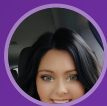


FREE GUIDE

PIONEERS IN PAIN PRESENTS

5 Things Nobody *Tells You* About Living With Chronic Pain

An honest guide for the days when the pain is real, the isolation feels impossible, and you need to know someone who truly understands.



Lynda Gayle Abner

25-Year Chronic Pain Veteran · Founder, Pioneers in Pain



YOUR GUIDE

Lynda Gayle Abner

Founder, Pioneers in Pain

A NOTE FROM LYNDA

I wrote this because nobody told me.

Twenty-five years ago, pain started stealing my life piece by piece. My teaching career. My marriages. My family's understanding. And most of all — my sense of who I was without it.

Nobody told me that what I was feeling was *normal*. Nobody said that the grief, the identity loss, the exhaustion of constantly explaining yourself — all of that was part of the chronic pain experience too.

This guide is what I wish someone had handed me on day one. Not medical advice — but real, human truths from someone who has lived every single one of these.

"You are not broken. You are not weak. You are a pioneer — and you deserve a community that knows that."

— Lynda

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Five Truths That Changed Everything

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Your grief is real — and it's allowed

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TRUTH ONE

Your grief is real — and it's *allowed*.

When chronic pain enters your life, it doesn't just bring physical suffering. It takes things. Your career. Your hobbies. Your ability to make plans. Your sense of who you are. I lost my teaching career — a vocation I had built my entire identity around — and nobody told me I was allowed to grieve it.

Society tells us to "stay positive" and "fight through it." What it doesn't say is that fighting through grief without acknowledging it first is like trying to run a race with a broken leg. You have to stop, look at what broke, and let yourself feel it.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Give yourself permission to mourn. The career you can no longer do. The activities you've lost. The person you were before. Grief in response to chronic pain is not weakness — it is the appropriate emotional response to real loss.

Try this: write down three things pain has taken from you. Then write one sentence honoring each loss. Not "but I'm okay" — just "I grieve this, and that's okay."

Invisible illness is a *full-time job*.

"But you don't look sick." Five words that can undo months of careful emotional work in an instant. Invisible illnesses like fibromyalgia and neuropathy don't come with visible markers — no casts, no scars, nothing for the world to point to and understand. And that invisibility creates an exhausting second job: managing other people's disbelief.

You spend energy justifying your limitations. Explaining why you had to cancel. Performing wellness so people don't question you. It is exhausting in a way that the pain itself sometimes isn't — because it is relentless, social, and has no days off.

A PERMISSION SLIP

You do not owe anyone a performance of health. You do not have to prove your pain. You do not have to explain yourself to people who have decided not to believe you.

Practice saying: "I **know my body**." That is enough.

Isolation isn't weakness — it's a *symptom*.

Chronic pain is socially corrosive. The cancellations pile up. Friends stop extending invitations. Family members grow frustrated. You start to withdraw — sometimes because you truly can't show up, and sometimes because withdrawing first hurts less than being let down. I lost relationships. I watched my family pull away when they couldn't understand what was happening to me.

The isolation that follows is not a character flaw. It is a predictable result of a condition that makes social participation difficult and a culture that hasn't built space for it. Understanding this can be the first step to seeking connection intentionally.

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

Finding **one person** who genuinely understands — not to explain everything to, but to exist alongside — can shift everything. Online communities built around shared experience have been clinically shown to reduce isolation and improve pain outcomes.

You don't need a hundred friends. You need a few people who say: *"Me too. I know. You're not crazy."*

Pacing is a skill, not *surrender*.

Our culture worships pushing through. "No pain, no gain." "Mind over matter." For people with chronic pain, this mentality can cause real damage — physically and emotionally. The boom-and-bust cycle is one of the most common patterns: you have a good day, you do everything, you crash for three days, you feel like a failure.

Pacing — deliberately spreading activity across time to stay within your energy envelope — is one of the most evidence-based approaches to managing chronic pain. But nobody frames it as a skill. They frame it as "giving up." It's not. It's strategy.

✗ Push Through

Do everything on a good day → crash → guilt → rest → repeat. Energy goes on the symptom cycle, not on life.

✓ Pacing

Do a little less than your max, even on good days. Stay inside your energy envelope. Slow and steady gets you further.

You need a community, not just a *diagnosis*.

The medical system gives you a diagnosis. It tells you what you have. It does not tell you how to live with it, how to grieve it, how to explain it to your family, how to find meaning in the middle of it, or who to call on the days when it's too much.

Research consistently shows that social connection — specifically with people who share your experience — reduces perceived pain intensity, improves mental health outcomes, and increases the likelihood of finding effective coping strategies. Community is not a nice-to-have. For chronic pain patients, it is part of the treatment.

"You deserve people who don't need an explanation. Who already know. Who show up because they understand from the inside."

— Lynda Gayle Abner

Lynda

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE

Ready to join a community that *truly* understands?

Pioneers in Pain is a membership community for adults living with chronic pain — led by someone who has lived through every one of these truths and come out the other side.

- ◆ Monthly group coaching calls
- ◆ Private community space
- ◆ Curated resource library
- ◆ People who actually get it

FOUNDING MEMBER OFFER

\$19/month — locked for life
First 100 members only

PioneersinPain.com/membership

This guide is for informational and emotional support purposes only.
It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.