

HEALING AND THE MIND:
BERNIE SIEGEL'S
HEALING PRESCRIPTIONS:
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Since the word "patient" means submissive, I always tell people not to be patients, but to be respants-people who participate in and take responsibility for their own health care. Taking charge of their healing means that people make decisions in conjunction with their health professional team. They are able to make responsible choices. They see their illness as an opportunity to change. Respants work on loving themselves. They learn to enjoy living fully in the present rather than concentrating on the future or past.

When people ask me how to do this, I give them a list of things they can do:

Keep a journal. Everyday, set aside time to write or draw what you feel, not about what you did. Studies have shown that people who express their feelings on paper show enhanced immune system function.

Take your emotional pulse hourly. Throughout the day, take the time to check in with yourself and see how you're doing. Resolve uncomfortable feelings within the hour. Learn you are in control of your feelings.

Take time for healing intervals. Meditate, pray, use a guided imagery tape or listen to soothing music several times a day.

Look at yourself naked in the mirror. Try it everyday. At first, it may be hard for you. Stick with it and as you feel better about who you are, you'll find more and more things you like about yourself. Learn to gaze into the mirror and find something about yourself you can love.

Join a group. Find an ECaP-like group, a 12-step group or any group of people who can come together with you each week to share your pain, concerns and laughter. Support, given and received, is a wonderful gift.

"Leave Your Troubles to God." Being resigned to an illness is destructive, but accepting it allows you to free energy for other things. You can move forward knowing that you can handle it now and in the future.

See your illness as a chance for growth. When you get sick, it's a good time to look at your life and figure out changes which will help you grow emotionally & spiritually. Talk to your family and tell them how you really feel. Quit the job that has been "killing" you. Do whatever you need to do, to find your way to love the world.

Express yourself. You don't always have to say "I'm fine" or "Nothing's wrong." It's OK to say "I've had a rough day" and ask for support. Free yourself from self-censorship and open up. Allow others to express themselves to you. Learn to listen, experience more fully and really participate in life.

Don't feel like you have to make all your changes at once. It's OK to give yourself permission to take it easy and see your healing as a process. Miracles don't have to happen overnight. They can happen gradually as you learn to love yourself, surround yourself with loving people and live fully in the moment.

Two hours a week help someone you are not related to. Do it as an act of love for others. It will help heal you. Your body doesn't limit your ability to help.

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