

WILL POWER WARRIOR

Guide to Conquering Chronic Pain



*A book of skills, tools, resources and support
to finally take your life back from the grips
of chronic pain & suffering.*



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About the Author

Dr. Damon William, your *Chief Wellness Warrior*, provides *"holistic training and support to elevate your inner peace & profits."* As the founder of Will Power Wellness & Consulting, he merges his work as a consultant, educator, author, clinician and collaborator to bring health & wellness to the forefront. Damon has practiced as a Doctor of Physical Therapy since 2009, and specializes in healing the whole person, especially those battling chronic pain and Arthritis. He is a Manual Therapy Certified practitioner as well as a National Board-Certified Health & Wellness Coach. Dr. Damon serves in the community as a Certified American Red Cross CPR Instructor, Board Certified Tai Chi Instructor, Speaker & Panelist, and creator of programs that elevate health and happiness for the entire family, and public. He is creator and chief instructor of the *"Intro to Tai Chi for Rehabilitation & Fitness Professionals"* course amongst other premiere continuing education offerings. Dr. Damon is a 2-time graduate of Langston University, a published researcher, author, and educator. He's co-Founder of the nonprofit organization *Modern Manhood Foundation*. He's also a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, and (most importantly) a proud father.

Introduction:

Why I wrote this book for you...

I wrote this book for you because the old ways have failed you. The traditional system of throwing pain pills/opioids, needles, surgeries, and antidepressants at you to try and “fix your body” haven’t worked for you.

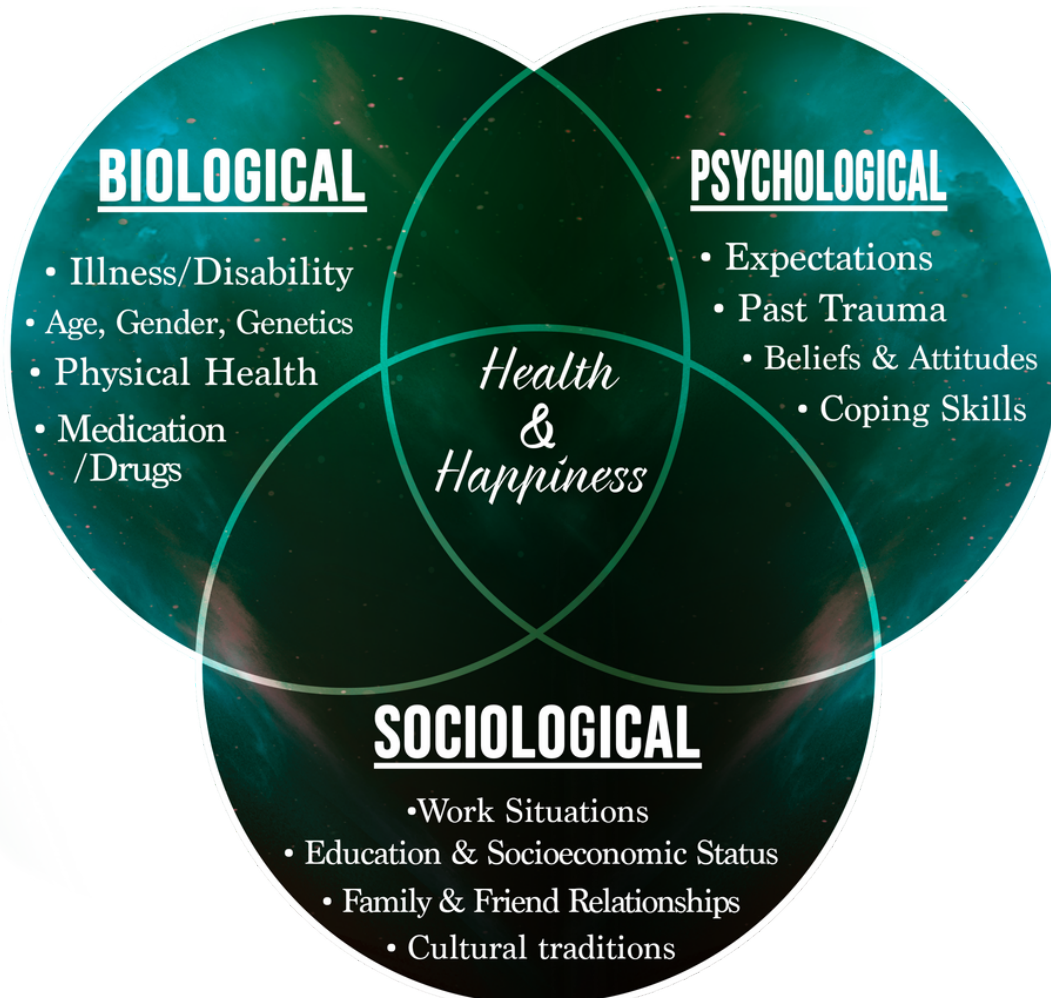
It’s time to take a different approach.

It is no longer enough that we help people simply mask their pain with a veil of pills and elixirs or a barrage of exercises and gadgets. As society becomes more knowledgeable and informed, we are realizing the risks aren’t worth the reward. And for many, there still is no reward, no significant relief of the pain and suffering. If you fall in that number, this book is for you. Just know, there are people out here, professionals and compassionate providers, who see your struggle and we want to help you live a life of health and happiness.

I've spent the past 12 years exploring the complexities of pain management and sharing the gift of relief with my therapy patients and coaching clients. My clinical experience has spanned hospitals, rehabs, outpatient clinics and beyond. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that everyone's experience with pain is as individual as they are. There is no one formula for eliminating one's suffering. There is no one pill, cream, laser, or surgery that "fixes" it.

Sure, there are protocols, and there are success stories, but how have these old methods served you up to this point? If they did, you likely wouldn't be reading this book. But here you are. And for that fact, I wrote this guide to help you. I believe we must take a personal approach to pain relief—just as the experience of pain is a personal one. No one else in the world feels what you feel. So how can we expect to understand and treat your pain exactly like we would the next person? We can't! And I won't! I know, I have all these questions, right? But you came looking for answers. So, let's explore together. We'll begin with understanding the Biopsychosocial Model (vs Biomedical Model).

Biopsychosocial Model



What you need to know is that the old, outdated, Biomedical Model of treatment rests on isolating and defining what is “wrong” with your body and labeling that as the cause of your pain and suffering. The problem is there is always an abnormality to be found, along with normal signs of “wear and tear” on your body when you look closely enough. And simply “fixing” these things (like an auto mechanic) with a pill, surgery or injection hardly ever brings success. Unfortunately, this old way of thinking is still prevalent in our healthcare system, and it never addresses the complexities of our full human experience. This is no longer acceptable. That is why responsible clinicians have adopted a better, more inclusive Biopsychosocial Model approach. When treating someone with this approach, I always consider how one’s life and pain experiences are shaped by the interactions between three different spheres: the biological (the body), psychological (mindset and mood), and social factors (a person’s lived experiences and relationships with the world). The connection between the three is the space where human suffering resides. More to the point, this is also where the healing must happen. To explore this uncharted territory and find relief, you will need the courage and dedication of a Warrior. In the coming chapters, we will take a more personal approach to your return to a happy and healthy life. We will explore powerful insight and you’ll learn tools that will help you to develop skills to overcome pain on your own terms. It’s time you discover the Ways of the Warrior and cultivate the mindset, motives, and means for you to find true relief from your pain and suffering.

1 CHAPTER ONE

The Ways of the Warrior

“It is better to be a warrior in a garden than a gardener in a war.” – Unknown

Life is inevitably filled with both gardens and burdens of war. They each exist in our family life, professional endeavors and even in our innermost thoughts of self. Naturally, we are all gardeners, as we tend to the things in our life that bring us joy and sustenance. On the other hand, most people aren't natural warriors, especially against cunning opponents and complex obstacles. One might consider that because the warrior prepares for the hardships of war, he might better appreciate the joys of peace and tranquility. The warrior who understands the nuances of battle, the struggle of confrontation, and the nature of the opponent can withstand hard times with a clear focus on the end goal—securing peace and safety. Warriors are strong in mind, body and spirit. Therefore, we should choose the ways of the warrior when it comes to dealing with pain.

As warriors, we must explore the details of our personal connections to pain. Our relationship with pain goes beyond

the physical self, even deeper than the skin and bones of our body. Pain affects how we think about ourselves and our lives. Pain makes us question our significance and stifles our feelings of worth. Suffering causes us to reconsider our deepest values and we may completely adjust our priorities in life because of it. An activity that once was a means of joy and fulfillment to us becomes a glaring reminder of our limitations and the tragedy caused by pain. Many people who suffer from persistent pain find themselves in an endless cycle of worry, apprehension, fear of injury and dreadful thoughts. There is no pill or surgery to date that can wipe this all away. We must take up our warrior stance and learn effective ways to break this cycle. This will bring peace to our mind and allow us to return to the life we feel so distant from. We do this by fostering a growth mindset; it is an essential part of your true healing.

Likewise, the way we live also shapes how we think about pain. The people, places and things we value influence our choices and actions when confronted with pain (or even just the threat of pain). Pain defeats us when we are unclear about what we deem worthy of our sacrifice or struggle. This brings us to further isolation and suffering. But, a warrior prevails every day that they operate with a clear motive and inspiration. The power of knowing one's deepest purpose and desires will prove invaluable in the face of pain.

The warrior also knows that there is no greater weapon than knowledge in action. Simply knowing is not enough;

it's also putting the knowledge in motion that reconstructs healthy neural pathways, which dissolves the brain's triggering of pain. Setting into motion positive intentions and desires for how we want to live is what brings that dream to reality.

As you explore this book, you will find insights, activities and thought-provoking ideas designed to help you understand the intersections of your pain experiences. You will grow to become the **warrior** who can both tend to your gardens and thrive in wartime. Rooted in the complexities of the three spheres of the Biopsychosocial Model, this exploration will shed light on the personal nuances of your experiences and empower you to take action to improve your encounters. This is how you conquer pain. I recommend you take some time after reading each chapter to explore the activities, tools and resources shared before moving on to the next. Let's get started.

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CHAPTER TWO

Warrior Mindset

“A warrior has to believe, remember? Otherwise, there is nothing!” – Théun Mares¹

Many who suffer from persistent pain develop a feeling of hopelessness and dread, holding firmly to the belief that nothing will ever relieve them from their anguish. Many hold on to this thought for a reasonable purpose— because they have tried so many options: medication, injections, rehab therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic... yet, the pain remains. Even worse, they get the impression from care providers and laymen alike that the pain “must be in your head.” I can’t help but empathize with those who are saddled with feelings of neglect and are seen as untruthful, on top of the already challenging painful experience. If this is you, let’s make one thing clear: I believe you.

Your pain is real.

What you feel is real.

¹ Mares, Theun. *Return of the Warriors*, Location 3073

Having read that, if you are suffering, then believe me when I tell you that your pain is real. It's as real as your fingernails and your eyeballs. I'm here to tell you that I know you are not making it up. You see, you believe that your pain is real because it truly is. The brain is a powerful entity which specializes in manifesting the pure (and sometimes untruthful) thoughts that pass through your mind. However, these thoughts are not in your control and you don't get to choose which thoughts show up. You only get to choose how you deal with them once they are present. Thoughts about pain are no different. When we believe these thoughts about our pain and treat them like truths, that is when the grips of suffering take over our life. For instance, it is a common thought that the presence of pain is a definite sign of current damage to the body (it must be a broken bone, muscle tear, nerve damage, cancer, etc.). You can rest easy knowing that this long-standing theory has been proven wrong. We know that even after a fractured bone mends (which usually takes 6–12 weeks) the presence of pain can be a very convincing sign of remaining damage, even though all other signs point to healing. But what truly remains is the thought and belief that “something must be wrong.” As an example of how powerful the brain is in manifesting an experience like this (from thoughts alone), I encourage you to take a few minutes to listen to the audio file ([Appendix A](#)) before reading further.

As we've learned from the previous audio exercise, thoughts alone can often act as catalysts to trigger pain or other sensations (like taste, feeling, or discomfort). This is where we should trust that our body is well-equipped to heal itself (in appropriate situations). We must intentionally work to build confidence in healthier thoughts. That is where having a 'growth mindset' is essential to reducing pain and suffering. In her groundbreaking book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2) famed researcher and psychologist Carol Dweck explored the idea of having a growth mindset vs a fixed mindset. This describes how our thoughts and beliefs about our abilities influence our daily choices and reactions to our environment. The graphic below shows thoughts and beliefs (many of which have been shared with me by my patients and clients over the years). Notice how (depending on the perspective and what one chooses to focus on) these thoughts align with either a growth mindset, or a fixed mindset. It's easy to see how the way we choose to view our circumstances greatly influence how we experience the world. This is an important tool in overcoming chronic pain and suffering.

Growth Mindset



Fixed Mindset

"I haven't figured out how to _____ with less pain, yet, but I will."

"This pain will not let me do _____ anymore. It's time to hang it up."

"I got injured, but I'm going to come back stronger than ever."

"Because I got injured, I will never be as good as I was before."

"Even though I still have some pain, I trust that my body is healing the way its meant to do."

"If my body was healing the right way, I wouldn't have this pain. Something's wrong, I know it."

"Although I do have some pain, these things are important to me, so I'll keep working at them."

"If I just stop doing too much, maybe the pain will eventually go away. I'll stop until then."

"My Physical Therapist says its safe for me to move this way, even with some pain. I trust her, so I'll try."

"My Physical Therapist says its safe for me to move this way, but she's not hurt like I am. I'm not doing it."

"The damage is done, but when it heals, I'll be back to my old self- with some hard work."

"The damage is done, there's nothing I can do about it- it's out of my hands now."

"Why not? I know things will get better, so I might as well start here."

"Why bother, when I know it's just going to hurt more anyway?"

One way of committing to developing a growth mindset is to be mindful of what you are capable of and to express your accomplishments. In his work, *Now for Pink Flags!* (3), Louie Gifford, (a well-known pain researcher and Physical Therapist) calls our attention to “pink flags.” Too often, we focus on “red flags” (things that are “bad” or “worrisome”) when we must also figure out the good things we can (and should) do. Pink flags lift optimism, promote healing and can help relieve pain. You can begin with a simple daily task of writing down three accomplishments for the day. Using the “Daily 3 Pink Flags” worksheet ([Appendix B](#)) can help you recognize several opportunities each day in which you were successful in showing up, despite the pain. This is a powerful practice in thinking and living with a growth mindset. A pink flag can be an action as simple as “carrying my baby boy to bed” or “folding laundry without sitting down.” I bet you can already think of two things right now that you’ve accomplished today to start your list. Don’t wait, write them down now!

Your mindset, along with how you choose to look at life, is a powerful way to start relieving your pain right now. Make the decision, in this moment, to “be a warrior, not a worrier...” Let go of the pull to focus on things that are out of your control. Constantly thinking of your pitfalls, limitations, or insecurities (or those of others around you) only serve to magnify your suffering in them. To succeed, a warrior must believe in themselves more than they believe in the power of their pain.

Along with a growth mindset, you must have a clear vision and understanding of what is important to you in this life. As a warrior, you can embrace pain and let it serve you in your life's mission. However, pain cannot serve you if you do not know to what end. Where are you going, what are you doing, and why? A warrior knows these as their motives, and they are energized by the power that lies therein. It's time for you to learn yours.

3

CHAPTER THREE

Warrior Motives

“Every victorious warrior draws his strength from the highest source– his love.” –Tapan Ghosh²

The warrior’s strength to overcome pain is limitless when the source of their power is clear. The warrior who knows where their true strength and drive comes from isn’t fooled by fleeting “motivation” or instant gratification to reach their goals. Instead, the warrior seeks to understand the deeper motives and values (that lead to actions) which helps reduce pain and suffering.

The warrior knows what is important in their life (their values) and how those values have a powerful influence on their experience of pain. These values spread throughout all aspects of our lives, which is why it is so important to have them clearly defined. In this next exercise, I want to help you find clarity in your personal values. Who you are, what you care about and what you love are all reflected in your values.

Take a moment and explore your personal values with this exercise I created based on the research of social

²Tapan Ghosh was a Hindu nationalist leader from West Bengal, India and founder of Hindu Samhati

psychologist, Shalom H. Schwartz, who pioneered the Theory of Basic Human Values (4) I urge you download and print the “Defining Values” worksheet ([Appendix C](#)), and then complete the following video activity ([Appendix D](#)).

Now that you have a better understanding of what’s important to you in life, how do your values influence your choices regarding your pain experience? Are you making decisions that speak to your values or is pain leading you in the opposite direction? How can you live according to your values, even amidst pain? Exploring your values further will help you find what peace means to you and empower you to live beyond the grips of pain.

The Biopsychosocial Model reminds us of the deep connections and intersections between three spheres: our body, our mindset & moods, and how/why we interact with the rest of the world. That how/why is expressed beautifully in your personal values– and your values directly guide your motives. Now you know what that looks like, I hope you find strength in that. I strongly encourage you to explore these ideals and reflections more– consider working with a Certified Health & Wellness Coach, or Counselor. It will strengthen you in your resolve to grow, heal, and live more fully.

You have now developed the *warrior mindset* and explored the *warrior’s motives* as a limitless source of power. Now, let's pick up the warrior’s weapons– the *Warrior's Means* to conquer your pain.

4 Warrior Means

“You are here, alive and awake and for whatever reasons you have fought your battles, it's time to start focusing on what strengths pulled you up when the entire world had knocked you down. That's where the virtue in self grows.” –Nikki Rowe³

Warriors who conquer pain understand how it “works” in the body. It's not as simple as the equation pain = injury. The science of pain is quite fascinating and enlightening, but for the purpose of this book, we will forego the deep dive. We will, however, focus on the following three important points to help you to understand pain and how to reduce it.

1) *Pain is not your enemy.* It is actually there to protect you. We could not survive without the wonderful gift of pain! Dr. Joe Tatta, in his book *Radical Pain Relief* (5) calls your brain the “protector within” and its favorite weapon to use to protect you is, you guessed it, *pain*. Pain is triggered to consciously alert you to harm or danger. In fact, research shows that the parts of the brain that activate when there is the sensation of physical pain also activate the same way when there are emotional/social triggers (rejection, neglect, verbal abuse, etc.). In any case, pain is a complex warning sign

³ Rowe, Nikki. *Once A Girl, Now a Woman*. 2013

for the presence of, or expectation of, impending danger. Your brain is not afraid to use pain to make that point. However, sometimes the point is overstated, which causes you to feel more pain than necessary and more severely. Other times, pain shows up even when the “source” is not there. Consider the person who feels “phantom” limb pain or pain in their toes several months after their foot was amputated. What that person feels is real– the brain is creating the experience to bring their attention to some problem or danger surrounding the foot and toes. In each case, the brain has a map of the body and, unfortunately, has not updated the map to the current situation (when the threat of injury or damage has passed). It also hasn’t turned down the alarm system that is still on high alert. A lot of people share these experiences. Even after your body has healed from initial insult or injury, your brain can still trigger pain. In this way, your brain is protecting you from doing things, no matter how ordinary, that challenge your body to work. That fear and apprehension can be directly related to how you feel about your body and what has happened to it, how your life has changed, and how you are coping with it all (think back to the Biopsychosocial Model). The cycle continues when we genuinely think that if we stop doing things to avoid “setting off the alarm system”, then we can stop the pain. This inactivity only reduces the threshold of the nervous system. The system then becomes more sensitive and pain comes more frequently and more severely. You must recognize the patterns and break the cycle! The most important thing is not to avoid safe

movements and activities because of this. Indeed, the way to overcome this hypersensitive alarm system (and reduce the subsequent pain triggering) is to learn what those safe movements and activities are, and then rewire the system—by exploring those very movements.

2) *Pain is not fair.* Have you ever felt pain without any injury or accident? Have you ever fallen hard and expected to be hurt but, thankfully, had no pain? We all have experienced random pains with seemingly no explanation, and also felt relieved when pain did not show up as expected.

Furthermore, it is a hard truth that pain does not function in fairness. The severity of pain you feel is not always equal to the level of damage caused to your being (physically or mentally). For instance, I've encountered patients who feel a debilitating “10-out-of-10” burning and electrical pain even with the light wisp of a cotton swab across their arm. What they feel is real, and it is truly an unfair assault. Remember to show grace and have patience with others, or yourself, who suffer with such harsh circumstances.

We must also recognize that shame, blame and guilt are well-known culprits that magnify pain and suffering. In a research article published by Gustaffson et al (6) participants expressed great relief from suffering chronic pain, and were able to return to healthy life and activities. The key factor in their relief was that they experienced an emotional shift from feeling “shame to respect.” You too can begin that journey, and it starts by believing the following statement:

there is nothing you have done to cause or deserve such pain.

And you must let go of feeling ashamed of having to go through this in the first place. You are not a burden, or a charity case either. You are not alone in this. Shame is a powerful tool your brain uses to keep you in a state of worry and regret. It diminishes your feelings of self-worth and value. But a warrior knows the power of vulnerability. You must become a warrior who seeks to acknowledge those feelings, speak of them, and release yourself (and others) from the burden of carrying this shame.

When your brain turns the pain dial up too high, it is often a mere prediction of any level of discomfort or difficulty.

Recognize the pattern and act accordingly– first, with a growth mindset. Stay focused on your pink flags and continue with movements that keep you happy, healthy and functional.

3) Warriors use their greatest tool– their body– to reduce and relieve pain. Now that you understand how the brain creates pain based on the intersections between your body, mindset & moods, and interactions with the world, you can see how your greatest weapon against pain is creating peace in those intersections. As Wellness Warriors, we must prioritize:

- creating the “rest and relax” state
- feeding our minds and bodies with nutritious food
- being active as much as possible

These habits promote strength, flexibility, and endurance (both mental and physical). Warriors shape their mindset towards positive affirmations and frequently visualize showing up as their best self. Warriors seek out opportunities to spend time doing things that feed their soul with people who support them. Now, let's explore some actions that you can take today to live in the *ways of the warrior*.

We can begin with the time-honored tradition of controlled breathing. It is no surprise that at the center of most healing philosophies and practices is breath control. Breathing practices date back farther than we can trace modern history. From Yoga to Tai Chi, meditation, sports, martial arts...a central theme in all of them is breath control. In the scientific community, there is growing research that substantiates the powerful nature of using controlled breathing to reduce pain.

Deep, controlled breathing can be used to switch your nervous system from the fight-or-flight state to the rest and relax state. Known as the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems respectively, they are activated complementary to one another. Remaining in a prolonged state of sympathetic activation can contribute to chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and even heart damage. Adopting a simple, yet invigorating, deep breathing practice like this ([Appendix E](#)) can be a great addition for managing your stress and anxiety, thereby reducing your pain experience. By activating the parasympathetic system

(that *rest and relax* state) as often as possible, we reduce our risks of stroke and heart disease, and allow our body to visit a restful state for optimal healing and peace. Try it now.

When considering eating habits and the influence on pain, there is ample research to support the age-old adage, “you are what you eat.” There is research that investigates the link between pain and food. It largely supports limiting dairy, gluten and processed food products. I’ll spare you the in-depth review of the countless eating styles, diets, and lifestyles out there. I will simply share a place to start, which I call “owning the plate.” We must take accountability for what makes it to the plate (and the fork) in front of us. By the time it gets there, we have practically no control over whether or not it makes it into our body (will power is hardly strong enough at this point).

Many of us might appreciate or require the skilled guidance of a nutritionist or dietitian for specific considerations, but we can all see significant improvement in our nutrition by simply choosing to add more color to our plates. To use a common slogan from an ironically familiar brand name, I encourage you to “taste the rainbow.” I lead my Health Coaching clients in a reflection activity ([Appendix F](#)) with the goal of identifying 3 different foods that represent each color of the rainbow (for instance, red is represented by an apple, beet, and sweet pepper). We then create a plan to cook and eat food from this activity over the following weeks to expand the client’s food experiences.

(We also explore the many facets of how and why you eat the way you do: food literacy, portion control, stress-eating habits, water intake, cravings, cooking habits, shopping mentality, budget/financial management, etc. Again, referring back to the Biopsychosocial Model, we mustn't only consider the calorie count when it comes to eating. We must also understand what else we are feeding within ourselves (emotions, social needs, etc.) and how that is directly affecting our pain experiences. You may be surprised and, hopefully, relieved by what you learn in the process.

Warriors who want to put pain behind them know that you must GET ACTIVE. Although the pain system is on high alert, seemingly telling you to be still, you must understand the power of movement. This doesn't mean you have to train for a marathon, but it does mean being brave and committing yourself to exploring physical activity. The American Heart Association (7) recommends 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity for adults. Understandably, the prospect of exercise can be a scary thought for people suffering persistent pain. But, start by thinking back to the physical things (activities and places) that brought you peace and joy- like spending time in nature, or swimming, or cycling, etc. Revisit your pink flags worksheet and find activities that make you feel like yourself again. Add them to your calendar and consciously make time for being active. This can look like 20-30 minute bouts of your favorite activity. In the worksheet ([Appendix G](#)), I recommend a 2-day-on, 1-day-off pattern to pace

yourself. It won't just happen on its own; you must schedule it. Believe me, your body will serve you better when you are looking forward to the time spent finding peace in things you enjoy. Here are some recommended activities to add to your 10-Day Activity Plan:

- brisk walking (at least 2.5 miles per hour)
- water aerobics
- dancing (ballroom or social)
- gardening
- tennis (doubles)
- biking slower than 10 miles per hour
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- hiking uphill or with a heavy backpack
- running
- swimming laps
- aerobic dancing
- heavy yard work, like continuous digging or hoeing
- tennis (singles)
- cycling 10 miles per hour or faster
- jumping rope

Granted, it may seem working out is a daunting task when pain is such a real thing for you. If that is the case, I strongly encourage you to *FILL IN THE PLAN ANYWAY!* The most important thing is to put it to paper today and visualize yourself doing those things often. Naturally, you may appreciate working with a Health Coach, Physical Therapist, or other professional to help you navigate

bringing these activities to life, but chances are you have identified activities that you are already familiar with and will be safe to move into. Trust your warrior instincts and get active today.

The reality is warriors don't often do these things alone... they trust their tribe to help them grow and thrive. In the next chapter, we will explore what it means to gather your tribe and work together towards your success over pain.

5 CHAPTER FIVE Warrior Tribe

“We were warriors then, and our tribe was strong like a river.” – Hunter S. Thompson⁴

As humans, we are naturally social beings. Our health, both mental and physical, depends heavily on the strength of our relationships with others in our world. We physically hurt when we experience the loss of a loved one or experience rejection from others. Contrarily, we have all seen how engaging with a loved one can immediately reduce one’s pain and suffering. We can, again, point to the Biopsychosocial Model to help illustrate the importance of being accountable for promoting psychological and social health when addressing pain. One study by Karayannis, et al (8) provides evidence that the impact of pain is lessened in individuals who perceive a greater sense of inclusion in their chosen communities. Another interesting research article by Jamison, et al (9) demonstrated on follow-up, patients who reported having supportive families experienced significantly less pain intensity, less reliance on medication and greater activity levels. They even reported working consistently and not having visited anywhere else for treatment of their pain.

⁴ Hunter Thompson was an American journalist and author who founded the gonzo journalism movement.

This was in contrast to patients who described their family as non-supportive. This adds strength to the reality that perceived support is an important factor in the healing of chronic pain. Simply put, successful warriors need a tribe. So, let's build yours. We will use this *My Tribe worksheet* I created ([Appendix H](#)) to assemble your tribe.

You must first identify, who are your *essential tribe* members (family/friend support, Health & Wellness Coach, Physical Therapist, Physician, Counselor, Trainer/Exercise leader, Nutritionist, etc)? Don't be afraid to seek out some guidance in creating this group- if you don't know what some of these people do, ask! Next, it's important to clarify what your needs are, and then communicate those needs to the members of your tribe. It is crucial that the individual members of your personal tribe understand their role(s) and how best to support you along this journey. Examples could include asking for understanding/listening, support, accountability, or motivation when called upon. Be specific in what you are asking for and be willing to reciprocate when possible. Also remember to express gratitude to your tribe members and encourage them in their own personal wellness journey.

As you explore this very powerful stage (and tool), remember this simple South African word which I believe best sums up the value of your tribe: *Ubuntu*, which means "I am who I am because of who we all are."

6

CHAPTER SIX

Warrior Triumphant

“There’s a remarkable amount of strength residing in those who move forward without being able to physically move. Ones that carry the weight of illness or a disability, they battle wars most know nothing about. They are the true warriors of the world, the ones who have every reason to quit but never do.” – Nikki Rowe

The warrior carries limitless power because of a firm belief in their own ability to invoke change. As warriors victorious over pain, we carry with us the strength and authority to shape our lives to meet our own vision of true happiness and health. Even amidst pain, the warrior embodies the mindset to live life fully, with courage and vigor. A warrior’s motives are steeped in deep reverence for the values held sacred to their core— be it family, freedom, or the ability to influence the lives of others with their gifts. A warrior knows that action, with the proper means, is the only way to see peace through the battles of our lives. My hope is that we can all agree that healing deep pain and suffering must come from within. In that, my purpose in writing this book for you is to awaken the warrior inside you. My hope is to empower you with insight, bravery, knowledge, powerful tools and skills so that you may live the life you see for yourself, starting today. No longer will you suffer in fear, not knowing how long this pain will grip

your life. Because the warrior inside you now recognizes the battles truly come and go, you will become (and remain) prepared for the inevitable next one. You now have the mindset, the motives, and the means to conquer your pain. Use them often, seek out and learn more, and find your health and happiness. Now, go secure your tribe and set out on your mission. Your warrior's journey begins here, know that you are already triumphant.

I am proud of you.

Acknowledgements

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Special Gift Offers

"Tame the Pain" Webinar

Follow along as I take you on a deep dive to help you understand the complexities of pain, your body and nervous system- and how to really take control of the healing process. Grab a pen for taking notes and explore this giant step towards conquering your chronic pain!



Book a Free 1-on-1 Health & Wellness Coaching Session

with Dr. Damon to help you explore & conquer your pain and get your life back. Healing is an "action word..." and I'm here to Coach you to success!



Appendices

The following Appendices A–H are tools referenced throughout the book. These tools include interactive audio files, reflection activities, videos, and worksheets.

These are for use only with this book, and are not to be redistributed, shared or reproduced without expressed consent from the author and publishing entity.

*Printable pdf versions can be downloaded at
<https://thewillpowerwellness.com/pain-guide-worksheets>
(also, there's a link at the very bottom of the main website)
TheWillPowerWellness.com*

Appendices are followed by Resources cited throughout the book.

Appendix A

"Understand the Power of your Thoughts"

(Audio File: reference page 15)

Location:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BYqL1HpvEKcCi8xtVXGGmUhdYt8lG29m/view?usp=sharing>

Scan Here



Appendix B

"Daily_3_Pink_Flags"

(Worksheet: reference page 18)

Location:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Fa9qAkIsHnsqN2DsLYVUt_r47B4KV5lN/view?usp=sharing

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Daily 3 Pink Flags

“Pink Flags” are those things that make us feel like ourselves again. They remind us of who we are, and what brings us joy, relief, happiness. It can be difficult to see the pink flags when pain has taken over. For the next 10 days, visit this sheet daily and write down at least 3 pink flags- recognizing all the ways your body, your mindset and your life, serve you (even in the midst of pain). Examples could be: “*walked the dog,*” “*meditated 5 min,*” “*laughed with my coworker,*” “*carried groceries,*” “*turned a negative thought to a positive*” “*ate dinner with family*” “*did big belly breaths*” “*played tennis for 5min*” “*cooked a meal*” and more... (* no flag is too small!)

Date	Physical 	Mindset 	Social 
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			
Day 8			
Day 9			
Day 10			

Appendix C

"Defining Values"

(Worksheet: reference page 21)

Location:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dt6Uy67Wo2ul2G3GL_NYVRLMV3SiyD6v/view?usp=sharing

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Appendix D

"Defining Values Video/Activity"

(Video: reference page 21)

Location:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vVKm_Ml5LcKuY1Ney4EEpIOJf-tpPbK5/view?usp=sharing

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Defining Values

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Top 3



Appendix E

"Big Belly Breaths "

(Audio File: reference page 26)

Location:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tbM94Xu2W676Zrm6Ha427ZSG1z3ELyTL/view?usp=sharing>

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Appendix F

"Taste the Rainbow "

(Worksheet: reference page 27)

Location:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1B3jUZCcToQQ_j_idZhBzo5ZiT7PxBouq/view?usp=sharing

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“Taste the Rainbow”

This exercise is centered on expanding your mind, your palate, and your eating habits. When it comes to building new, healthier habits, you must first *experience* new, healthy things. Think outside the box and write down foods (mostly natural foods) that you might have never considered eating (and even some you may have tried only once before). **ABSOLUTELY NO INTERNET ALLOWED-** you can **ONLY** ask other **PEOPLE** for suggestions and food ideas on this first part. Have fun!

Color	Choose 3 foods of each color and write one in each box		
Red			
Orange			
Yellow			
Green			
Blue			
Purple			

Commit to this 3-part process (*must be completed within 7 days*)

- 1) Circle 1 food in each color group to explore in the next 7 days. (*total of 6 new foods*)
- 2) Identify 1 recipe (start simple) for each circled food- ask friends, family, even use the internet on this one, etc. Have fun with this part (pairing them together works too)!
- 3) Shopping date: _____ Also, date each food above when it will be eaten (must be within 7 days from now). Enjoy the meals, and take notes, then repeat 1-3.

Notes: _____

Appendix G

"10-Day Activity Plan"

(Worksheet: reference page 28)

Location:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18HNMeT41xnZhpZWlAxnMynDtsusMkNlo/view?usp=sharing>

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10-Day Activity Plan

This 10-day activity plan will help you explore ways to bring back your active lifestyle, even amid the pain. The goal is to schedule at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise or activity for each available day below. Check the box if it is one of your *pink flags* (*brownie points). Remember to return and take notes on the experience and tally your total minutes at the end of the 10-day period.

Date & Time	Activity/Exercise		Minutes planned/used	Thoughts, ideas, feelings about the experience
Day 1: Time:			/	
Day 2: Time:			/	
Day 3: Time:	<i>Rest & Relax Day: On this day, consider deep breath exercises or “restful” activity you enjoy: reading, meditate, music etc. Notes:</i>			
Day 4: Time:			/	
Day 5: Time:			/	
Day 6: Time:	<i>Rest & Relax Day: On this day, consider deep breath exercises or “restful” activity you enjoy: reading, meditate, music etc. Notes:</i>			
Day 7: Time:			/	
Day 8: Time:			/	
Day 9: Time:	<i>Rest & Relax Day: On this day, consider deep breath exercises or “restful” activity you enjoy: reading, meditate, music etc. Notes:</i>			
Day 10: Time:			/	

Total Time: ____/____

Notes:

Appendix H

"My Tribe"

(Worksheet: reference page 33)

Location:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JofFgLBh3NZe87nXPgMm8zylJl-qXfV/view?usp=sharing>

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My Tribe

Sometimes, a warrior must draw strength and resilience from their tribe. This is the collective from which support, motivation, knowledge, and grace flow freely in the battle against chronic pain. Consider your tribe the people who you can call on for understanding, insight, and even a kick in the butt when you need it. This may seem silly in the moment, but when the grips of pain isolate you, it helps to know exactly who to call on... and for them to know how they can support you. Being clear about who is in your tribe, and what role they play will give you ease and comfort when it is time to navigate pervasive pain again, which is surely inevitable. *** Remember, it is IMPERITIVE that you talk to them about this! It can be as simple as saying:

"It's time I get this pain thing under control and take my life back. That means I am getting my support system, my tribe, behind me on this.

Can I count on you to be my _____? If I call on you, can you help me by _____? Thank you so much!"

Name	Role	How you can help me...	Dates Contacted
	Confidant		
	Wellness Coach		
	Counselor		
	Physical Therapist		
	Nutritionist/Dietician		
	Personal/Athletic Trainer		
	Hugs & High Fiver		
	Cheerleader		
	Swift-kick Motivator		
	Workout Buddy		
	Party Planner		
	Yoga/Tai Chi Instructor		
	The Relaxer		
	Physician		

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