

"The Turning Point"

Richard Tyler, DC

Several years ago I went to an evening showing of Rocky II. Through most of the film, poor Rocky had to put up with his wife begging him to give up fighting. Finally she's ill and in the hospital. Rocky, in the meantime, has stopped all training because of his concern for his wife's health. The guy's a mess. He looks like a cadaver as he sits in tears by his wife's bed. At this point the audience is thoroughly frustrated. How could our hero ever get in shape in time for the big fight? Will this ever end? At last, Rocky's wife's eyes flutter open and she beholds her broken husband. There's a silence. Finally she whispers, "Rocky." He looks up and sees she's awake. Eagerly he leans forward to see what she wants. There's another silence. At last she looks at him intensely and whispers one more word. "Win!"

The moment was electrifying. The people in the audience actually stood up and started cheering. This was the turning point in the film. All else had been but a prologue to that one word as the music pounded with renewed excitement. Until that point it was just another film. The word "Win!" transformed Rocky II into a winner, which in turn allowed the production of the Rocky films that followed.

It's my conviction that many of the most popular films of today have had turning points or pivotal scenes that changed them into something very special. Another example is the first Superman film. I went to see the show on a Saturday matinee in a theatre that was filled with screaming kids and flying popcorn. Everyone seemed to be having fun. It was like looking at a fancy live-action cartoon. You could hardly hear the dialogue. Then came the balcony scene with the mighty Superman and the lovely Lois Lane. At one point in her "interview" with the man of steel she asks, "Just what do you stand for anyway?"

Superman shoots back, "Truth, justice and the American way."

Lois says, "Oh, come on." The kids in the audience hoot at Superman's "corny" reply.

The camera then moves in on Superman's face. There's a pause as his eyes narrow. "Lois," he says simply, "I never lie."

This simple and sincere reply made the audience so quiet that you could hear the proverbial pin drop. Suddenly everything seemed different. No longer was the audience looking at a cartoon -- rather at a real life-and-death fight with the forces of evil. Why? Because Superman never lies.

There are, of course, turning points in people's lives and in all kinds of endeavors. With chiropractic, we are reaching a turning point in our profession. The forces of "evil" are personified by those who would restrict not only their own scope of practice but that of every other chiropractor as well. It wouldn't matter if they minded their own business -- but theirs is a fanatical holy mission devoid of any thought of the consequences of their actions.

To make things worse, they have formed their own schools and are trying to force their graduates into every state. The problem with all this is that they admit and proudly proclaim that they are not qualifying their students to a full scope practice.

The majority of the country allows varying degrees of physical therapy, nutritional counseling and various diagnostic procedures. Therefore, every CCE accredited school should be required to teach everything that might be allowed in every state.

Oh, sure -- Sammy Straight never wants to touch one of those filthy diathermy machines because that isn't chiropractic. Then sometime, a few years later, he has second thoughts. He finally figures out that the adjustment isn't a panacea. That maybe -- just maybe something added might increase the benefits to his patients. Sammy then picks up the telephone and calls a dealer in physical therapy equipment.

Before you know it, there's a shiny new diathermy machine in his office that he can't wait to use. All he has to do is turn it on and let it fry the next person who comes in. Denied the knowledge needed by his CCE or SCASA approved school and allowed to practice by a whimp board -- this potential public menace blithely goes on until he applies diathermy to a pregnant woman and causes her to abort.

In spite of things like this as a possible common occurrence, state boards still agonize over how to handle the unqualified applicant.

It all seems so simple. The CCE should only approve schools that teach or expose their students to a full scope of practice in the event that the student might apply to practice some day in a broad scope state. It is then the duty of the individual state boards to do what they were appointed to do -- guard the welfare of the public from the unqualified practitioner. In other words, don't allow anyone to practice who hasn't been educated to practice to the limits allowable by the respective laws.

Doesn't that make sense? So why all the squirming and hand wringing? Let's have the CCE and the boards clean up their act and replace some of that Jello where their guts should be.

This is a turning point in our profession. We can become a vacillating bunch of bewildered members of the healing arts or examples of integrity and strength. We can "win" by demonstrating our sense of purpose and "never lie" to the public when we say that the graduates from our institutions are fully qualified to serve their health needs. The script is in our hands and the ending is up to us.

RHT

JUNE 1991