

Dr. Palmer vs. Dr. Mayo

L. Ted Frigard, DC, PhC

In the early 20th century, Dr. Charles Mayo, physician, surgeon, and co-founder of the famed Mayo Brothers Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, brought his wife for treatment to the Dr. B.J. Palmer Chiropractic Research Clinic in Davenport, Iowa.

Dr. Mayo had taken his wife to other physicians, including doctors in Europe, all distinguished diagnosticians and specialists. Dr. P.L. Poulsen of the BJPC staff informed me that those medical specialists had agreed upon a diagnosis - osteochondromatosis of the knee joint. They had tried everything medical to heal Mrs. Mayo, but all treatment had failed.

Dr. Mayo brought his wife to Dr. Palmer for his chiropractic professional services. He addressed Dr. Palmer as Mr. Palmer. To this Dr. Palmer replied: "This is a case of Greek meeting Greek; a test of steel against steel; a test of our simple chiropractic principle and practice against your complex medical theories and experiments."

Dr. Palmer ordered spinographs taken of Mrs. Mayo's spine.

"Mr. Palmer, why are you only taking spinal x-rays?" queried Dr. Mayo.

"Because, we are going to locate the vertebral subluxation cause of her sickness, so we can correctly adjust it." replied Dr. Palmer.

Dr. Mayo rejoined, "There is no such thing, and if there were, you couldn't adjust it by hand only."

"Dr. Mayo," Dr. Palmer said to the world-renowned clinician, "while you are here, we are going to ask you to keep your mouth shut."

Dr. Palmer performed readings with the neurocalometer and neurocalograph, then analyzed the patient's spinographs. Afterward, he gave her an upper cervical chiropractic adjustment to release spinal cord compression from the vertebral occlusion in her spinal canal.

After the chiropractic adjustment, Dr. Mayo asked, "Is that all you are going to do? What is wrong with my wife? Where is she sick? What is your diagnosis?"

Dr. Palmer replied, "We don't know. What is more, we don't care."

"You are a very ignorant man," retorted Dr. Mayo.

"We are ignorant of everything you think we should know," countered B.J.

After a pause, Dr. Palmer spoke again. "You, too, are a very ignorant man. You are ignorant of everything we think you should know about the cause of disease in the backbone of sick people. We know cause; you know there is a difference or you wouldn't be here. That's the difference in your approach, which has done your wife no good, and our approach, which will get your wife well."

"That remains to be seen," Dr. Mayo replied.

Dr. Palmer continued: "I am ignorant of everything you think I should know about disease of the sick. You know all this, and what good has it done your wife? The fact that you brought her here proves your methods have failed. Because of reports of the success of our methods of vertebral subluxation and adjustment, you brought your wife here to us."

Mrs. Mayo received chiropractic care for several months and went home well. Dr. Mayo stated it was impossible for her to get well with what Palmer did, yet he also admitted she was well.

Dr. Palmer expounded: "Medical doctors are concerned in knowing everything about effects, while chiropractors are vitally concerned in the cause in the backbone and how to correct it. What a difference between medical care and chiropractic care! A patient can come to the B.J. Palmer Chiropractic Clinic and be deaf, dumb, and blind - not telling or indicating anything - and we could and would locate the cause of whatever, wherever he had it; we adjust him and send him home well. It is as simple as that."

I was on the staff of the B.J. Palmer Chiropractic Clinic in 1953-54. Although "Dr. Charlie" had passed away in 1939, during that time, 60 to 80 percent of our patients were referred by "someone" on the staff of the Mayo Clinic.

References:

1. BJ Palmer,DC,PhC. *Volume XXXII*.
2. PL Poulsen,DC,BJPCC. Personal account.

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