



Chronic Pain and the Spoon Theory

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Understanding the Spoon Theory

Scores of people are affected by chronic pain, and yet there is still a lack of understanding for sufferers. If people can't see illness, they tend not to believe it.

This is the case for many chronic illness sufferers. For Christine Miserandino, it was her friend trying to understand her condition that led her to the explanation now used by people all over the world — the spoon theory.

Using spoons to illustrate energy, she explained each task she completes in a day “costs” a certain amount of spoons. Once the spoons are gone, she has no more energy left for that day.

Typical “healthy” people have a high or unlimited amount of spoons and don't usually have to worry about running out. However, those with chronic illness must think about their day in advance and plan it according to how they feel that day.

what is Spoon Theory?



The **Spoon Theory** was created as a way for people with chronic illness to explain their experience to others.

= ENERGY

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IN THE U.S. ALONE
there are at least
112 MILLION
people living with one or more
CHRONIC ILLNESSES¹

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Despite this, there is still a lack of understanding towards sufferers.

HOW IT WORKS

When you have a chronic illness, you have a **limited number of spoons** for each day — and each task you complete costs a certain number of spoons.

Once your spoons are gone, they're gone.

Say you have **10 tasks** to accomplish in a day — like showering, getting dressed, going to work, etc. — and only **10 spoons** for that day.

Some tasks may require more than one spoon, so some things won't get done. You could dip into your spoons for the next day, but then you'll have even fewer spoons tomorrow.



The difference in being sick and being healthy is having to make choices... the rest of the world doesn't have to.²

- Christine Miserandino, spoon theory creator

AM I A SPOONIE?

The theory has a following of people with a range of conditions who call themselves **Spoonies**.

Conditions the Spoon Theory Applies to Include:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| ★ Lupus | ★ Arthritis |
| ★ Fibromyalgia | ★ Diabetes |
| ★ Depression | ★ Cancer |
| ★ Anxiety | ★ Chronic pain syndrome |
| ★ Chronic fatigue syndrome | ★ Osteoporosis |
| ★ Multiple sclerosis | ★ COPD |

Show the Spoonies in Your Life You Care.

Share to get the word out about chronic illness and end stigma against sufferers.

Follow the discussion using #Spoonie
#SpoonieProblems #SpoonieChat #SpoonieLife

Resources

1 <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/>
2 <http://www.butyoudontlookick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/>

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