

The Fibromyalgia Connection

The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston, Inc.

P.O. Box 2174 Bellaire, TX 77402

www.fmah.org - e-mail at FMAHouston@yahoo.com

Fall 2003

Volume 10 Number 3

October Meeting Features Mind-Body Expert

The October 28, 2003, meeting of the Fibromyalgia Association of Houston will feature Cathy Chapman, PhD, LMSW-ACP, LPC. Dr. Chapman has earned her PhD in Mind/Body Psychology and has practiced psychotherapy since 1976. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Stephen F. Austin State University and a Master of Arts in Theology from the University of Notre Dame. Dr. Chapman is a Licensed Master Social Worker-Advanced Clinical Practitioner (LMSW-ACP), Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Certified Hypnotherapist (CHt.), a Certified Healing Touch™ Practitioner and Instructor (CHTP/I), and a Certified Melchizedek Facilitator. She has received certificates in Advanced Hypnotherapy and Release Therapy. She has also studied Pranic Healing and is a Reiki Master.

For more information about Dr. Chapman, please check her Web site at www.OdysseyToWholeness.com. We look forward to hosting Dr. Chapman at our Tuesday, October 28 meeting. For further information and directions to the meeting, please see page two of this newsletter.

The following article was written by Dr. Chapman, and will explain some of what she will discuss at our meeting.

Mind-Body Psychology

When talking about stress reduction and pain management through relaxation and meditation, you are using the concepts of mind-body psychology. Basically, the mind-body connection affects how we feel, how we get sick, and how we heal.

Stress is the most discussed mind-body category. How we feel and think about what is happening around us determines how much stress we feel in our lives. If getting caught in traffic is an unnerving experience, then our stress level is high. Our body responds by entering into the fight-or-flight mode. Since we are stuck in traffic, we can't fight and we can't flee. Our body, however, doesn't know this. Our body reacts just as if we were being hunted down by the resident Bengal tiger. Adrenalin enters our system, our digestive and immune systems shut down, both our blood pressure and heart rate rise and blood rushes from our internal organs to our extremities. All of this to help us run from the tiger...uh, traffic jam?

See Chapman on page 4

2003 Meeting Schedule

Support group meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month from January through October. The November meeting will be held on December 2. We meet at St. Luke's United Methodist Church and greatly appreciate the space they provide for our meetings; however, FMAH is not affiliated with any church.

Companions are always welcome. Please feel free to bring a chair cushion so that you will be comfortable. If you wish, you may bring a snack and something to drink. All meetings are free and open to the public. FMAH reserves the right to substitute speakers if necessary, so for more current information, please call 713-664-0180. Parking is free in the church lot.

LOCATION: **ST. LUKE'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
3471 Westheimer (just inside the 610 Loop)

ROOM: **Parlor B, on the Westheimer side of the church**

TIME: **6:30 p.m.** New members, please
come 15 minutes early to register.

October 28, 2003 **Cathy Chapman, PhD, LMSW-ACP**
*Mind-Body Psychology, and What is
Body-Talk* □ ?

November 2003 **No meeting (Thanksgiving)**

December 2, 2003 **Holiday Party**
White Elephant Gift Exchange



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Meeting Schedule

October: Mind-Body Psychology

Come to our **Tuesday, October 28, 2003**, meeting to hear a very interesting discussion about healing the mind and body. Cathy Chapman, PhD, LMSW-ACP, will talk about the interaction between the mind and body, and also answer the question “What is BodyTalk?” We anticipate a large crowd, so please come early for a good seat. We’ll be in our normal meeting space, Parlor B, at St. Luke’s at 6:30 p.m. For more information about Dr. Chapman’s talk, see the article on the front page of this newsletter.

November: No Meeting



Happy Thanksgiving!

December: Holiday Party

Let’s have some fun! We will have a Holiday Gift Exchange and refreshment party on a special day, Tuesday, December 2, 2003. Please bring a wrapped “white elephant” gift to be exchanged; it’s fun to see what others get and then plot how to take it away from them. You may not end up with your first choice, but you will have lots of laughs. This gift may be something that you already have in the house or find at a garage sale. It should be worth less than \$5. FMAH will provide the drinks. If you can bring a snack, we’d appreciate it. We’ll meet in our usual room, Parlor B, at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church. Note the unusual date: Tuesday, December 2, 6:30 p.m.

Please Join Us

Are you afraid to come to the meetings? Do you think that we sit around and complain about our pain? For over ten years, we’ve worked hard to make our meetings a place where you can get help in a positive atmosphere. We do not allow “pity parties.” We feature great speakers who can give you helpful information and answer your questions. We also have meetings which are “open forum,” where we sit in a circle and discuss what’s on our minds. We do not allow vendors to come to meetings, so you don’t have to worry about a salesman trying to make you buy something. Since there is no cure for FM, we don’t permit people to come in and claim that they can cure you.

So what’s holding you back? Traffic? It’s quite easy to get to St. Luke’s United Methodist Church on Westheimer, across from River Oaks, but if you would like to avoid rush hour, please join us for an early dinner at the **Cleburne Cafeteria**. Before each meeting, at 4:30 p.m., a group of volunteers meets for dinner at the **Cleburne Cafeteria**. Located only five minutes from St. Luke’s, the Cleburne is on the corner of Edloe and Bissonnet one block from the Channel 13 studios. The cafeteria features home-cooked food and reasonable prices. Dinner is Dutch treat, and the Cleburne accepts cash only. We’ll be wearing our FMAH T-shirts, so we’re easy to spot. Come for lively conversation and lots of laughs.

The speaker for our September meeting, Diane Pope, MSN, CHt, was ill and had to cancel her talk on Hypnosis and Pain Control. If you were unable to attend in September, you’ll have a second chance to learn about hypnosis and experience it for yourself. Ms Pope will be rescheduled for early next year.

The longer we are in a state of stress, the longer our body alters its chemical makeup to help us fight or run from danger. As you have noticed, the problem is that most of the "danger" in our lives has nothing to do with running from anything. Our "danger" is coping with the difficulties of being on time, taking care of home and family, doing what we need to do to function in this emotionally stressful world of ours. When we had to run from danger, there wasn't time to think. We reacted on instinct. The stresses in our lives today require that we think things through and listen to our inner voices.

Research done by HeartMath has demonstrated that when we focus on our heart, the stress response stops. The electrical activity of our brain and heart enter a gentle, relaxed mode. Our body responds by chemically changing so that our immune system is strengthened, our muscles relax, our digestion goes back to normal, and our intuition increases. Medical science is now discovering that we have brain cells in our heart and in our connective tissue. These cells hold memory. The memory of what we feared in the past and what we now fear is held in connective tissue. Dr. Norm Sheely, the co-founder of the Holistic Medical Association, once described Fibromyalgia as frozen fear. If Fibromyalgia is, indeed, "frozen fear," no wonder the connective tissue is "frozen."

Mind-body psychology addresses physical distress from a different perspective than traditional allopathic medicine does. Whereas allopathic medicine primarily focuses on drugs, mind-body psychology focuses on how the mind causes reactions in the body. As explained above, we simply need to enter a place of fear for powerful chemicals to release in our body. How do we change that? First and foremost, become aware that how we think affects how we feel. It is not an event that causes stress. It is our thoughts about the event.

A tiger at the zoo behind a barrier can be a wonder to behold. A tiger on the pathway is a very different matter. Thoughts of fear, anxiety, and depression will result in biochemical changes which will, in the long term, physically damage our bodies. One research study estimated that at least 75% of all doctor visits are related to the mind-body interaction lumped together in the category of stress. This includes high blood pressure, autoimmune illnesses, heart problems, stroke, back pain, and more.

Since our thoughts affect how we feel, we must learn to control our thoughts. Although difficult and requiring discipline, this is not an impossible task. We can simply quit thinking about one thing and think about another. Instead of thinking about being stuck in traffic and being late to pick up your child, think instead about the last wonderful time you spent with your child. Instead of counting your woes, count your blessings. Have a ready-made supply of alternate thoughts to enjoy when you discover you are thinking anxious thoughts. For a quick change in physical stress symptoms, focus on your heart. Imagine that you are breathing from your heart. "Listen" to your heart. (Try it now.) You will discover that your heart rate will decrease and your mind will calm. The stress chemicals in your body will decrease. Research has demonstrated that meditation will have similar calming effects. One of the newest mind-body modalities is The BodyTalk System™. The BodyTalk System™ incorporates the cutting-edge research of the consciousness of cells and organs. The BodyTalk System™ taps into the inner wisdom of the body to help the body communicate with itself. This method is a drugless, noninvasive modality which works on what is called the mindbody. Many people diagnosed with Fibromyalgia are now finding their sleep improving, chronic pain decreasing, mood elevating, and a general sense of well-being coming into their lives. After one session, a client found her pain to be so decreased that she canceled a massage session and joined her

friends for a much needed outing. Another client is thankful for blessed sleep and a general sense of well-being. As for me, my massage therapist can now give what she calls a "normal" massage instead of barely touching my body for fear of my knocking her hand out of the way.

The above are a very few of the many mind-body methods that have helped numerous people suffering from chronic pain. Others are hypnosis, Reiki, Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch and other forms of energy work. Whatever your pain level, investigate one or more modalities which will assist you in releasing the pain in your body.

Dr. Chapman can be reached at 713-681-2400.

Randall's and Kroger

Thanks to you, this quarter Randall's donated \$488.34 to FMAH through their Remarkable Card program, and Kroger donated \$323.47 because of shoppers using their Share Card. Both programs donate a portion of your total purchases, without changing the price you pay. It is easy to sign up for either program. The first time you use the Randall's card, tell the cashier that you wish to donate to charity number 1094. For Kroger, you just hand the cashier an FMAH card with our charity UPC code. Let us know if you need a card; you can call the Hotline at 713-664-0180.

The following generous donors are people who have given contributions by check. We are unable to thank each of you who donated cash or yard sale items, but we are grateful for everything that you give us. The * indicates contributions of \$50 or more. Thank you!

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Easy Holiday Shopping

Did you know that more money is printed daily for the game Monopoly than by the U.S. treasury? If only some of that money could make a difference for FMAH. But guess what? You can make that happen just by buying your games, toys, books, CDs, and everyday items at **iGive.com**. At www.iGive.com/joinLink, you get a free membership (no costs or obligations) to shop at 400+ stores, and without even knowing it, you'll be helping FMAH at the same time. So, instead of printing money, just find a little here and there by doing a little shopping, and up to 26% of every purchase you make will be donated directly to FMAH!

With the upcoming holidays, now is a great time to become acquainted with **iGive.com**. What better way to shop than at home in front of your computer? No lines, parking hassles, or exhausting crowds to fight your way through. Whenever you go to **iGive.com**, you'll choose from over 400 stores. Holiday shopping has never been easier or safer. Our president, Mary Harper, has shopped through **iGive.com** for several years and has raised over \$120 just by purchasing flowers, gifts, and pet supplies. Think of how much we could earn if everyone bought gifts and everyday supplies over the Internet! Please join **iGive.com** and list FMAH as your cause. It will help you survive the holiday season, and help us to continue our mission of serving those with Fibromyalgia.

Newsletter Editor Resigns

FMAH is sorry to announce that the editor of this newsletter, Aaron Hamilton, has resigned. Aaron has done an exceptional job as editor. We will miss her sense of humor and writing. Thanks for your hard work, Aaron.

We are now looking for a new editor for *The Fibromyalgia Connection*. If you like to write, and would enjoy a fun challenge, please call the Hotline at 713-664-0180 or e-mail us at FMAH@yahoo.com. No experience is necessary, and free training is available!

Fibromyalgia Aware Magazine

Did you know that the Fibromyalgia community has its own magazine? It's a full-color, 80-page magazine that contains articles that cover many aspects of living with Fibromyalgia. They cover lifestyle, health, and research. A recent issue discussed children and Fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, and the effects of FM on marriage.

The magazine is published by the National Fibromyalgia Association (NFA) of Orange, California. NFA is composed of very dedicated volunteers, who not only spend many hours working on the magazine, but also sponsor a Web site, conferences, and other activities designed to spread awareness of FM. To subscribe to one year (three issues) of *Fibromyalgia Aware* magazine, send a tax deductible donation of \$35 to:

National Fibromyalgia Association
2200 North Glassell Street, Suite A
Orange, CA Phone: 714-921-0150

The NFA also has an outstanding website, www.fmaware.org. It is full of the latest research and information. Look for the "Online Newsletter" link. Click on it to sign up for an

e-mail newsletter delivered every two weeks to your e-mail account. It's free, and they promise to keep your address confidential. It's a great way to keep up with late-breaking news in the field of Fibromyalgia.

Katy FM Support Group

The Fibromyalgia Support Group in Katy continues meeting monthly and has been well received. We thank FMAH for their assistance and support. The October meeting will be a table discussion about what works and what doesn't; in November we will cover medical issues; and December will be a time of holiday celebration with a possible speaker. The group meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 at St. Peter's Methodist Church, 22075 Kingsland Blvd. (right on Kingsland from S. Fry Road exit off I-10). The next meeting dates will be: Wednesday, October 1st; Wednesday, November 5th; Wednesday, December 3rd; and Wednesday, January 7th. The group is facilitated by Dot Anderson, a licensed social worker. For more information, contact her at 281-578-2858 or DotAnd@aol.com. Everyone is welcome.

Helpful Hint

The night before we left for vacation, my husband came home and handed me a fat, bright blue duffel bag. He had been in a bedding store and noticed that they had a single-sized memory foam mattress pad (about 2" thick) that came with its own travel bag. He knew how much we both loved our new memory foam mattress and how much better I had been sleeping since we got it, and he was afraid that I would not be comfortable on vacation. I cannot even begin to tell you how much of a difference the pad made. I used it both in the hotel and on the ship during our cruise, and in the future it will go with me anytime that I will be away from home!

Submitted by Annette Novominsky

Books, Videos, & T-Shirts

All information is presented for informational purposes only and reflect the views of the authors

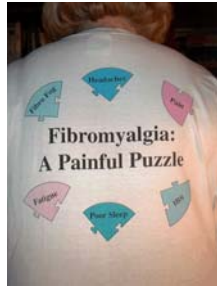
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<u>Living with Fibromyalgia: A Practical Guide to Coping</u> edited by Thomas Romano, MD, and FMAH	_____	\$ 7.00	\$ _____
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<u>FM Research Advances</u> (2 CDs or cassettes, please specify) I. Jon Russell, MD, PhD	_____	\$12.50	\$ _____

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