

We Get Letters & E-Mail

Broadening the Well

Dear Editor:

As usual, I enjoyed Dr. Perle's column ["[Poisoning the Well](#)," April 24, 2006], and as usual, I disagree with him. I don't think a man picking up women is analogous to a chiropractor marketing his practice. The fact that Dr. Perle believes they are analogous may be an indication of his vision of chiropractic. In fact, even the examples Dr. Perle uses are more an indication of his adaptation to the chiropractic stigma and what he has passed on to his patients than an indictment of the marketing tactics used.

To illustrate, Dr. Perle used as an example a doctor offering to give one half of his new patient income to a charitable cause. Dr. Perle's patients found that offensive. However, local restaurants in my town just gave away a percentage of proceeds on a certain day to a food bank. Some of us might have considered that to be shameless advertising, but it helped the homeless and was viewed as altruistic by the community. If someone among the group needed chiropractic care, what a great way to get started and help a worthwhile cause.

Dr. Perle's second example is adjusting people at a fair, which also can be seen as a shameless hustle or as a humanitarian service. The difference in vision depends on your vision of chiropractic. Is a chiropractic adjustment something of value? If so, then when given freely to help relieve suffering, is it not a humanitarian service? In my community, the local hospital often has operatives at fairs taking blood pressure and performing cholesterol screening. I doubt that the public sees that as simply a marketing tactic, although those of us in business may recognize it as such.

Dr. Perle then asks us to look at chiropractic fraud and ignore the fraud of medicine. That is the fallacy of special pleading. Chiropractic has always been held to a higher standard than medicine. Frankly, I'm tired of it.

I think I know how he feels. There was a time when I felt the same way. At times, I still do. It is easy to feel that any chiropractor who practices differently than I do is poisoning the well. I used to be very X-ray based and thought that any chiropractor who practiced without taking X-rays was poisoning the well for those of us who are more scientific. I used to think that those who adjusted by palpation alone were poisoning the well for those of us who use instrumentation. I used to think that those who denied the 110 years of anecdotal evidence for chiropractic effectiveness, and failed to do a literature search before stating that chiropractic is only good for back pain, were poisoning the well for those of us who adjust subluxations to enhance health. I no longer believe that is true. People come to me for who I am and what I do.

As a profession, we are people. A percentage of us are hucksters. That is true in any profession. There are a percentage of us whose vision of chiropractic can't go beyond back pain, regardless of the evidence. A percentage of us want to play medical doctor and diagnose and treat all manners of disease. A percentage of us want to be alternative providers and practice anything but prescribing medicine and performing surgery. A percentage of us want to check people for subluxations to

improve their ability to adapt and respond to innate intelligence. A percentage of us understand and teach chiropractic philosophy and a percentage of us haven't grown beyond the ancient Greeks.

Each of us, in our own way, broadens and deepens the well. If we consider anything but a limited view of chiropractic and a limited range of behaviors to be poisoning the well, the well becomes smaller.

I encourage Dr. Perle to broaden his vision. Try to defend your fellow colleagues. Many people and companies make money playing on the chiropractic stigma. It is time for it to stop.

Robert Clyde Affolter, DC
Bellingham, Washington

Editor's note: The following letter to the editor is in response to "Gilligan's Island," written by William Morgan, DC and published in the May 8, 2006 issue. An online version of that article is available at www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/10/09.html.

Trapped on Gilligan's Island?

Dear Editor:

One can only feel sorry for Dr. Morgan if he feels like he is trapped on an island with a bunch of stooges. In the chiropractic paradise I live in, there are only sick and suffering people, finding ease from the rudeness and rigors of life and lots of good friends and mentors, past and present, to share the experience, each from their own unique perspectives. Everyone from newborn infants to quadriplegics, to medical doctors and their families get "adjusted, strictly for their subluxations" here. One could ask if it is just good fortune or a more complete education, of the philosophical tenets of chiropractic, that makes the difference in our chiropractic experience, on the same planet at the same time?

To begin with we need to understand what the impetus was for the genesis of chiropractic in the first place. Was it to establish a profession that would eventually be complementary to medicine, or finally be credible enough to be practiced in hospitals? Were the founders or those that were incarcerated for the principle of chiropractic, worried about their paraprofessional relationships or insurance equality? Did they dream of being primary care providers some day with the option of writing medical prescriptions? Please Dr Morgan, you do a grave injustice to those you proffer to represent. The profession you dream of sounds more like "*doctors of physical therapy*."

Chiropractic was born out of an incomplete and failed medical model of the late 1800's, which remains pretty much the same today. Dr Palmer realized that the mankind and health was not just comprised of a mechanistic assortment of individual tissues and organs, but that there was an organization and interconnectedness to all of it and an intelligence that governed that organization and maintained it in existence. The profession of chiropractic has always had a "clear direction"; only some of its practitioners have been disgruntled and malcontented for reasons only known to themselves.

The power and uniqueness of chiropractic is that it links the metaphysical concept of the "mental impulse" to the physical vehicle of the nerve impulse as the means of intellectual coordination and expression of health in the human body. Now, there will always be a segment of the populace (including those in the medical community) that is uncomfortable with the intangible aspects of life and that is their prerogative. But we, as chiropractors, cannot pander to that insecurity by trying to

be all things to all people. Once you remove the metaphysical aspect of the "mental impulse" from the chiropractic paradigm and the philosophy that seeks to define and defend it, do you begin down the slippery slope of medical treatment and analysis solely defended by medical science to substantiate your being. Herein lies the angst of our poor brother, Dr. William Morgan.

To his credit as a visionary, Dr. Morgan is right about establishing a logical and defensible twenty-five year plan for the future. But rather than looking too fondly over the fence for cultural authority and credibility we should repair back to the philosophy and principles that brought us here; enhancing and expounding upon that experience. Science may give us credibility but only philosophy can give us direction. Just as philosophy can never replace scientific validation, science can never replace the role of chiropractic philosophy. Chiropractic philosophy should be mandated, standardized and studied to a testable degree as much as the other aspects of our education. This knowledge would serve to empower and embolden us as chiropractors. Once our young chiropractors are educated and the older chiropractors are reacquainted with the veracity of intention of our historic philosophy, they will never again feel second class to anyone, or feel as though they are trapped on an island of fools.

Jack K. VanDervort, DC, DPhCS
Meadville, Pennsylvania

Innate Intelligence and the Wellness Care Model

Dear Editor:

I would like to commend L.D. Koenig, DC, for her honest and thoughtful comments on innate intelligence. [See "What Am I doing Wrong?" Letter to the editor published in the May 8, 2006 issue: www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/10/21.html.] In my 30 years of practicing chiropractic I have also questioned why, if innate intelligence is all so powerful, does one constantly need adjustments of the spine to maintain homeostasis?

Of course, there are many patients who may need extended care for a period of time due to trauma. Also, there are chronic subluxated patients who are under much physical and emotional stress which is compounded by a lack of exercise. However, I have always believed that a fit and well-conditioned person is less likely to need chiropractic adjustments. Even if these individuals are subluxated from time to time, I believe that their subluxations are often resolved on their own because their innate intelligence is easily expressed. Most people would be better off spending their money on a health club than sign up for a chiropractic family plan under the illusion that adjustments will take care of most of their health needs.

I feel that my subluxation-based colleagues who profess wellness and lifetime care have little respect for the human body and its recuperative powers. I believe this is a reality that these practitioners do not want to face or admit.

Daniel V. Mariano, DC
Rutherford, New Jersey

JULY 2006