

FREIGHT TRAIN, FREIGHT TRAIN...GOING SO FAST!

BY PHYLLIS EDWARDS

“Freight train, freight train...going so fast...” Remember that old song? The words to it popped into my mind – my busy, busy mind – as I was interviewing Cindy Fisher. Cindy, a Clinical Counsellor for nearly 25 years, has developed a series of CDs as part of her ‘RECLAIM Your Life From Pain’ program. One CD of this series is designed to “help slow down a racing mind”. It sounds like something I could use.

Many of my friends could use it too. The really creative ones share this affliction, especially at sleep-time. Just as we start to drift off, another idea pops up and jerks us back to a more conscious state, thereby interfering with REM sleep. Some exciting projects and inventions arise from these sleep interruptions, but it is not good for one’s overall health and it sure doesn’t feel too good when that early alarm clock rings.

I know I need more sleep, but Cindy tells me that I might be approaching the problem from the wrong angle, “Relaxation improves

sleep, reduces the negative impact of stress, and it creates a healing environment for your body. Sleep is a beneficial side effect of relaxation.” It sounds like a paradox. I thought that being relaxed during the day was a benefit of having had a good sleep the previous night. This idea requires me to shift my perception.

Here’s another mind-bender. “Pain is about perception and pain management is about everything but pain”, says Fisher. Has my perception been skewed all these years? How can pain management NOT be about, well, pain?

Cindy clarified by saying, “Pain management is never about one thing we could do differently, but about a number of

strategies put together. It’s like using several tools in your toolbox for a job, and maybe using different tools for different jobs. And when you use the right tools together, you get the job done.” In this case, what she means is that we can change our perception of pain.

Cindy developed the RECLAIM program to teach people coping strategies for taking their lives back from pain or illness and restoring a better quality to their lives. This shift away from having pain be the centre of one’s life is accomplished by internalizing a new way of looking at pain, a process called “re-framing”.

Cindy’s re-framing techniques also work with people suffering from emotional trauma, depression and anxiety. After a traumatic event, people can get stuck in a ‘looping pattern’, re-living the event whereby they subject themselves to re-traumatization. To break the pattern, Cindy helps her clients become aware of their thought patterns, while introducing ways to reduce the emotional charge. Emotional healing can proceed once the charge has been removed and the person has fully integrated their experience.

Cindy believes that people have solutions within themselves and that the role of the counsellor is to help them gain insight in order to find those solutions. Specific techniques provided in the RECLAIM CDs, like the guided imagery exercises for improved relaxation, can help with pain management. The “Freight Train” technique in the *Getting to Sleep* CD, is designed to quiet the mind.

With some practice using these techniques, maybe this busy mind of mine will finally let me get a good night’s sleep. And you? ~

Cindy can be reached at www.reclaimyourlifefrompain.com or telephone 250-248-2822.



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