

Lessons From Patient Performers

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It is a rare opportunity when I have the chance to spend so much time in a doctor of chiropractic's office and talk to so many of their patients. From the interviews conducted for "Vegas Performers Give Chiropractic Top Billing" (see article beginning on page 1) come a number of recurring themes from the patient's point of view.

All of the interviews were conducted apart from Dr. Trev Henuset, so the comments were more honest than they might have been if he had been in the room. The dancers, musicians, production people and management team had much to say. From their comments emerge a number of points I'd like to share:

It's About Trust

Brian Burke, the dance supervisor for Celine Dion's show, made this remark about Trev as the responsible party for all of their health care: "I think that in order to be a person in that position and to be trusted with your body, you have to be a person that people are really comfortable with and comfortable talking to. I mean, it's your body, so you have to be able to have a really intimate relationship with that person, and I feel that everyone just feels very, very comfortable and secure in Trev's hands, and I think that they feel really confident about that."

This perspective was echoed by a number of the dancers and musicians. Most of the musicians I talked to would rather go four or five months on the road in pain without chiropractic care than let a DC they didn't know work on them. If they didn't have a relationship with a DC, they didn't trust them. As a chiropractic patient, I believe trust is the foundation of a great patient relationship. Without it, you're not really their doctor.

Patients Want to Understand

Bob Birch, Elton John's bass player and background vocalist, said he saw "many therapists, many chiropractors, many excellent doctors, but Trev actually showed me pictures and told me muscle stuff that none of these other doctors ever did. Certain things that I had wrong with me, like this extensive pain in the left shoulder blade that shot up the side of my head. All of these doctors were telling me that I was crazy, and [Trev] showed me exactly what was happening, and how to try to get it out. That amazed me right there."

There is a certain empowerment that comes from understanding what is happening to you. You feel that if you can just understand what is happening, you can somehow affect it. When you understand the problem, you appreciate the care required to address it.

Trev made sure all of his patients understood what had happened to their bodies and how it would affect their performances. He taught his patients the proper names for the various joints and muscles. Your patients want to know more today than ever before. Rest assured that they have already searched

the Internet for answers. How you educate them is potentially more important than what you do for them.

Understand Each Patient's Health Goals

When the dancers come in for care, their immediate need is to eliminate the pain and get the function they require to perform. They have very specific movements they need to be able to do. Moreover, they have specific goals for their lives and their chiropractic care is designed to help them reach those goals. Sara Montene, a dancer from France who is part of Celine Dion's show, sees chiropractic as an integral part of her ability to perform: "You go to work and you're like, 'OK, I'm going to get adjusted and I'm going to have a good show.' So it's helping a lot, having him here." Chiropractic becomes a way of life when patients can't see themselves living at their best without it.

Well-Informed Patients Desire the Care They Need

How often does a patient need or want to be adjusted? The answer depends on the particular patient, their understanding of the benefits of chiropractic care and their health goals. When I asked Chris Houston, a dancer from Scotland, how often he was adjusted, he remarked: "Normally, it's about once a week, but certainly there have been times where I've been coming in at least twice. Normally, on a Sunday evening after the show, just because we then have two days off, and then often maybe midweek, Thursday or Friday, after the first show."

Needless to say, Chris knows the value of the care he receives. He has high regard for his health and has recognized that chiropractic is the way to maintain his body at the high level of performance required. We all want optimum health. We just need some help setting aside the time to get the chiropractic care we need to maintain it.

These are just samples of what I heard and recorded. These comments were indicative of what these artists believe and live every day. It takes skill to be a good doctor, but I think it takes intent to be a great one. Trev made a comment that I think speaks to this well:

"The best health care practitioners, the best healers that I've met, can create a lasting relationship in five minutes. It's confidence, it's loyalty, it's trust. I think the people can get that feeling from you."

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