

"A Case Against Recycling"

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First let me state that I'm all for the environment -- and I believe that recycling wastes is one of the most efficient ways to help. There are some things, however, that you hope won't be recycled because they are so filled with waste already that you just don't want to encourage it coming back in any form - be it a tin can or cardboard box.

The other day I was going through my letter file with the express purpose of thinning out weeds of idiotic correspondence I sometimes receive. As I glanced at two, I wondered why I had saved them in the first place. Reading the letters once again made me realize that I had kept them because they were so outrageously inane that they became examples of the madness that cloaks us in the mantle of mystical nonsense.

One of the letters was written a couple of years ago on paper that tells you the character of the individual, while at the same time proves professionally embarrassing. Over in one corner is this big ball which I suppose is supposed to be the sun or maybe a billiard ball. Anyway, flames or something are exploding from whatever the ball is supposed to be. This in turn forms chiropractic hands that cradle the ball, and from the hands come rays of energy that lead to this poor soul's name. Nothing but class. The author has "Palmer Graduate" under his name and babbles on about an article in which I denigrated the constant use of the "Palmer Graduate" label as being immature and unprofessional. This got him so upset that he went on about "The Big Idea and my picture with a stethoscope in my ears. This demonstrated his poor eyesight, since the picture with this column has the stethoscope around my neck. Under his name at the end he once again stuck "Palmer Graduate." How much do you want to bet he's got it tattooed on him somewhere and will undoubtedly have it carved on his tombstone, complete with the ball, hands, and all the rays?

The other letter was even more disturbing, not just because of its ridiculous content but because the writer is a relatively well-known entrepreneur and self-anointed demigod within the profession. With so many who fit that description you'll never know who wrote it.

It rambled on about the usual thing -- how he had seen the light, how such things as homeopathy, physical therapy, herbal therapy, medical diagnosis, orthopedics, and neurology weren't really chiropractic. Gee, I always thought the subjects of orthopedics and neurology had to do with what we do; but then, what do I know?

The funny thing about most of my detractors is that they always seem to resent the fact that I have an opinion. It's fine for them to spout all the pseudoreligious nonsense they wish. Quite honestly, it's frightening. When I joined the chiropractic profession I had no idea it was a religion.

Let me say once again -- for the millionth time -- I don't care how straights practice and never have. It also doesn't make any difference to me what techniques anyone uses or what political party they belong to or what church or temple they go to -- if any.

What does matter is that they afford me the same indifference. This can only be done by having laws that respect the widest form of practice through education and examination. This ensures that all variations of practice can be performed by those qualified to perform them. It doesn't require anyone to practice in a manner repugnant to them.

While this letter writer speaks of his conversion to true chiropractic and his "great joy" with this revelation, he (as so many of his kind do) fails to recognize the conversion of so many straights to a wider scope of practice -- one that requires a more dimensional education for the safety of the patient. This doesn't matter to him, since he apparently feels that he, and those who believe as he does (and pay for his seminars and tapes) are anointed to tell the rest of us how to practice as enforced through the restriction of education and licensure.

He is right about one thing. In his letter he describes me as a "fearsome and unsettled person." No doubt about it -- I'm afraid of the lunacy within us that creates fanatical theorists who are allowed to treat (or -- I mean adjust) the public. There's enough madness in medicine with their knives, needles, and drugs. Who needs another health discipline conceived in intolerance?

There are many roads to health and the natural ones should be the first ones tried. In the field of natural therapeutics there are wonderful alternatives that can work well or alone. To deny a patient this broad health mosaic because you don't want to do it, or don't believe in it, or don't want to take the time, is your business. But to expect others to do and act as you believe and then attempt to legislate the enforcement of those beliefs (which is constantly being done) is wrong.

Unfortunately, the letter writer/seminar guru/divinely enlightened teacher/philosopher is in a position to influence others in the profession who need some kind of emotional anchor. People like him prey upon the unsteady walking the decks of professional practice. They need a "figure" to cling to, and he and a few others like him exploit their weakness by pretending to give them strength through their religious dogma. This is when we become a cult.

I worship nothing of this earth. My only professional goal is to help my patients with every ethical means possible and thereby make a comfortable living for myself and my family. Contrary to what my detractors believe, I believe that the cornerstone of my practice is the chiropractic adjustment and that anything else I use, while important, is ancillary to that adjustment -- and that the adjustment, specifically and properly given can, and does affect the organic function of the body.

To what degree any of you reading this agrees or disagrees is of little importance -- as long as you don't come in my back yard and start telling me what to think and how to practice.

OCTOBER 1990