

What Are We For? What Are We Against?

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As a veteran chiropractic spectator, I've seen a lot.

Between the massive amount of information that passes across my desk and comments made by individual DCs via e-mail or on the phone, I see, read and hear a great deal every day. It's what I have been doing, full time, for over a decade and a half.

And while there are constant debates about how chiropractors should define themselves, I think there is at least one other question that doesn't get enough attention. It's probably a relatively important question for most people, although I really can't say for certain. After all, most of my life revolves around chiropractic, the profession I love.

I believe that this question, and how each of us answers it, sets the focus for DCs as they live out each day of their professional careers. It's the ultimate foundational question of how we define ourselves:

Are we generally "for" or "against"?

Do we define ourselves by what we support or by what we oppose?

This is not necessarily a conscious definition. You may sit there, reading this article, and say to yourself, "I support all kinds of things, but what does that prove?"

Well, think about what you say throughout the day ... how you approach the things you feel the strongest about. Take the time (and effort) to listen to yourself, especially when you get angry, and then ask yourself the following:

- Are you speaking about what you agree with, or disagree with?
- Do you talk about what people (organizations) are doing right or what they are doing wrong?
- Are you complimenting or criticizing?
- Is your humor funny, or just sarcastic?
- When something goes wrong, are you frustrated, or do you see the challenge and appreciate all that usually goes right in your life?
- When someone does something that you find offensive, do you attack that person, or do you try to reconcile?

(Note: These questions are relevant to everyone, myself included. I have recently been asking myself these questions after noticing how I was reacting to certain situations.)

In this profession, we seem to have entire chiropractic organizations that feel the need to define themselves by what they don't agree with. And depending on the individuals running the organization, it can easily get personal and ugly.

Just recently, I was asked to recommend chiropractic leaders who might wish to serve on the advisory board of a very important project. When asked about a particular person, my comment was, "Well, we don't always agree on every issue, but he is the kind of person you can disagree with and still work together to get the job done."

I meant this as a sincere compliment. Thinking back on it, I only hope that many in the chiropractic profession can say the same about me.

Unity is not about what our associations do; it is about what every DC does. If we are unified in our thought, speech and actions, organizational unity is inevitable.

For much of our history, we have defined chiropractic as not being "medicine." We are proud of our "nondrug," "nonsurgery" heritage. And so we should be. But chiropractic is more than just what we aren't and what we don't do. It's what we are and what we do that matters to our patients.

Spend today paying attention to what you say, how you think and how you act. Listen especially the next time you get angry. The saying is true:

"Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks."

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