

SLICE OF LIFE

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ing full blast.

I began to wonder whether other people have this curse and found an online blog by one sufferer who has actually named the condition for us. "Broken Record Syndrome," or BRS, she explains, is the involuntary internal airing of Auditory Memory Loops or AMLs.

"Basically, sufferers of the BRS/AML phenomenon hear short (5 to 15 second) clips of songs and sometimes phrases over and over to a maddening degree. While most of us have had a song stuck in our heads for a brief period, in those with the AML phenomenon, the noise reaches pathological proportions.

"At one end of the spectrum, for some sufferers the internal music is like a soundtrack to life and causes little or no disruption to speak of. For others, the loops occur sporadically, totally consuming their lives at times, and at other times being blissfully absent.

"At the extreme end are those who are tortured with constant, unrelenting, mind-scrambling sound loops 24/7 for months or even years with absolutely no relief. I fell into this group, along with two other

women I know of so far. For over a year I *never* had even one minute of silence in my head. Not awake and not in my sleep. I couldn't even hear my own thoughts. I literally thought I would go insane or die if I couldn't stop the constant maddening loops in my head."

And there you are. Although BRS hasn't been officially recognized by the medical establishment, so far as I know, it occurs to me that there's a pharmaceutical opportunity here. Since there's a pill for everything else in America, why not one to stop the music? I can hear the announcer now.

"Are you being driven crazy by unwanted songs inside your head? New Tune-Ex with Notebegone stops that maddening soundtrack so you can think and rest normally again. Tune-Ex replaces recognizable tunes with a simple thudding sound that most users say doesn't interfere with their thoughts the way actual music and lyrics can. Side effects may include an inability to dance. Ask your doctor if Tune-Ex is right for you."

I'm going to start working on the formula right after I take a short nap. Ahhh, that feels good — wait — No, please — "Daddle-a-dat, dat-adda-dat dat dat dat — stayin' aliiiiiiii-ah ah-iiiiiiiive —"

PROSE & COMMENTS

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riencing the pain of their destructive decisions that they will eventually reach the point of having had enough. By protecting them, you are actually adding to the problem and delaying the possibility of their getting into recovery.

- Addiction is very misunderstood and complex, so learn all you can about the disease so that you will know what to expect and how to be part of the solution.

If they are in recovery:

- Do not demonize or reject the person in recovery. Remember they have a deadly disease and they need love and support from all of us. They already feel "less than" — it's one of the reasons they turned to drugs.

- Part of the recovery process often includes slips. Do not panic if this happens. Often, once the addict has been in recovery, they will learn from the slip and want to return to their recovery program.

- One of the tenets of recovery is that the person needs to change the people, places and things that serve as triggers. This makes it doubly difficult to get and stay clean and sober on Shelter Island. Moving off the Island may be necessary in order to sustain their sobriety.

This disease affects all who care

about the addict. You can receive help and support to heal the pain you have suffered and learn how to be part of the recovery process by going to open Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous meetings and regularly attending Al-Anon or Alateen (for adults or teenagers who have been affected by someone else's drug/alcohol abuse). These meetings are available on the Island (see listings in the Reporter calendar) as well as on both forks. Call 1-888-425-2666 or go online (al-anon-suffolk-ny.org) for meeting times and locations.

And finally, never give up on your loved one who is involved in drugs or alcohol. There is always hope. Miracles happen every day.

We can all be part of combating heroin as well as alcohol and other drug abuse on this Island. Be vigilant and call the police if you suspect drug activity in your neighborhood, be supportive of those in recovery, and participate in an appropriate Communities That Care program. By working together we can build stronger youth, stronger families and a stronger community.

Communities That Care is currently gathering experts who will share their knowledge on additional aspects of this issue at a community meeting.

Watch for an announcement of the date, time and place in this paper and on Channel 22.

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