



The Psychomatrix: A Deeper Understanding of Our Relationship with Pain

Doreen M. Francis

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What is pain? What does it mean to have a relationship with it and how does this affect your identity and existence? Doreen Francis' definition of pain is derived from that proposed by scientists, such as Melzack, Wall and Freud. Pain is a dynamic, multi-layered, diverse collection of experiences, which impacts and influences us throughout life. Pain is a kind of conglomerate of past, traumatic, neurobiological, psychological and emotional imprints--pain as in suffering or being in pain. The author's aim here is to argue that it is not pain, as such, but our relationship with pain, which is most significant to the processes of our lives. In examining the combination of Freud's psychosexual theory of development and Melzack's theory of the neuromatrix, Francis endeavours to evidence her theory that there is the distinct possibility for the existence of what she has named a Psychomatrix--patterns of pain (loss, abandonment, grief, rejection, desire) imprinted from infancy, that are specifically translated by their own 'psychological and emotional neural loops' and therefore, congruent with the neuromatrix concept. She concludes that pain becomes an object that compels us to respond accordingly, thus defining our identity and existence.

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