



# GLEANINGS

ISSUE #2, SPRING/SUMMER 2023

## Our Friend Pain

*by Millie Malone Lill*

Yes, pain is really our friend. It lets us know when we have screwed up. It is constantly on the alert for mistakes we are making. Head hurts? Pain sends an alarm to our brain where it types in all the pertinent data.



“Subject is complaining of pain in forehead area. Possible causes: Banged head on doorway again. Babysat neighbor kids all day. Forgot to eat lunch. Watched the news. Balanced checkbook.”

Solution: Duck head when going through doorway. Send neighbor kids home. Eat. Unplug TV. Ignore checkbook or make someone else balance it.

“Subject says hands are hurting. Possible causes: Clenching fists too tightly. Using crutches. Knitting for several hours. Watching news.”

Solution: Did I not already tell you to unplug the TV and stop watching the news? Take a break from knitting. Your crutches are killing you, use your power chair.

Pain is a signal to let you know something is not right. One of the big problems with being a polio survivor is that we are almost always in pain. Sometimes it is really bad, but if it hangs on for a long time, it becomes Old Pain. At that point, we can ignore it. New Pain is something else. It makes us long for a solution. Eventually, though, it becomes Old Pain.

Sometimes New Pain will cause us to go to a doctor. That's when the trouble starts. The trigger is when the doctor says, “Where does it hurt? Does it hurt here? Here? Over here?” Then, of course, Old Pain wants attention too. You had been concentrating on New Pain, but at that point you have to admit that yes, it does hurt here, and here, and over here. You are so used to your wrists hurting from the crutches that you have been able to ignore it and go on with your life. Now your wrists demand immediate attention. As do your hips, that polio affected leg and now that it has been brought to your attention, your neck kind of hurts, too. New Pain ratchets up its demands as well.

What is the solution? That question should be answered by your doctor, your physiatrist, or a polio expert. For the wrist and shoulder pain, maybe you should start using a power chair. A scooter will help with the foot pain, but it will make the shoulder pain worse. A power chair works better by reducing the weight on your wrists as well as shoulders and hips and feet. It also makes you less of a fall hazard. You don't have to use the chair all the time, but it sure helps when you need to go a distance or if you wake up fatigued. You can still walk around in your house if you are able. You can still stand for brief periods if you start conserving and preserving before you have burnt the last working motor neuron.

You might think that Pain would resent the polio mantra: Conserve to Preserve. Surprisingly, it does not. Even Pain relishes some time off.

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## Grieving After A Pandemic: Helpful, Healthy, Traditional Ways to Cope and Heal

By Stephen Jackson, *Gleanings* Editor

For a lot of us, our biggest fear during the pandemic became a reality shortly afterwards. We lost a loved one! Like so many others, we grapple with feelings of grief in ways we believe that most have never experienced. We began contemplating the similarities of our loss with others, but it does not quite level the playing field. Therefore, we wondered how best one could grieve during these post-pandemic times.

If you are struggling to cope with grief post-pandemic, here are some tips that may help:

- Be patient with yourself. It takes time to heal from grief, and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Allow yourself to feel your emotions, and don't try to bottle them up.
- Talk to someone you trust. Talking about your grief can help you to process it and feel less alone. Talk to a friend, family member, therapist, or grief counselor.
- Take care of yourself. Make sure you are getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods, and exercising. Taking care of your physical health will help you to better cope with your emotional health.
- Find ways to connect with others. The pandemic has made it difficult to connect with others, but it is important to stay connected. Find ways to connect with friends, family, or online support groups.
- Do things that bring you joy. Find activities that bring you joy and make you feel happy. This could be anything from spending time in nature to listening to music to reading a good book.

If you are struggling to cope with grief on your own, please reach out for help. There are many resources available to you, including therapists, grief counselors, and support groups.

Here are some additional local resources that may be helpful:

- **Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare**  
[www.regionsix.com](http://www.regionsix.com)
- **Community Alliance**  
[www.community-alliance.org](http://www.community-alliance.org)
- **Catholic Charities**  
[www.ccomaha.org](http://www.ccomaha.org)
- **Lutheran Family Services**  
[www.lfsneb.org](http://www.lfsneb.org)
- **Heartland Family Services**  
[www.heartlandfamilyservice.org](http://www.heartlandfamilyservice.org)
- **UNMC Psychiatry**  
[www.unmc.edu/psychiatry](http://www.unmc.edu/psychiatry)
- **CHI Creighton Mental Health**  
[www.chihealth.com/mental-health](http://www.chihealth.com/mental-health)
- **Douglas County Community Mental Health Center**  
[cmhc.douglascounty-ne.gov](http://cmhc.douglascounty-ne.gov)

Remember, you are not alone. There are many people who understand what you are going through and can help you to cope with your grief.

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### April – July 2023 Donor List

The Nebraska Polio Survivors Association gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the following donors, who supported our mission with their gifts from April 1 – July 31, 2023.

Annual Gifts:

Norman and Alma Rohlfing, Talmage, NE  
Gary Halvin, Lees Summit, MO

If you wish to memorialize or honor a polio survivor with a donation to NPSA, you may send a check to the address below:

**Nebraska Polio Survivors Association**

**PO Box 6076**

**Omaha, NE 68106**

Because we are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, all gifts are fully tax-deductible. We will acknowledge your gift in a future issue of *Gleanings*.

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## Zoom with NPSA

As a Gleanings subscriber, you are invited to attend our Zoom meetings, no matter where you live. We regularly have people from as far away as Germany, Montreal, New York, and Florida in attendance. **You're invited to join our Zoom meetings by:**

1. Calling one of the phone numbers listed below. OR
2. By downloading the Zoom app onto your mobile device or computer. Then, join the meeting by entering the Meeting ID and passcode.

We will meet in person at Bloomfield by Essex, 9804 Nicholas Ave., Omaha, from 2:00 – 4:00 Central Standard Time (CST) on the following Sunday afternoon. Topics will be announced via email approximately one week in advance.

2023 Dates	Zoom Meeting Details
<b>Both in person and on Zoom:</b> Aug. 6 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 10 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov. 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Zoom web address:</b> Join Zoom Meeting <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3834080816?pwd=SlcxWnRzMEZaTlXkvbW1nTk5hU3dOQT09">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3834080816?pwd=SlcxWnRzMEZaTlXkvbW1nTk5hU3dOQT09</a>
<b>Zoom only:</b> Dec. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting ID: 383 408 0816 Passcode: 940274  One tap mobile +17193594580,,3834080816#,,,,*940274# US +17207072699,,3834080816#,,,,*940274# US (Denver)

## NPSA Mission Statement

The mission of the Nebraska Polio Survivors Association is to educate the public and the health care community concerning polio and post-polio syndrome and to respond to the needs of individuals who suffer from the syndrome through group meetings, educational programming and newsletters, financial and other support of research concerning the syndrome and the circulation of research results.

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