

## Playing as a Team

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There's no "I" in team. It's a sports saying we've heard time and again, but there is considerable merit to it, despite its simplicity. Playing as a team will get you much further than playing as individuals who have no sense of the bigger picture. Chiropractors, it's time for us to start looking at ourselves like a team, and for that team to be successful, we have to unite.

We must work together to meet our goals or we will never reach them. A championship - a team's top goal - is won by a group of people who come together to meet a shared objective. Becoming number one in your field is about discovering what sets your team apart from the rest, and then using those strengths to achieve victory. The same rules apply to chiropractic: We need to discover our strengths and use them to achieve success.

It starts by taking a good look at ourselves, our practice and our profession. I believe you need to know where you stand before you can determine where you want to go. Take some time to notice what you do in your daily routine. How do you greet your patients? How do you determine their diagnoses? How do you treat them when they ask questions? You are the face of chiropractic to so many people. Their only interaction with the profession could be in your office. It is important for you to stop and think about what that means and what kind of impact you want to have.

Next, we need to see how our practice fits into the profession as a whole. You may feel that you cannot impact the big decisions, but that's not true! Every single chiropractor makes a valuable contribution. Everyone has a strength or asset that makes him or her unique. We need to identify that talent and use it to benefit the profession. On a football team, the kicker may not seem like the toughest position to play, but wait until your favorite team needs to make a last-second field goal to win the game. Then it becomes clear how much pressure the kicker deals with and how that one skill affects the entire game.

Once you know what your strengths are, it's time to set goals. It is good to have personal goals in addition to a group goal, as long as your personal goals fit into the main objective. Take a basketball player who only wants to set individual scoring records. If that personal goal is more important than winning the game, the player is missing the main objective. For chiropractors, leading a successful practice can help our profession tremendously, but you have to be careful of how you achieve that success. If you are trustworthy and work hard to gain new patients, you will show many potential patients how honest and reliable chiropractic really is. But if you veer from honesty for the sake of improving the bottom line, you will do a disservice to the entire chiropractic profession.

Our main goal should be to work together to shed light on the profession, so more people will seek and receive its many benefits. Chiropractic needs to become more unified, and we need your help. We can't provide the level of care our patients deserve if we are not all working on the same page. We want everyone to see the value of chiropractic to their health, whether or not they are in pain. We need to become a unified group so potential patients will see what we are all about, and then choose us as a health care provider.

Once you set your goals, put them down on paper. Make a list of the top three things you do well in your practice, and then find a way for those skills to help chiropractic. There is a reason successful sports teams write down their goals before the season starts. It is much easier to work toward something concrete than it is to work with an abstract image of what you want to happen.

Now we need to work together to meet our goal and achieve success. It's one thing to talk about unity; now we have to go out and live it.

A teammate who doesn't share the ball during the game or share the credit for the win is not a true teammate. We must talk to other members of our field, listen to their points of view, and then work together to meet our main objective of getting more people to use chiropractic care. If you strive to meet your goals while still focusing on the main objective of chiropractic, you will be doing your part to help the profession. At the end of the game, that is what we all want: to get more people to benefit from chiropractic. So, let's join together to make this goal possible!

It's easy to become complacent in our daily lives. We get caught up in our routine and it becomes safe. But, we need to push ourselves to break out of that routine and raise the bar of our care. If we keep striving to be the best - by giving our patients the best care, learning the latest techniques, and growing as a doctor - then we will continue to improve our practice and, in turn, improve our patients' lives.

So, what happens when we see a change in the way people perceive chiropractic? We will celebrate as a team! There may not be a stadium full of people cheering loudly or confetti streaming down from the sky when we meet our goal, but the pride and joy we'll feel will be the same. We'll know that we did it together, and that our hard work caused millions of people to see chiropractic the same way we do: as a positive way to both heal the body and manage a healthy lifestyle.

Let the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress help you spread the word. Let us take care of educating the public about the benefits of chiropractic. Let us take care of promoting wellness through chiropractic. Together, we can make a difference. Together, we will make it work.

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