



An Interview with

Professor Brian Rothbart | Sound Authors Radio

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Dr. Kent: Welcome back to Sound Authors! My next guest on the show is Professor Brian Rothbart. He is known as the father of chronic pain elimination. He's got 40 years of experience as a doctor and a researcher. Welcome to the show Dr. Rothbart.

Prof. Rothbart: Thanks Kent, thank you for inviting me.

Dr. Kent: Tell me a little bit about your newest book.

Prof. Rothbart: Well we just finished writing and actually it's going to be available this month. It's a book titled Forever Free from Chronic Pain. Basically, the book talks about my 40 years of research and clinical experience and actually my own experiences living with chronic pain and how it culminating in the therapy that I invented that actually eliminates, not manages, but eliminates many of the chronic muscle and joint pain without using drugs or without doing surgery.

Dr. Kent: Explain for the listeners what exactly chronic pain is? There are so many diagnoses these days; what does it mean chronic pain?

Prof. Rothbart: When we talk about chronic pain, we're talking about people who are having ongoing pain that has lasted more than three months. So if you have knee pain, back pain, hip pain, spinal pain that's been going on longer than three months, we call that chronic pain. As compared to acute pain that lasts only for a few weeks and then it's over.

Dr. Kent: Things like fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome and things like that?

Prof. Rothbart: Yes, it all fits into it and actually what's really interesting about this is that I researched, which culminated in a paper that I published eight years ago. It actually identified the source, the actual source of many of the chronic muscle and joint problems that we're seeing and that includes fibromyalgia and many of the chronic fatigue syndrome patients. In the past, when I was a member of the American Academy for Pain Management for many years and lectured about we needed to find the source of the chronic pain because we were treating symptoms.

Pain is a symptom, not the source and when you treat a symptom it keeps recurring. This was a frustration for so many years because as patients, we actually had to manage the pain, we couldn't eliminate it, we were managing it. For many years I was saying we need to find the source; if we can find the source, we can eliminate the pain. In 2002, I

published a very significant paper that actually identified the source of chronic muscle and joint pain in many of the people suffering today. Interestingly enough, it is an embryologic foot type, unknown before my research. It's a foot type you're born with that causes your feet to twist when you walk and you know that it's happening because if you look at the heels of your shoes, if the outside of your heels are wearing faster than the rest of the heel, you have this foot structure.

When you have this foot structure and the foot twists, it's like a foundation on an unstable foundation on a building. The whole building becomes unstable, you're going to have problems with the doors, the windows, and even the roof can leak. Well it turns out when you have a foot with a twist; it produces structural changes in the joints and muscles around the joints that in time leads to chronic pain. My therapy is very different in its approach because it specifically identifies and treats this embryological foot type and it does it in a totally different way. We apply a signal to the bottom of the foot to change the signal sent to the brain where the body is in space, actually normalizing the signals coming from the feet.

The brain receives the signal and automatically changes the position of the body, puts it in a more correct position. When the posture is in a more correct position, the joints are properly aligned, the joints around those joints are in the proper position and the joints and muscles can then heal. That's the basis of what we call Rothbart Proprioceptive Therapy.

Dr. Kent: So, *Forever Free from Chronic Pain* is the book and the pain sufferers guide to getting your life back. Is it possible to be free from chronic pain then?

Prof. Rothbart: Absolutely. I've treated countless numbers of patients who come to me living in chronic pain for 20-30 years and been everywhere, tried everything, being treated for the symptoms, being treated for the chronic knee problem; two, three, four knee surgeries, doing physical therapy, patients coming to me with chronic back pain, sciatica, chronic neck, shoulder tension and their frustration has been that the same physicians who have treated them symptomatically. Now treating the symptoms can work.

You can get rid of back pain if you stay in ongoing therapy; continuously taking the drugs, continuously going for manipulation, continuously doing the different physical therapies will reduce your pain, but it's ongoing therapy. These patients come to me and if they have this embryological foot type that I described, which by the way we estimate covers 80% of the world population we believe has this foot structure so it's very common. If a patient comes to me with this foot structure by using this Rothbart proprioceptive therapy, by stabilizing the signals to the brain, we don't manage; we eliminate the pain, which means the pain is gone. You no longer have to take drugs, you no longer have to be in surgery, and the pain is eliminated. Not managed, eliminated, and that's what this book is about.

Dr. Kent: Here's a question for you: I get a lot of folks that come on the show and we've all heard a lot about a lot of different treatments that are eastern medicine or acupuncture or this and that. Now you're talking about actual medicine so explain to me in whatever way you can understand to a lay person what exactly happens in your treatment.

Prof. Rothbart: Okay; what it is basically is first of all, once we identify the source of the pain, which is critical in any therapy. If you don't know the source of the problem, you can't eliminate it. Once the source is identified as being the underlying source as embryologic foot type, what ends up in chronic pain for an individual is by the way the foot moves. It sends a distorted signal to the brain when the foot twists.

Dr. Kent: That could be chronic pain for like a knee, your back or anything?

Prof. Rothbart: Exactly, any weight bearing joint. The brain acting on the signal changes the position of the body. It doesn't know that the signal is distorted, it acts on the distorted signal and you end up with a distorted posture, which leads you into chronic pain. The way this therapy works is we normalize that signal coming from the foot. We do that using a device we call proprioceptive in-sole. But the end result is normalizing the signal to the cerebellum, the balance center of the brain. The cerebellum acts on that signal, automatically corrects the posture, which places the joints and muscles in their correct anatomical position, and that allows those muscles and joints to heal. That's the basis of this therapy. Allowing the body to heal by eliminating the source of the problem where it started. This is very different from any other type of therapy.

Dr. Kent: Now you're calling from Italy right now?

Prof. Rothbart: Right now we're in Rome, Italy, actually 12 miles outside of Rome, it's a beautiful area here.

Dr. Kent: It's a place I always wanted to go; have you visited the Michelangelo ceiling and all of that?

Prof. Rothbart: Oh of course, how could you not? It's breathtaking.

Dr. Kent: So your work itself is now based in Italy? Tell me about that.

Prof. Rothbart: Yes, actually it is. I ended up in Italy because my research is being followed by the Istituto Superiore di Sanita, a major research facility in Italy, much like the NIH in the United States. They were so interested in my work; they offered me a fellowship, actually a research seat in the department of bioengineering here at the ISS. In fact I was the first American ever to hold that seat and that's obviously allowed me to do a lot research here and we fell in love with the country and we decided to stay here. The research continues and I see patients here and it's one of the truly great countries of the world. If you haven't been here you have to visit.

Dr. Kent: So give me some secrets out of your new book Forever Free from Chronic Pain. Is it something that people need to use your message? What's the secret in the book?

Prof. Rothbart: Well the secret is basically first looking for the source of your problem and the book describes how they can look at themselves to see if they have this embryological foot type or take the book actually to their physician. There's several chapters written for the lay person and physician that tell you how to identify this foot structure and if indeed they have this foot structure, there then is a therapy available that will eliminate it. We have set up actually an academy called the International Academy of Rothbart Proprioceptive Therapy that is currently teaching physicians from all over the world how to use this approach effectively to help their patients and once and for all break the chains of chronic pain and get their life back.

So this book empowers the patient number one to see if indeed their chronic pain is coming from this embryologic foot type and if it is, number two it outlines the steps they can take to eliminate their pain. It's a powerful book, its one that I finally decided I had to write to get this message out. Up until now basically patients have been managed, the pain has been managed, not eliminated and the message needs to get out that there is a way to eliminate the pain. Not manage it, eliminate it. That's why I wrote the book.

Dr. Kent: In what cases does your method not work? If people don't have that foot disorder?

Prof. Rothbart: Yes, there's no one thing that works on everything and that includes my therapy. There are types of chronic pain that are not due to this foot structure. For instance, there are myosin gravis, primary muscle diseases for example, trauma caused from tumors, cancer, pain from cancer, these things would not respond to my therapy because the source is not embryological foot type, the source is something else. The key is and I keep going back to this message; whenever you go see a physician the first question you need to ask is what the source of my problem is? Where did it start? And if that question cannot be answered you cannot eliminate it, you're going to manage it.

For instance, if you come in to an orthopedist and say why am I having knee pain and he says to you when you fell off your bike you tore a ligament and the ligament is the problem. We have to surgically repair it. Then when they do the surgery and repair it, the pain is gone. Isolate the problem and correct it, but if you go into your physician and say I've had a lot of joint pain; my knees hurt, my back hurts, I'm having stomach problems, breathing problems, my ankles hurt, I've been everywhere and I don't understand it and they say to you that you have fibromyalgia you say okay, what causes it? And they'll say to you we don't know, we don't know what causes it but we are going to give you drugs or we're going to give you physical therapy.

We're going to do all these things to make you better, you are being managed. What is happening is they cannot identify the source and so they're treating the symptoms. When you treat symptoms, you never get rid of the problem. You may feel better, you may feel

worse but the problem is ongoing and you'll be in therapy for the rest of your life. So the main thing I say to people is whenever you go to your physician, the first question you should ask is what is causing my problem? What is the source? And if they can't tell you the source of the problem you need to understand that you're being managed. The problem is being managed, which means it will be ongoing. That is probably the most important message I try to give in this book for people to understand that is a key question you must ask any physician that's treating you.

Dr. Kent: Well what a wonderful conversation. The book is called Forever Free from Chronic Pain and when is that coming out?

Prof. Rothbart: It's actually coming out next week I believe. It will be available; they can go on my website of the same name **ForeverFreeFromChronicPain.com**. It talks about the book and they can actually read a free chapter. It talks about where you can order the book; the e-book is available now, the hardcopy will be available next week, that's what I'm told by the publisher. It is a book that will truly change lives of people currently living lives in chronic pain, who are giving up hope. This book offers insights of how to get your life back. It's an important book to read.

Dr. Kent: Well it's been a pleasure speaking with Dr. Brian Rothbart. The book is called Forever Free from Chronic Pain and the website is foreverfreefromchronicpain.com.

Prof. Rothbart: Thank you so much for inviting me to be on your show.