

"Chiropractic Warrior?"

"I think great damage has been done by people romanticizing the image of a gentle warrior, a peaceful warrior. I understand the intent. It's honorable. But I think we have to come up with another word. To use the word "warrior" in that respect is to confuse the issue. A "good person," "brave man," "courageous woman" - these are better terms than "warrior."

- Terry Dobson

In the wake of the heartbreaking massacre at Littleton, Colorado last year, and other previous and subsequent acts of violence, people are beginning to ask very important questions about the way we teach our children to think and act.

There has been talk about gun control, though few people think that guns are at the root of the problem. There has also been talk about the preponderance of violence in the areas of popular television, the cinema and arcade games to which our children are exposed to the point of saturation. Terms like "virtual military desensitization" are being formed to describe the effect of this immersion in the culture of violence.

All the while, details of this earnest discussion are printed virtually side-by-side with graphic depictions of the NATO bombings and the recent violence in Yugoslavia. Somehow, we have decided to separate the language of violence from the language of war.

War is violence, of course; war is aggression; hostility; fear; hatred; revenge; violence; and killing. Eric Harris, one of the young men who opened fire on his classmates at Columbine High School, did so only after he was rejected by the Marines. He wanted to go to Yugoslavia. He wanted to go to war. Eventually, he did.

We should understand that when we speak of war, we are speaking of everything that defines war, including violence. When we speak of war, we invoke a paradigm whose tenets permeate every aspect of our endeavors.

I am not a pacifist. I agree with the aikido master Terry Dobson's statement: "We are all for nonviolence, but there are times when the right course of action is to fight like hell." Choosing when that right course of action involves weighing the price of war in its entirety. Of course, war exerts a price on both sides, no matter how it is fought. How many innocent Kosovars have we slaughtered as we clumsily try to liberate their country while avoiding U.S. casualties?

At its best, war may be considered the final option in an exhaustive effort towards peace. At worst, it is a hormonally-motivated, fear-based, shortsighted reaction to a perceived threat.

With this in mind, I am always uneasy when I hear the term "war" invoked in the context of some

cause or movement. As a chiropractor, I am particularly disturbed by the usage of the term "chiropractic warrior." How may people leading this war cry accept responsibility for the perpetuation of the war paradigm in its uglier and more insidious manifestations? Granted, there is a certain exhilaration that this language inspires, yet I can only imagine that those who use it have little appreciation for the true nature of war in the real world and the price that it exerts on its very real victims.

A more mature society would pause more profoundly before inciting the paradigm of war, just as a more noble society would refrain from glorifying it so gratuitously. War is not glorious. It's horrible, cruel and devastating. It is not a concept to invoke frivolously at pep rallies and expensive seminars. It is a concept which, when borne, manifests its nature throughout its host. It is a beast whose nature we cannot selectively employ. We cannot glorify war and then act stunned when our children act like warriors and do what warriors do.

Even in the chiropractic profession, especially in the chiropractic profession, at least in the chiropractic profession, we should hold ourselves to a higher standard. In chiropractic, the messages of peace, harmony and cooperation are already ingrained into our fundamental ideology. We were years ahead of our time when our forefathers authored inspiring lectures on global transformation through individual healing. When we gratuitously champion the paradigm of war, we dishonor our nature, our heritage and our power.

I am not a chiropractic warrior. I choose not to perpetuate the cause of war in my beautiful and sacred profession. I will strive toward its growth and work toward its cause, but I prefer not to be part of the mindset that inspired the Columbine High slaughter. I choose to pray that there will not have to be another massacre for us all to feel a sharp catch in our throats before we utter another cry for war.

JANUARY 2000