

## Keep Your Finger on the Pulse

In today's changing world, it is more important than ever to keep one finger on the pulse of society. I believe that chiropractic is perfectly positioned for tremendous growth and prosperity. I would like to share with you some of today's trends and how I believe they will continue to impact you and your practice.

It is most important to acknowledge the impact of the "baby boomers." Boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964. There are 78 million baby boomers in this country; another boomer turns 50 every seven-and-a-half seconds. They are entering their peak spending years, taking their places at the seats of societal power and preparing to launch 30 years of change based on the tenets of the '60s consciousness. The U.S. president and vice president are both baby boomers. "Boomers are going to redefine 'middle age' to 'midyouth'," says Cheryl Russell, editor of the monthly newsletter the Boomer Report.

What do baby boomers spend their money on? Cosmetics, health, fitness, and nutrition products, says Gerald Celente of the Trends Journal newsletter. "Anything having to do with health and longevity is going to sell." Boomers are joining health clubs at an all-time rate, according to the fitness product council, and focusing on exercise routines that place a greater emphasis on energy, stamina and wellness as opposed to those that just build muscle.

Boomers do not associate health, wellness, fitness and spirituality with insurance coverage. They are accustomed to paying for health, but not for the alleviation of pain. When it comes to what boomers perceive as improving their health, they will spend as much as it takes.

Boomers created a billion-dollar industry of bottled water instead of drinking water out of the tap. They pay extra for organic fruits and vegetables, vitamins, herbal supplements, health clubs, cosmetic surgery, and spa vacations. Boomers are moving away from the treatment of disease and toward an improvement of their quality of life and spiritual pursuits.

The lesson here is that Americans are looking for and spending their money on exactly what we in chiropractic have to offer: health and wellness care. We must be ready. If you practice chiropractic as a treatment for pain and disease, many of your potential patients have already been conditioned to avoid your services. On the other hand, if you maintain a health and wellness practice and stress chiropractic as part of a healthy lifestyle, patients will not only pay for your services, but pay premiums for it. As the millennium approaches, we can see a dramatic rise in businesses related to personal growth, new-age thinking, and a greater connection to spirituality. In 1996, six medical schools received grants from the National Institute for Healthcare Research "to teach students how to incorporate spirituality into clinical care." USA Today and Time recently reported that approximately 70% of the population see a relationship between spirituality and health. A recent Gallop/CNN/USA Today survey indicated that 96% of Americans believe in God and the God within.

Once again, this trend is perfect for the chiropractic profession. Chiropractors must be proud of their heritage and openly communicate with and educate their patients about innate intelligence. Patients today feel more comfortable and more aligned with a doctor who believes in a supreme healing power. Tell the truth, and it will set you free.

In her best-selling book, *Clicking*, futurist Faith Popcorn identifies some of the sweeping consumer movements driving the marketplace. Among the trends she highlights are "being alive," "anchoring" and "icon toppling."

"Being alive" explains that the concept of wellness and healthy living is a dominant philosophy today that will continue to mushroom in the future. "Anchoring" talks about the search for our roots. We are desperately looking for meaning and purpose in our lives that cannot be gained simply from material accumulations. "Icon toppling" says that if it's big, established and traditional, it's in trouble. We are overturning all the pillars of society. This means difficulties ahead for big business, government, and the legal and medical professions. The continuing collapse of the medical model of disease care proves this trend. Alternative and complementary health care systems will continue to flourish, and once again chiropractic finds itself in the perfect position.

Knowing about, understanding and following society's trends makes succeeding so much easier. As chiropractors, we should know better than anyone that life is one adjustment after another. We must be like the chameleon, who never really changes who he is, but regularly adapts to the changes in his environment. We need to be in synchronization with what's important today and tomorrow to best benefit the people we serve.

All the trends point toward chiropractic. It is important for us to be ready and to stay focused: to remain strong in chiropractic philosophy, to better communicate what we do, and to position chiropractic as a lifestyle, not as a treatment for disease. Society is racing toward us.

We are so fortunate and blessed to be chiropractors. To serve others and to give out of our abundance keeps us alive, focused and powerful. It is a joy and an honor to have a lasting purpose. Chiropractic has positioned us perfectly, and life is extraordinary.

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APRIL 1998