

Undying Hope (Rather, a Plea) for Unity

I must be stupid! After attending the Parker Seminar in Las Vegas [Jan. 29 - Feb. 1], I couldn't wait to get home to write a letter telling my fellow students that the moment we have been waiting for is in sight. It was so moving to see chiropractic leaders stand together in the name of unity.

In general, the responses I received from the letter were positive, yet a few were pessimistic. "They're just standing up showcasing unity, it doesn't mean anything. They'll all be back at it (the power struggle) in no time," was one comment that sticks in my mind. These words turned out to be more true than I could have imagined. Could I be so naïve? Is this profession incapable of unity? Was that day that made me so proud to be a chiropractor just a hoax?

It wasn't long before intraprofession bickering began regarding Life University's appeal. Then we had the Trigon case dismissal, and arguments seemed to turn into fistfights within the profession. Each time, the organizations involved quickly publish what I call "That's not true, this is the real truth" letters. While I feel it is important to set the record straight and make sure the profession is well-informed, I don't think these letters are a step in the right direction.

This lack of camaraderie encouraged me to write this plea for unity ... but what really inspired me to reach out was the American Osteopathic Association (AOA). Yes, I know that sounds odd, but recently, I picked up their publication *The D.O.*, because it featured an article, "Healing the Mind, The Whole Patient Approach."¹ I wondered if osteopaths were returning to their roots of treating with a wholistic approach. While flipping through the journal, I ran across another article, "Call for Unity: Leaders Commit to Uniting and Strengthening Profession (sic)." At first, this rubbed me the wrong way, because I was green with envy as I gawked at the picture of them taking an oath of unity. Then, I became empowered - not so much personally as professionally. If osteopaths can stand united in the name of advancing their profession, I know we can. Just browsing through their publication demonstrated that they seem more fragmented and confused than we are. One article talked about the AOA's textbook promoting unity of the mind, body and spirit; a few pages later, there were a bunch of huge drug advertisements. I am not trying to spend too much time on all this, but I hope it demonstrates the importance of unity. The osteopaths see it. We see it, too, but we seem unable to put egos and "I told you so's" aside.

Dynamic Chiropractic just published an article titled, "New Study Finds Unity in Chiropractic: Surprising Agreement Among DCs on Issues of Philosophy, Practice."² This study points out that the long-standing stereotypes are untrue. Donald Petersen Jr., did a marvelous job presenting the relevant issues in his "Report of My Findings."³ The key points he focused on are that 93.6 percent of chiropractors routinely provide periodic maintenance/wellness care and 88.1 percent want to continue using the term "vertebral subluxation complex."

These articles are the way of the future. We need to focus more on our similarities than our

differences. As I heard recently, "Chiropractors need to just agree to disagree."⁴

A few weeks later, I ran across an article that was so well-written that I almost scrapped my plea for unity. Kent Greenawalt wrote a wonderful piece titled, "Unity: Getting Down to Business."⁵ I recommend every chiropractor read this article. Rather than trashing it, I hope you support the emerging efforts it encourages. The more pleas for unity, the better, and the less "we're right, your wrong," the better. Let's put more energy into unity than disunity. The highlight of Mr. Greenawalt's article, in my opinion, is when he writes:

"We do a terrific job of taking care of patients, but are not so good at achieving optimum health for our profession. Although we are experts behind the wellness revolution, we lack professional wellness - the ability to work together as a profession ... It's time to roll up our sleeves and quit dancing around semantics ... Let's give our profession a unity adjustment. It's naturally right!"

So, I stand behind Mr. Greenawalt's unity plea, and encourage others to do the same. Let's push for more energy to be placed on unity than on the traditional "circling the wagons and shooting in."⁶ Let's encourage our leaders to pledge for unity and mean it.

References

1. *The D.O.*, volume 44, number 4.
2. New study finds unity in chiropractic. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, June 2, 2003:21(12). www.chiroweb.com/archives/21/12/19.html.
3. The typical American doctor of chiropractic. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, June 2, 2003: 21(12). www.chiroweb.com/archives/21/12/16.html.
4. Dr. Robert Brooks, past president of the Palmer Chiropractic College International Alumni Association, stated during his May 23, 2003 visit to PCCW.
5. Getting down to business. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, June 2, 2003:21(12). www.chiroweb.com/archives/21/12/06.html.
6. Dr. Wayne Whalen of the California Chiropractic Association stated this as one of the problems in our profession during his May 9, 2003 visit to PCCW.

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JULY 2003