

# Dr. Serena Sterling's Top 5 ways to Alleviate Physical and Emotional Pain



**Dr. Serena Sterling**

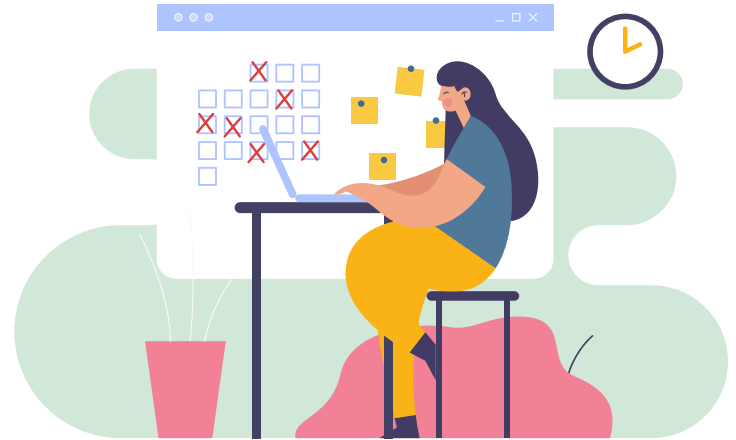
# FIRST, ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS



Where were you and what were you doing when the pain or emotional stress developed?

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Look at a calendar if that helps. Some things to consider: did you move, did your job change, did you start or end a relationship, did you get a new pet or say good-bye to a pet, what was going on in your family?



Once you've identified what might have been going on in your life, ask yourself how you felt about it. Were you anxious, sad, angry, resentful, frustrated, etc?



How did you handle those feelings? Did you talk to a parent, friend, colleague, sibling, or therapist about those feelings? Or did you keep them to yourself?

Let's take the example of my client, Jessica (not her real name). She developed pain in her low back out of nowhere.

When I went through these questions, it turned out that 3 months before the pain started, she had moved in with her boyfriend.

Moving in with a significant other can often be a joyous and exciting time but not always. It can also bring up worry about making the right decision.



Jessica felt anxious and was riddled with self-doubt. Relationships didn't come easily or often to her and this was her longest relationship; moving in together seemed like the next step.

But she never felt like he was her soulmate and had convinced herself that soulmates were only found in romantic comedies. This was as good as it was going to be, she rationalized.

These feelings went through her mind daily but she never disclosed them to anyone for fear of being seen as needy, unrealistic, or being labeled a commitment-phobe. Jessica's back pain was her presenting issue. Underneath that was all the worry and concern about making the right decision about her boyfriend and living together. Yet, she lived with those concerns daily that she hadn't considered that the anxiety was connected to her back pain.



## **ANXIETY**

Once I helped her identify her life events (moving in with the BF) and her feelings, I helped her release them by using the mind body therapies I work with in my practice. Within a few sessions the pain subsided.

You can try this out on your own by asking yourself the three questions described above. Once you've identified the answers, the pain should be less. If it's not, try doing these two other exercises.



# 4

Journal: write about all the feelings you have about the situation you've identified in steps 1-3 above. Don't edit your writing. Keep a free flow without worrying whether your spelling or grammar is correct. Let it out by typing or writing by hand. Talk to text



does not have the same benefit. Pay attention to your feelings not necessarily the story involved to explain why you ended up in the situation you've identified. In this exercise, it's more important to feel the feelings you've been having and which have been circulating in your mind.

## LESSON

The point of journaling is to free your mind of all the looping thoughts and feelings that are not being adequately processed. They instead get lodged in your body and develop into physical pain or get stuck in your mind and manifest as emotional distress such as anxiety or depression. Writing allows you to process the thoughts and feelings and give them an outlet rather than let your mind and body absorb them.

# 5

Express your feelings to the other person involved. In 98% of cases, the issue being identified involves another person. Take the example of Jessica. She was having many doubts about her boyfriend being The One but didn't bring this up with him for many reasons. She feared it would end the relationship and she wasn't ready for that. She feared it would hurt his feelings, he'd be furious that she hadn't said anything until after moving in together, sad that she wasn't sure, anxious she'd never find anyone again, etc.

## LESSON

This step is the hardest, which is why I left it for last. However, it has the potential to transform relationships as well as eradicate physical and emotional pain. So, I challenge you to remind yourself that the most growth occurs when we push ourselves out of our comfort zones and face our fears head on such as expressing our feelings to the other person involved.

## OVERVIEW

If you found these points helpful and you'd like to learn more, or, if you still have some lingering pain and are interested in knowing whether we'd be a good fit to work together, please check out my website: [drserenasterling.com](http://drserenasterling.com) and sign up for one of my sessions.

# THANK YOU

