. Myss. M Y. S. S. I want to go back to a point we talked about earlier about love. And when it was said that pain is a call for love, whatever that level of pain is, whether it's emotional pain, physical pain, cognitive pain, whatever the role of the pain is, we say it's a call for love, but is it a call for somebody else to give you love?

Christina: No, I think it's a call for you to give you love. I mentioned self-abandonment earlier, right? There's a lot of ways that we fragment ourselves and so I think part of it is it's about, collecting all these pieces of ourselves that we lose along the way and then reclaiming that back into the whole. So if we come back to that visual of that circle and that if it was a smashed circle that some of these pieces have to be brought back together. So we really want to, I feel that one of the big mistakes, and I think probably why the divorce rate is so high, is that people are looking for love outside of themselves



DRPAWLUK **PAIN** **SOLUTION** **SUMMIT**

and they're looking for someone to complete them. There's this line in that movie, I think the movies Jerry Maguire.

Christina: Yeah. Jerry Maguire with Renee Zellweger and Tom Cruise. It was, I'm dating myself again, but there's a line of that movie that I can't stand, which is you complete me. One of them says to the other, and I'm thinking myself, no, that is so wrong. And so many women and men are looking for someone to complete them and fix them or make them whole. And ultimately it's you that you need to be working on yourself and bringing love to yourself first. That's my view. It's great if somebody can get, sure, if someone loves you, that's wonderful. Of course. Right? But love yourself first.

Dr. Pawluk: If you can't love yourself first, I believe that what happens is you're an empty just a black hole, an empty bucket that can never be filled. So you have to fill your own bucket first. And then you can not only not only be able to give love, but also receive love. If you're a black hole, it's just all going in and nothing's coming out the other side, then you're never going to fill that bucket.

Christina: Yeah. And I think one qualifying piece I want to make just to help a little bit here for women especially, I think this applies is a lot of times we become extremely depleted because we are giving, we're often the caretakers and men are too. So whoever's doing the caretaking, we want to recognize that you cannot be giving completely of yourself to everyone and nothing to yourself. Because then there is nothing. You are this empty shell and it's like that is that oxygen mask theory in the plane. Right? You need to put your oxygen mask on first before you're giving to others. And so really learning to set boundaries is important. I mean, we're not talking about loving yourself in this narcissistic capacity. That's not what we're talking about here. But we're talking about really honoring you know who you are and what makes you tick as a human being. But at the same time, recognizing that you can't give completely of yourself to the point where you're depleting yourself to exhaustion and causing illness. I see that a lot in practice. So that's just something I wanted to mention quickly.

Dr. Pawluk: So yeah, again, it's giving yourself a break, but it's also not just giving yourself a break. It's giving yourself a break with love and love has to be to recognize that it's in you. And what we've talked about in a previous interview is that you have to start with a thought of love for yourself. Build on that thought. So what you have, once you have an anchor that that becomes your anchor, you know without any doubt whatsoever that the Creator only loves you. That's inside you. So if you reject the Creator, then what are you doing?

Christina: Well, you're rejecting yourself.



DRPAWLUK **PAIN** **SOLUTION** **SUMMIT**

- Dr. Pawluk: Your brain doesn't love me. Well, if you are love, just because you're made. That's because you are just because you exist. You're already a creation of love.
- Christina: Yeah. And you know this. So I was telling you that I'm adopted. And so for a lot of my life I felt that I wasn't conceived out of love or that I wasn't wanted or that I wasn't good or worthy or you know, all these negative core beliefs. And ultimately, if anybody else is in that position, what I've come to understand is that life or the Creator loves you. You are here. It's not because you're, you know, in the case of adoption that someone didn't love you, They loved you so much that they wanted to give you up to have a better opportunity in your life and that it's life itself, that you are life itself and that can't be stopped. And so you are-- just understanding that life loves you and I just know for myself that I was really stuck in this mindset that well, because of that experience, this means that I'm not wanted or I'm not lovable.
- Christina: And that's something that I've had to reframe, shift my attitude around or my thought processes around that understanding that I am here because I'm a representation of life and love therefore of the Creator.
- Dr. Pawluk: So you can never be hated by the Creator. You can never be abandoned by the Creator. We do a lot of this to ourselves and we have a lot of people around us that are reinforcing these ideas that for ourselves or we accept those ideas from other people about ourselves. But what we're saying is we have tools. We have a way to be able to find this place in yourself where your job of healing your pain is not going to be complete unless you find that place and what you can do all of the procedures you want to do. You could do all the things you want to do to make yourself feel better so you don't feel the pain. But until you deal with the spiritual and the emotional aspects of this, you're not going to be rid of your pain.
- Christina: Yup. I think so.
- Dr. Pawluk: So why don't, we're just about at the end of our time. Why don't you give people some resources. We talked about some books. Let's give people some resources from things that you've done where people can look up more of your work.
- Christina: Yeah, I think there's so many, there's so many tools. The one tool to look up is and it's on my website, so I have two websites, but thenaturalterrain.com clinic website, there's resources. And so one of them on there it's the six R's of working with problematic thoughts. So I think I'm breaking the thought emotion cycle. So really getting people to start to question what are these thoughts that I'm thinking and learn to shift these core beliefs that might be running your life. That's been really, really, really important for me.



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

And a key piece of that is moving into the present moment, learning to be in the present moment because a lot of us are carrying the pain of the past into the present moment.

Christina: And a lot of times, again, this pain, this physical pain that we're experiencing is due to things from the past. And so always checking in with yourself in each moment where am I living right now? In my mind? Am I in the past, in the present or in the future? And when I asked that question of my patients, most of them say I'm there. They're living in the past or the future. And those two realities don't exist, right? The only thing that exists is the present moment and things that come up for you in the present moment. It's often something that is unresolved from the past usually. So starting with this compassionate learning to tune in to yourself, to get out of your head into the body, staying with your breath and just checking in. You know, when simple questions you can ask yourself, you know, when was the very first time I felt this, whatever it is that you're feeling in your body, connect that with an emotion.

Christina: So if you're feeling sadness or frustration or anger, see if you can connect to a memory of when that was the very first time you felt that way. Because that is usually the unresolved fragment that I was talking about earlier. And I would encourage people to work with somebody who is trained in a form of compassionate inquiry. The other tool for me that I have found really helpful in this self-love category is setting boundaries. So I'm a recovering people pleaser and I'm learning to recognize. So for me, it started by recognizing when I was saying yes, but I really meant no. Why was I not able to make that 'yes' a 'no'? And for a long time for me, I would recognize, okay, I'm saying yes, but I really mean no, but I'm not able to say no and that's this people pleasing part of me because I want people to like me and I've had to practice--this quote of Wayne Dyer's, which is other people's opinions of you is none of your business.

Christina: So when I first heard that quote, I must've said to my naturopathic doctor who taught it to me, you know, I said what? He had to say it at least 10 times I swear before I could hear it, because I was like, what do you mean it's totally my job to make so and so like me and if that's the case, you become a puppet on the string. So always remember that it's your opinion of you that matters most. I'm not saying to disregard the opinion of people that is important to you, but I want you to check in about, well what's your opinion here to that? That's got to have some merit and some value as well. So, setting boundaries has been a big key to my self-recovery and self-care. And then another tool here is, I mean I could go on probably for an hour, but I'll keep it with this, this next one to maybe two more.

Christina: But another one here is mirror work. So Louise Hay talks about mirror work, which is basically looking at yourself in the mirror and saying, I love you, Bill, to you, right? So I would say myself, I love you, Christina. And when I was given that as a homework



DRPAWLUK PAIN SOLUTION SUMMIT

assignment by one of my doctors or counselors over the years, I can tell you that that was very difficult for me. Very difficult. So pay attention to yourself. This is all information and learning. You yourself are a science experiment. You know, really just observe yourself and see, just get curious about yourself if you have. And even with the thoughts that people may be thinking, get curious about where's that thought coming from? You know, that's a real humdinger of a thought I just had there. I wonder where that came from but don't get so super attached to it, but just get curious about, huh, I wonder why I thought that, no judgment, just curiosity.

Christina: And then I think a final tool that has been life changing and really powerful in my life is learning to trust my own sense of spirit, intuition, God, grace, creator, whatever. Again, whatever word floats your boat, you know, within that lies within you. So tuning into this heart space for yourself and just learning to trust. There's a great quote by Joseph Campbell, which is the heart must usher the mind into the zone of revelation. So we're wanting to lead our lives from a heart centered place and use the mind to figure out sort of the steps along the way. Most people are doing it the other way around. As a result, a lot of people stay stuck in the egoic mind. We stay stuck in fear and indecision and inaction as a result of that. So, learning to build this muscle if you will, within you, is important.

Christina: So start with little questions like brown rice or quinoa tonight. You know, Brown pants or blue pants, like nothing earth shattering is going to happen if you serve your family chicken tonight versus beef, right? But learn to build the trust. So then when the hits come, right, like call your sister or turn left or don't take that drink, you'll learn to trust because God or the Creator is always talking to you. But the reality is most of us aren't listening. So the only way you're going to hear the voice of the Creator is by getting quiet, right? Most people are talking at God, do this, do that, fix this, fix that. Right? Right. But we're not sitting back and getting into that space in the present moment and listening. So that's a lot of things. But pick one of those things and start there.

Dr. Pawluk: Those are wonderful. And so again, your website.

Christina: Yes. So drchristinabjorndal.com. You'll have the spelling. So hopefully people, because it's a hard one to spell. It'll be on the interview list. And then there's also the clinic, which is where as mentioning those resources, if you go there's actually a link or a drop-down that says resources, and then you go to handouts. Then there's where the seven, the six R's and breaking the thought emotion cycle. The information about that is there. That's naturalterrain.com

Dr. Pawluk: The last thing I'm going to say, God is. Thank you all for being here. See you on the next program. Thank you again. Have a great day everybody.



DRPAWLUK
PAIN
SOLUTION
SUMMIT