



Prevention of Chronic Pain: A Human Systems Approach

It's the Little Things: Life in the Seven Realms

Dr. James Friction

Spread the word on preventing chronic pain!

With the misery of chronic pain, we often miss noticing how the little things that we enjoy every day can make us feel good. Thus, the final “homework” assignment of the MOOC is be a little creative and generate your own list of “little things” that make you feel a little better each day. Simply the process of writing down these positive affirmations can often be transformational. Remember, the concept of neuroplasticity. You can change the brain and help others at the same time!

With your permission, I will then publish them in a book to help others know how important these little things are in our lives.

Thus, please make a list of the little things that touch your life every day and make you feel better in each realm of your life. The seven realms (BLESS ME) include the body (physical), lifestyle (behaviors), emotions (feelings), society (people), spirit (beliefs), mind (thoughts), and environment (surroundings). Please refer to the **Seven Realms chart** to remind you of the risk factors, protective factors, and small actions you can take every day to feel better with more energy. Here is my list.

Who am I?

My name is James Friction. I live in Edina, Minnesota and have a cabin on Loon Lake, Wisconsin. I am a husband, friend, father of 4 children, grandfather of 2 grandchildren, MOOC Course Director, Professor Emeritus at University of Minnesota, Senior Researcher at HealthPartners Institute for Education and Research, Pain Specialist at Minnesota Head and Neck Pain Clinic, author, teacher, life-long student, reader, hiker, swimmer, and Packer fan. I am a person who likes to make plans, appreciates the little things along the way, and works to achieve positive energy and balance in each realm of my life and the life of others around me. More than anything, I like to help others.

How do I boost my energy and wellness?

Here are some of the little things that I do in each of the seven realms of my life to feel good.

Body—I love the feeling after...

- I do my yoga routine each morning and stretch the muscles that are tight.
- I go for a brisk walk or run in the morning
- I warm up in the sauna and then cool down by jumping into Loon Lake
- Maintain a balanced relaxed posture all day including while driving
- I hit a string of three point shots playing basketball with my son
- Hitting a long iron golf shot to reach the green in regulation

Lifestyle and Behaviors— I love the feeling after...

- I take a deep breath, slow down, and pay attention to the little things around me.
- I eat rich salad of lettuce, carrots, tomatoes, pine nuts, sunflower seeds, diced olives, goat cheese, dried cranberries, olive oil, and vinegar
- I relax to finish glass of wine and eat a dessert of fresh blueberries and watermelon following a healthy meal
- I wake up rested and take a few moments to listen to the water fountain and birds outside of my bedroom window.
- I take a warm bath to relax before I head off to bed

Emotions and Feelings— I love the feeling after...

- Creating a stain glass window to celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary
- I identify the reason for a bad mood and do something creative to change it
- Creating a new software that supports self-management of patients with pain
- Creating the plot for a new mystery novel
- Writing a scientific paper from my recent research grant

- Reviewing those things in my daily life that make me happy

Social and Relationships– I love the feeling after...

- My grandson runs up to me when he first sees me to give me a big hug
- Helping my patients sort out the reasons for their pain
- A patient tells me that she has no pain since the first visit with only self-management
- I find myself losing a game of cards with my kids despite sincerely trying to win
- A student tells me how important it is to see and care for the whole patient
- I show respect and appreciation for my children in little ways

Spirit and Beliefs– I love the feeling after...

- I have an “Aha! moment” when exercising and identify the solution to a problem
- I am frazzled and take ten minutes to breath deeply and meditate to calm down
- Walk and talk with my wife to realize the best way to handle a situation
- Realizing at the end of a day that my energy was balanced between the 7 realms
- I daydream about how the next few years of my life will be
- I assess what is important in life as I read about disasters in the newspaper

Mind and attitude– I love the feeling after...

- I read a magazine article about a 95 year-old track star who believes that positive attitude is most important factor in health and longevity.
- Reading a scientific paper that confirms the role of diet in developing chronic pain
- I developed the modules for this MOOC about the humans systems approach
- I make an effort to continue to learn Italian...slowly
- Learning how to use a new software application

Environment and Safety– I love the feeling after...

- I make a list of goals for the day and get them done
- I pick up the clutter in my home before my wife arrives from work
- I feel fortunate that I choose not to be a driver who is rushing through traffic
- I plant and tend flowers in our garden to enjoy a splash of colors all summer long
- I notice the beautiful but hidden wild flowers when I hike through a forest
- Breath the scent of a fresh summer rain mist over my patio
- I stop my car to let a group of rambunctious boys cross the street safely

This is my life in the seven realms
What makes you feel good?