

The Rehabilitation of Dr. Andrew Weil

Editorial Staff

A highly anticipated speaker at the Parker Seminars' "Super Saturday," February 2 in Las Vegas, was Andrew Weil, MD. Many in attendance were all too aware of Dr. Weil's less-than-charitable views of chiropractic over the years through many writings, the Internet and broadcasting. His first appearance at a chiropractic event sparked mixed reactions, and although some chiropractors refused to attend, as many as 7,000 DCs, their spouses and CAs were present to hear him speak at the city's convention center.

Dr. Weil, a Harvard Medical School graduate, is a clinical professor of internal medicine and the author of eight books. He has been a frequent guest on many television shows, including those hosted by Larry King and Oprah Winfrey. He was recognized recently with a Genny Award from the American Association of Retired Persons, as "one of the most influential people of our time." He shared this honor with 10 others, including Muhammad Ali; Andy Warhol; Billy Jean King; and the late Gilda Radner. (Winners of the first annual award included a few inanimate symbols, such as the seat belt and the birth control pill.)

The doctor's opinion of chiropractic, while probably not important to DCs, certainly matters to the multitudes of his readers, fans and visitors to his Web site, DrWeil.com.

"I have been accused of writing and saying uncomplimentary things about chiropractic in the past, so I thought at the outset I would introduce my chiropractic colleague and friend, Dr. Michael Menke. Dr. Menke has been responsible for my rehabilitation and education on chiropractic." He continued, "I got Michael a faculty appointment at the University of Arizona Program in Integrative Medicine. He is also the chiropractic advisor to my Web site, with its millions of hits each month."

Dr. Weil described the Associate Fellowship Program, providing online training at the University of Arizona, where Dr. Menke developed a chiropractic course for MDs that demands 30 to 40 hours of participation, and requires a visit to and treatment by a chiropractor. The highly regarded course has been attended by nearly 90 medical doctors in its first two sessions, and will be online again in April 2003. It does not teach MDs to perform chiropractic services, but instructs them about how chiropractic works and how to refer to chiropractors.

After Dr. Menke left the stage, Dr. Weil continued, emphasizing the common views and values shared by integrative medicine and chiropractic; both parties consider the body's innate ability to heal itself as a fundamental principle. He remarked that as chiropractors, "Nature is on your side."

Dr. Weil challenged chiropractors to look for subluxations beyond the spine - for cultural; community; lifestyle; and spiritual subluxations that could contribute to disease. From these comments, Dr. Weil pointed to a broader role for chiropractic in health care delivery. He acknowledged DCs for their emphasis on the healing system, as opposed to fighting disease. He talked about the crisis in medicine, and shared his vision of healing centers where chiropractors; medical physicians; Chinese medicine doctors; massage therapists; and others work together for patient welfare and for health care that would renew physicians.

Dr. Weil concluded his presentation by inviting chiropractors to participate in an online training program on nutrition, and a nutrition conference to be sponsored by the University of Arizona, March 11-14, 2004, in Tucson, Ariz. Dr. Fabrizio Mancini, president of Parker College and Parker Seminars, offered Dr. Weil a special award and welcomed him into the chiropractic "family," for which Dr. Weil received a standing ovation.

More information about the University of Arizona nutrition conference; online nutrition; associate fellowship program for MDs; and development of an online CME program on chiropractic is available at www.integrativemedicine.arizona.edu. Dr. Menke may be reached at jmmenke@aol.com.

APRIL 2003