

Which Chiropractor Are You?

Steven Visentin | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

There are four professional development phases before we become "fully realized, fire-breathing doctors of chiropractic." Learn what phase you're in and what you can expect in your future!

Phase I: Beginner

When we first start, we don't even know what we don't even know! We receive extensive education, but the real learning begins after we receive a diploma. We're fearful, tentative and question the very principles the profession is based on. We wonder if chiropractic works or if we can make it work!

Fortunately, this phase is also characterized by enthusiasm and energy. You're young; everything is new and exciting. You're lucky enough to have entered the world's greatest profession.

I remember being an associate doctor and getting fired! I was giving my best, doing everything I thought I should. I was going all out and still got fired. I was irate, confused. I didn't even know what I didn't know. I was an unconscious incompetent, or beginner chiropractor.

Most of us start at this low level of consciousness. Fortunately, we outgrow it and go to the next phase, the "conscious incompetent." We know that we don't "know" or fully understand this healing art to which we've been called.

Phase II: The Seeker

Whereas phase one is characterized by fear, the chronic emotional state of most "seekers" is frustration. You finally wake up. *If I'm a good doctor doing everything properly*, he reasons, *why isn't my practice growing?* Seekers search for answers, filling practice-management seminar halls. They're often in the front row, leaning forward to garner any morsel of information that could build their miserable practices.

They're in "startup" mode and search for the best techniques, practice managers, business systems, advertising programs, etc. It's as if they are straining to move a gigantic boulder. Using every ounce of strength, they're trying to get their clinics profitable. They look up to higher-echelon doctors, imagining, *If only I could get there!* It all seems impossible.

What most seekers don't fully understand is: The body is a self-healing system. Seekers think they're doing the healing. They assume it's not enough to create balance in the body and allow it to heal itself. Unconsciously, they transfer these insecurities to patients under their care. They lack the confidence helping 1,000s and 1,000s of patients brings. Their practices suffer from hesitancy.

When I started, I gave a talk to four patients. One lady brought her husband, who had been diagnosed with cancer and given just six months to live. Every time I said a well-learned line, he looked down at the floor and shook his head "no."

Foolishly, I focused on winning him over and my talk disintegrated. "The power that made the body

heals the body" became "In some instances, we can get better." It was awful! I began to stutter. He was convinced of impending death, and I felt like I was dying. I didn't know I could focus on the people in the room who were available for my message.

Fortunately, we develop skills and, over time, confidence. Eventually, we become "conscious competents" or successful chiropractors.

Phase III: "Dr. Success"

To become a master, Robert Greene suggests 10,000 hours of deliberate practice. I believe it requires helping 10,000 patients for a chiropractor to really hone their skills.

I remember feeling super confident and comfortable helping lots of people after a mission trip to Panama. I felt as if I had lightning bolts coming out of my hands after helping so many people. At times, it seemed like they came into alignments slightly before I even touched them. Other doctors in our group described the same experience!

Phase IV: "Healer"

There's a level we attain when we feel gratitude and are at peace with ourselves. We become unconscious competents. Every legendary chiropractor enjoys this envied state. I've had the pleasure of being adjusted by the best of the best. Their care took only seconds, seemed effortless, but was in each instance quite memorable and effective.

What Kind of DC Are You?

Beginner: Do you wonder if chiropractic works or if you can make it work? You are an "unconscious incompetent."

Seeker: Are you looking for a better technique? Do you sometimes question your ability to adjust? You're a "conscious incompetent."

Success: Do you feel very confident in your skills and ability to deliver care at the highest levels? Good news, you are a "conscious competent."

Healer: Are you wildly successful? Is chiropractic like breathing? Does it pour out of you like a mountain stream with effortless effort? You're more than likely an "unconscious competent."

The four states of practice may not be sequential. Doctors may get stuck or repeat phases, or skip them entirely depending on their training, natural abilities and experience. Wherever you are on your journey, you can do better. You are limitless.

Step Into Your Power!

Endless growth is yours if you're brave enough to ask! If you're stuck, call someone who's done it and get help. Ask! The winners in chiropractic want you to win, too. Put aside ego and decide to never stop learning and growing. Seek out doctors who are ahead of you in their journey. If they are truly successful, they'll want to help you. You have nothing to lose.

You also might want to stop associating with people holding you back. If you've outgrown certain friendships, it's OK to move on!

The most evolved leaders in our profession have traveled the world spending 1,000s of dollars expanding their knowledge. They asked for help, as should you!

Don't get too comfortable. The world is waiting for you, doctor. Move now!

Author's Note: This article is loosely based on Martin M. Broadwell's work and his 1969 theory behind the four stages of competence, which Noel Burch later expanded upon. It also references Robert Greene's book *Mastery*.

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