

Give the Gift of Change

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As human beings, we are blessed with something remarkable that we generally take for granted: the gift of conversation. Unlike animals, fish and insects that can communicate basic information, we have the ability to express ourselves at levels that can change hearts and history.

A great speech can inspire us to make dramatic decisions, even to the point of risking our own lives. A well-written romantic song (even a sad love song) can evoke emotions of selfless love or tears of regretful loss. A great joke or quick-witted quip can take a person with little expression into fits of laughter.

Sadly, with all this potential, many of our words are rather shallow, almost to the point of being empty: For example: "Hey Bob, how are you doing?" "Great, Joe, how are you?" The greeting is important, but the conversation is almost meaningless. Since the advent of the Internet Era and the proliferation of social media, these types of empty conversations have become increasingly prevalent.

In order for effective conversation to impact a person, two things must occur simultaneously: The hearer must be open to listening and the speaker must be bold enough to express themselves in a way that the hearer will receive. Many times this interaction takes place in what a friend of mine calls a "teachable moment." Sadly, most teachable moments slip by as lost opportunities.

As a doctor of chiropractic, your day is filled with moments when people are ready to receive. When you ask, "How are you?" the patient tunes into their body in an effort to give you an honest evaluation of their current condition, coupled with whatever historical events brought them to your office.

As you touch their body, they are sensitive to that touch, and then notice with great acuity how each joint moves and feels. Your patients are quick to note restricted movement and become immediately aware of tenderness of which they were previously unaware.

It is at that moment that your patient is almost completely tuned into whatever you say next.

Medical doctors are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to [communicating](#) with their patients. For many, the health of their patients is the culmination of facts and figures that will ultimately conclude with the prescription of a drug. Most lack the initiative to seize those teachable moments. When they do, they tend to come off as scolding, rather than supporting.

DCs, on the other hand, have a very natural way of speaking into their patients' lives. It's part of our philosophy. When you believe that wellness comes from within, expressing wellness to your patients becomes second nature.

Obviously, some conversations are harder than others. Weight loss quickly comes to mind. Say the wrong thing and you may never see that patient again. But speak with genuine love and concern, and you can change a person's life forever (not to mention the lives of those around them):

"Betty, you and I have been working together to help you be as healthy as possible for over three years now. During that time, I have noticed that your muscle tone has gotten worse and your pain is more frequent.

"I really want to see you living a wonderful, pain-free life, but to do so we will need to make some changes that will involve working together to help you become more fit."

You know your patients want the fullest expression of wellness in their lives. They are looking to you to continually guide them toward maximum health as they go through the various stages of life. The teachable moments are there for you to act on.

Think about each of your current patients. If you could tell each individual patient one thing that would help them live a better life, what would it be? For some, it might be more [exercise and weight loss](#); for others, it might be diet and nutrition. Some of your patients may need nothing more than some encouragement as they go through some rough times.

Speaking into your patients' lives with love and concern at those teachable moments can help them make decisions that will redirect their lives toward their full potential. (This is also true of your friends and family.)

All it takes is a little courage on your part. Thoughts expressed poorly with honest love and concern are still well-received.

This holiday season (Christmas, Hanukkah, etc.), give gifts that will last a lifetime. Give the gift of change. Speak into the lives of your patients, friends and family with love and boldness the things that will set them on a better course in 2014 and beyond.

Read more findings on my blog: <http://blog.toyourhealth.com/wrblog/>. You can also visit me on [Facebook](#).

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