



WHAT IS YOUR PAIN TRYING TO TELL YOU?

A reflective questionnaire for the journey from pain to peace

***“Pain is not the enemy.
It is a messenger asking to be heard.”***

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Before You Begin

If you're living with pain, you've likely been asked a hundred clinical questions about it: where, how bad, how often. This isn't one of those.

This is a different kind of question altogether — not what is wrong with you, but what might your pain be trying to communicate. In more than forty years of clinical practice, I have come to see pain not simply as a malfunction to eliminate, but as a signal carrying information about the whole person: body, emotion and spirit together.

This questionnaire won't diagnose anything, and it isn't a substitute for the medical care you're already receiving. It's simply a space to notice — honestly, without judgement — what your experience of pain actually looks like, beneath the symptom itself.

A note before you begin: You don't have to have answers. You don't have to perform recovery, or optimism, or gratitude. “I don't know” and “I'm scared” are both honest answers, and both belong here.



Even in stillness, nature keeps communicating.

Noticing Your Pain

The Physical Layer

Not a symptom diary — just a moment of honest noticing.

Where in your body does pain most often live? Has that location shifted or moved over time?

When is it loudest — what time of day, what circumstance, what season of your life?

What, if anything, have you noticed genuinely eases it — even briefly?

Medication and treatments are often hard-won — and if what you're currently using is giving you relief, that matters, and this isn't a question about whether you should change any of it. It's simply an invitation to notice: however things currently stand with your medication and treatment, would you like to feel more in charge of your pain overall — more choice, more say — rather than pain always seeming to hold the upper hand?

The Emotional Layer

Pain and emotion are rarely as separate as we're taught to believe.

What emotion tends to arrive alongside your pain — frustration, fear, grief, anger, or simply a flatness, an absence of joy that's hard to put into words?

Are you frustrated and fed up with yourself — quietly judging how hard it feels to stay emotionally afloat under pain that is sometimes chronic, sometimes acute, and always asking more of you than feels fair?

The Emotional Layer (continued)

Has pain ever gotten louder in moments that had nothing to do with your body — stress, an argument, a memory?

What does your pain stop you from feeling, doing, or saying, that you suspect you might actually want to?



The sky changes with the seasons — so does the body.

The Deeper Layer

If your pain could speak in words, what might it actually be trying to say?

If you gave your pain a voice for one honest sentence, what would it say?

What would need to change — not necessarily in your body, but in your life — for that voice to feel less urgent?

What would 'peace' with your pain actually feel like? Not necessarily its absence — but a different relationship with it.

Looking Forward

What is one small thing you are willing to try this week — not to fix the pain, but to listen to it differently?

Where to Go Next

You don't need to be ready for anything else today. If simply answering these honestly was enough, that is enough. There is no pressure here — only an open door, whenever or if you ever want to walk through it.

Have you ever quietly wished someone would sit with you — not to hand you another instruction, but to help you patiently work out what might actually help your particular pain? If so, you are far from alone. In more than forty years of clinical work, and in my own experience as a patient long before I was ever a practitioner, this is what nearly everyone I have sat with has ultimately wanted: not a quick fix, but real time and real attention, to understand what is actually going on — layer by layer.

If any of these questions stayed with you — if you sensed there was more beneath your answer than you had room to write — that's exactly the territory this next step is for.

From Pain to Peace is a course exploring chronic pain through mind, body and spirit together, drawing on Catherine's forty years of clinical experience and her own lived history of navigating pain and recovery.

Nature has always been part of this work — my first book, [UnRavel Dis-Ease Naturally: Season by Season](#), began this same conversation with the seasons around us.

Website: catherinearolt.com

Course: [From Pain to Peace — enroll here \[link\]](#)

This questionnaire is provided for educational and reflective purposes only. It is not a diagnostic tool, does not identify the cause of any pain, and is not a substitute for assessment, diagnosis or treatment from a qualified healthcare professional. If your pain is new, worsening, or accompanied by other symptoms of concern, please seek appropriate medical advice.

**With love,
Catherine**

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