

## What Do We Do With All These Bricks?

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

Like cans of spray paint, bricks are sometimes used for something other than their intended purpose. When paint companies came up with spray cans, they gave homeowners the ability to use a spray application method without having to buy lots of equipment. If you've ever painted shutters or vent covers, you appreciate the value of spray paint.

Unfortunately, spray paint also became the weapon of choice for "tagging" among gang members and other minor-league criminals. In a vain quest for fame and power, these individuals use spray paint to deface everything from billboards to traffic signs.

So, spray paint is good when used to paint (legally), and bad when used to deface property. It's not always the product that determines its true value; it's the intention of the person using it.

The same holds true for the building blocks of chiropractic practice and philosophy. They can create a structure we can all live in, or they can be used to smash the windows of other DCs with whom we disagree. Unfortunately, the latter seems to be the norm for a number of people in this profession.

And while there is always the "He started it first" mentality, the reality is that throwing bricks at each other really isn't getting us anywhere. In fact, it only serves to weaken our profession. And most of the time, we are humiliating each other in the face of the consumer public, other health care providers and our detractors.

There is a difference between thoughtful self-criticism (which this editorial hopefully serves as) and an "I'm gonna get you back" tirade. Like all people, we need to look at our profession from time to time, admit our shortcomings and consider how we can improve. This is not only healthy - but also mandatory - if we ever hope to mature.

The quickest way to tell when people's comments have deteriorated to verbal war is when the topic of conversation is no longer the issues, but the individuals involved. What should have been a respectful debate turns into an all-out effort to vilify people and/or organizations.

Unlike the United States of America, chiropractic in the U.S. is not "one" profession, "under God, with liberty and justice for all." We are still divided, without a mechanism by which we can meet, debate and decide our future, based on a consensus of the best minds in our profession. (I'm sitting here asking myself if I will be writing a similar statement 10 years from now; I hope not.)

This is what chiropractic in the U.S. still needs: Unity. Chiropractic professionals in almost every other country in the world are united into one body. They don't always agree (They probably don't even usually agree!), but they act as one, based on the wishes of the majority. This is how our national, state, city and county governments work. It is even how the PTA works!

There has to be a way to allow individuals to be elected by specific bodies of DCs. These bodies could be based on regional location, philosophic orientation or some other criteria. The idea is that every DC in the U.S. should be represented by one or more people who respect and choose to

represent them.

Once the structure is in place, the rest is easy: If someone gains the support of his or her peers in an open and honest election, let that person represent them. If he or she doesn't, regardless of how much money the person has or how loud his or her voice is, that person hasn't earned the right to represent the public.

While some suggest that this model would reduce association membership, I disagree. More DCs will become members of more associations as a way to support the "party" that best reflects what they believe in. Associations that act in the best interest of their members will gain members; those that don't will lose them.

And just like the elections in this country, you would see leadership shift over time. Our "House of Chiropractic Representatives" might be more liberal one year, and more conservative the next. (My guess is that it would be more middle-of-the-road, as representatives debate issues and realize we aren't that far apart.)

You get the idea. It's not as if we don't have lots of models to look to. We just need to decide it's time to make the move.

But for now, chiropractic is like a large brickyard. Various groups of DCs are using the bricks they find to build separate houses, and a few are picking up bricks with the sole intention to throwing them.

*DMP Jr.*

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