

**Polio Perspective**  
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**The Pain of Exclusion**

Our need to matter and our need to belong are as fundamental as our need to eat and breathe. Therefore ostracism -- rejection, silence, exclusion -- is one of the most powerful punishments that one person can inflict on another. Brain scans have shown that this rejection is actually experienced as physical pain, and that this pain is experienced whether those that reject us are close friends or family or total strangers, and whether the act is overt exclusion or merely looking away. Most typically, ostracism causes us to act to be included again -- to belong again -- although not necessarily with the same group:

"Studies reveal that even subtle, artificial or ostensibly unimportant exclusion can lead to strong emotional reactions. A strong reaction makes sense when your spouse's family or close circle of friends rejects or shuns you, because these people are important to you. It is more surprising that important instances of being barred are not necessary for intense feelings of rejection to emerge. We can feel awful even after people we have never met simply look the other way.

"This reaction serves a function: it warns us that something is wrong, that there exists a serious threat to our social and psychological well-being. Psychologists Roy Baumeister of Florida State University and

Mark Leary of Duke University had argued in a 1995 article that belonging to a group was a need -- not a desire or preference -- and, when thwarted, leads to psychological and physical illness. Meanwhile other researchers have hypothesized that belonging, self-esteem, a sense of control over your life and a belief that existence is meaningful constitute four fundamental psychological needs that we must meet to function as social individuals. ...

"Ostracism uniquely threatens all these needs. Even in a verbal or physical altercation, individuals are still connected. Total exclusion, however, severs all bonds. Social rejection also deals a uniquely harsh blow to self-esteem, because it implies wrongdoing. Worse, the imposed silence forces us to ruminate, generating self-deprecating thoughts in our search for an explanation. The forced isolation also makes us feel helpless: you can fight back, but no one will respond. Finally, ostracism makes our very existence feel less meaningful because this type of rejection makes us feel invisible and unimportant. The magnitude of the emotional impact of ostracism even makes evolutionary sense. After all, social exclusion interferes not only with reproductive success but also with survival. People who do not belong are not included in collaborations necessary to obtain and share food and also lack protection against enemies.

"In fact, the emotional fallout is so poignant that the brain registers it as physical pain. ... As soon as [we begin] to feel ostracized, [brain] scanners register a flurry of activity in [our] dorsal anterior cingulate cortex -- a brain region associated with the emotional aspects of physical pain. ...

"For most people, ostracism usually engenders a concerted effort to be included again, though not necessarily by the group that shunned us. We do this by agreeing with, mimicking, obeying or cooperating with others. In our 2000 study, for example, Cheung and Choi asked participants to perform a perceptual task in which they had to memorize a simple shape such as a triangle and correctly identify the shape within a more complex figure. Before they made their decision, we flashed the supposed answers of other participants on the screen. Those who had been previously ostracized ... were more likely than included players to give the same answers as the majority of participants, even though the majority was always wrong. Those who had been excluded wanted to fit in, even if that meant ignoring their own better judgment.

"Although personality seems to have no influence on our immediate reactions to ostracism, character traits do affect how quickly we recover from it and how we cope with the experience. ... People who are socially anxious tend to ruminate or are prone to depression take longer to recover from ostracism than other people do."

Author: Kipling D. Williams

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Publisher: Scientific American Mind

Date: January/February 2011

## **On The Topic of Polio Survivors being Susceptible to Hearing Issues** *by Dr. Richard Bruno*

**Question:** *Are we PPS survivors susceptible to a troubling hearing disorder that causes an especially tough time hearing others on our cell phones? Or how about it being harder to hear when there are outside noises or even noises that are inside a paratransit bus? Directional sources (even by the ear such as a handheld cell phone) drive me nuts. I only have this hearing problem using the cell phone or land line earpiece. (An audio doc told me he could send in my Motorola Bluetooth for an extended cone permanent earpiece, which I have yet to try.)*

*A polio doctor told me that we could have nerve damage in or around the inner ear that only becomes a problem that affects us later. (I think that my associated problem of answering before a person is done talking to me is also related to this.) I'm wondering if this sensory nerve area is somehow related to my hearing and answering problem. Thanks, Dr. Bruno.*

**Dr. Bruno's Response: There is no evidence that the poliovirus damaged any brain area or nerves that affect hearing. (It is the same for visual acuity or touch.)**

**General Rule: If anything sensory is wrong it's not polio-related.**

*A Comment Related to this Question and Answer: What is visual acuity? I have blurred vision (left eye only of course) that my doctor's think is due to the Herpes Zoster (Shingles) damaging nerves that were already compromised from the polio.*

*Dr. Bruno – given your explanation above, that makes so much sense to me. Polio was not the cause of the vision issues. Another issue that causes additional nerve damage was simply the 'icing on the cake'.*

**Dr. Bruno's Response: Visual acuity is focusing your eyes. The muscles that focus were not affected by the poliovirus. None of the hearing taste or other sensory nerves were damaged by polio, but that doesn't mean that another virus couldn't do damage, as in your case, the Herpes virus.**

## Me, Me, Pick Me!

*By Millie Malone Lill*

Being accepted is one thing, but being included is different. I was very fortunate in that I started kindergarten with the same group of kids who would accompany me all the way through school. There was some teasing at first, I suppose, although I really don't remember it much. The first few years of school were almost magical for me because I was encouraged to read and to learn, stuff I've always loved to do. I didn't worry about my peer group. I was too busy dealing with a big heavy brace, walking ten blocks to school, and indulging in my favorite pastime, reading.

Later, though, in junior high, when a girl I considered a good friend told me we could not be friends anymore, I was hurt. "Why not?" I wanted to know. "Because," she explained, as if I should really have known this already, "boys will not come around if I'm hanging out with you. You are just too fat and ugly." That happened roughly 60 years ago and thinking about it still makes me sad.

Not everyone was so heartless, of course. One boy, when it was time to choose teams for games, would make sure I was not the very last one chosen. Next to last, often, but not last. Of course I was hopeless at sports, but he told his teammates that I was their lucky charm. It didn't completely offset the "fat and ugly" comment, but it helped. A lot.

This sort of thing stays with you. I truly believe that what you learn while you are growing up is what shapes your perception of yourself. My mother was very careful not to let me develop an ego. She told me repeatedly that I was ugly and repulsive and that I should prepare myself to live alone, because no one would want to marry someone like me. I not only had had polio, but I was apparently Congenitally Wrong. Her constant criticism still echoes in my mind.

This piece is not dedicated to self pity, all evidence so far to the contrary. No, it has a happy ending. As a result of being left out of most things as a youngster, I have developed a great appreciation for those things I am included in. I am very careful not to make anyone else feel left out. The guest list for the average party of mine strongly resembles the phone book. I never know when to stop inviting. If you can fit in the room, you will be welcome.

I believe my biggest turn around was when I went online and discovered the many polio survivors who were willing to accept me and include me. I'm not so different when in a group of polio survivors. I am not just accepted, I'm liked. I am chosen, not last, not even next to last. Not always first, but almost always early on. My self esteem is higher now than when I was a child. I no longer compare myself to the beautiful people because of the beautiful people in my present peer group. These people are not super models, but they are beautiful from the inside out. When I'm with them, I don't feel fat and ugly at all, I feel loved.

Many of my friends have said that they keep hearing those old tapes playing in their heads. You probably know the ones I mean. The ones that say you are "less than," that you are not worth as much as a "normal" person. We need to smash those tape players to bits. We've all earned the right to be accepted, included, loved, and esteemed.

Join a polio support group, or start your own. I did. There is nothing in this world as affirming as being with a group of people who have been through what you have and have come out the other side. They will hold the lantern that is indeed the light at the end of the tunnel.

## Web Corner

### **Mayo Clinic Store**

[http://www.mayo.edu/pmts/mc1200-mc1299/mc1234-20.pdf\\_ga=1.251566016.735410137.1421378543](http://www.mayo.edu/pmts/mc1200-mc1299/mc1234-20.pdf_ga=1.251566016.735410137.1421378543)

### **Long standing poliomyelitis and psychological health**

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25722063>

### **Laughter and Music Heal**

<http://www.myragoldick.com/4656/laughter-and-music-heal/>

### **How to File an ADA Complaint with the Department of Justice**

[http://www.ada.gov/filing\\_complaint.htm](http://www.ada.gov/filing_complaint.htm)

### **Braces and Brace Management**

[http://www.oandplibrary.org/op/1957\\_04\\_043.asp](http://www.oandplibrary.org/op/1957_04_043.asp)

### **Slide Show: 10 Top Health Questions Answered**

[http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/ss/slideshow-10-top-health-questions?ecd=wnl\\_men\\_022715&ctr=wnl-men-022715\\_nsl-ld-stry&mb=RgNJ8njVI@/vkV0bO8tV1uHnVev1imbCKSun2bnnLCg=](http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/ss/slideshow-10-top-health-questions?ecd=wnl_men_022715&ctr=wnl-men-022715_nsl-ld-stry&mb=RgNJ8njVI@/vkV0bO8tV1uHnVev1imbCKSun2bnnLCg=)

### **Bracing For the Falls of an Aging Nation**

[http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/11/03/health/bracing-for-the-falls-of-an-aging-nation.html?ref=us&\\_r=1&smid=fb-share](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/11/03/health/bracing-for-the-falls-of-an-aging-nation.html?ref=us&_r=1&smid=fb-share)

**Moving the Post Polio Conversation Forward (a video)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R5cEKtr87s&feature=share>

**Pennsylvania Polio Survivors Network**

<http://www.papolionetwork.org/>

**Ouchless Immunization**

<http://gajitz.com/ouchless-immunizations-dissolving-patch-delivers-vaccine/>

### **A Little Bit of Humor**

**I'm sure you will enjoy this. I never knew of one word in the English language that can be a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and preposition.**

**UP**

**This two-letter word in English has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and that word is UP. It is listed in the dictionary as an [adv], [prep], [adj], [n] or [v].**

**It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP ?**

**At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP, and why are the officers UP for election (if there is a tie, it is a toss UP ) and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report?**

**We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and fix UP the old car.**

**At other times, this little word has real special meanings. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UPexcuses.**

**To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP is special.**

**And this UP is confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is blocked UP .**

**We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP!**

**To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look UP the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4 of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions.**

**If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with UP to a hundred or more.**

**When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP/ When the sun comes out, we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, the earth soaks UP the water. When it does not rain for a while, things dry UP. One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now. My time is UP!**

**Oh. One more thing: What is the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night?  
U P!**

**Did that one crack you UP?**

**Don't mess UP. Send this on to everyone you look UP in your e-mail address book. Or not. It's UP to you.**

