

## The Wedding (Can't We All Just Get Along?)

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It was 1957 and the "Baumgartner-Stewart" wedding was at hand. Many in Homosassa Hills, Fla., were looking forward to the event, since both the bride and groom had grown up there and both their families were very active in the community. The Baumgartners were known for their financial support of the wildlife sanctuaries that skirted the Homosassa region and the west coast of Florida. The Stewarts had the reputation of giving money for many civic needs, such as their donation to buy the new pump-truck for the voluntary fire department.

As a practical matter, the families even attended the same Methodist church, so the wedding had none of the drama of different religious traditions thrown into the mix. In fact, it appeared that all the important, nervous variables of a wedding were covered – except for one gorilla-size issue: the bride and groom (curiously) both had fathers who were chiropractors, and the two did not like each other.

For the uninitiated, chiropractic has had a history of different opinions regarding the definition of the profession. This was especially true in the '50s, when there were essentially two camps: "straights and mixers." "Straight" chiropractors felt that practice should be limited to spinal adjustments for neurological interference, while "mixers" wanted a broader definition including nutrition, physiotherapy, extremity adjusting, etc. This debate might seem tame by chiropractic's professional culture today, but in those days, the "difference of opinion" could be compared to differences between people in Northern Ireland, Bosnia or Rwanda. It was gut-level.

Bob Baumgartner was the "straight" chiropractor and Frank Stewart was the "mixer." They were always cordial to each other in church, but they had a colorful history of "differences." Both had been active in their separate chiropractic associations, which often battled each other in the Florida legislature, mostly over the scope of practice.

Once in Tallahassee, after a few alcoholic refreshments at the Holiday Inn, Bob and Frank ended up in a shouting match in the parking lot, which required their chiropractic buddies to pull them apart. Both were opinionated, idealistic and bull-headed. But they were good fathers and their wives had their fingers crossed that the docs would not act up at the wedding.

The moms liked each other and had often worked together in community activities. They had worked together to promote the Juvenile Delinquent Prevention Program for the school system. Debbie Stewart was a Sunday school teacher and Paula Baumgartner was a licensed practical nurse at the local "old folks home," working part time. The bride, Linda Baumgartner, had known Wayne Stewart all her life, but he was two years older and had gone to private high school. They found each other again in college, in Gainesville. Linda had graduated as an accountant and Wayne was halfway through dental school in Miami. They were popular kids and had invited 20 friends to be in the wedding party, so it was bound to be a lively affair.

At the rehearsal dinner, the wives sat Drs. Baumgartner and Stewart next to each other. "Might as well get the tension over with" was the logic. "If you screw this up," Paula warned Bob Baumgartner, "you'll be sleeping on the Davenport for a long time!"

Indeed, conversation was difficult at first for the two chiropractors - until they started talking about problems they had experienced with staff in their practices. That got it started. By the time the dinner wound down and the restaurant was ready to close, they were still sitting and talking.

"What's going on with your neck?" Bob finally asked Frank. He had noticed how stiff the other DC looked. "You know, I woke up this morning with this [wry neck](#), and I thought it would be better by now," Frank said. He had been too proud to ask for a treatment, and Bob figured that out.

"Let me fix that," Bob offered, and adjusted Frank with a sitting cervical technique, amusing the waiters and bringing a collective sigh of relief from Paula and Debbie. They knew that when two DCs trust each other enough to have one of them adjust the other, well, things were going to be OK at the wedding.

The next day at the church, as the wedding participants gathered, it was apparent the gang had been up late partying. The best man had hurt his mid-back when he jumped from his balcony into the pool at the hotel, sometime early in the morning. Several of the bride's entourage had headaches.

When Dr. Baumgartner and Dr. Stewart arrived, everyone seemed to need attention. Before long, Frank was adjusting people on a folding table in the church kitchen, and Bob was working on the guys on the landing of the stairs. "This scene reminds me of the M.A.S.H. unit I worked in on the front line in Korea!" Frank observed.

Even the bride had a bad [headache](#), and yet her dad could not go in the dressing room to treat her. "Frank, Linda's already got her wedding dress on, so Paula says it's bad luck for me to see her until we walk down the aisle," Bob explained.

"Well, I'll be glad to treat her," Frank said, and he started walking to the dressing room. "Her problem is usually the atlas vertebra, rotated posterior on the right!," Bob added loudly as Frank walked off.

It was a storybook wedding. As the newlyweds drove away in their new '57 Chevy, tin cans rattling behind the car, Paula and Debbie cried and Bob and Frank told jokes so they wouldn't start crying. And they *all* lived happily ever after.

I read somewhere that Alexander the Great encouraged his soldiers to intermarry with the local women in the countries he conquered. Apparently he figured future generations might get along better if they shared a common ancestry. Could this be the solution for differences in the chiropractic profession - getting our kids to marry each other? Hey, it worked for Drs. Robert Baumgartner and Frank Stewart!

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