

# THE PIVOT REVIEW

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piv'ot (piv'ut) n. 1. a point, fixed pin, or short axis on the end of which something turns. 3. That upon or around which something turns or depends; the central, cardinal, or crucial factor, member, part, person, etc.

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## Practice Building the Sisyphus Way

**S**isyphus was the mythological Greek King of the city of Corinth. As the story goes, he displeased one of the gods and was forced to spend eternity rolling a large stone up a steep hill. The catch was, whenever he reached the top, the stone would roll down the hill and he would have to begin again.

For many of us, building a practice is much the same. We struggle to get new people in the office. We ask for referrals almost to the point of being an annoyance...even to ourselves. We feel like we are begging people to send someone in and no one likes a beggar. We spend money on advertising and usually there is only a minimal return. Yet you feel you must do it because everyone else does. We do all sorts of things to get new people in, including lay lectures, meeting the public, buying F.A.C.E educational material (even though it is relatively inexpensive). Still many people don't get the big

idea and don't stay after they feel better (or don't feel better). Many become part of that great mass of humanity who come in only on an irregular basis. Others go off to college, move away and yes, even chiropractic practice members die! So we constantly need a stream of new people. Of course, there are exceptions. Some chiropractors are happy to see just a couple dozen people two or three days a week. Most of us though have resigned ourselves to the idea that we are going to have to push that practice rock up the hill everyday until we are ready to retire or at least cut back in our practice. We may be faced with the task of practice building for 30 to 40 years or more. Practicing chiropractic is easy and fun. Building a practice is tough work. If it were not, everyone would be doing it and there would be no need for practice consultants. Further, if just being a client would automatically do it, everyone who has ever utilized any practice

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consultant's services would be successful and no one would go from consultant to consultant. In fact, I sometimes think the greatest services the practice-management consultant offer are to crack the whip and tell you to push that rock harder and to cheer you and tell you that you are getting close to the top. After a while you realize that the coaching (read encouraging), even if it gets you to the top, will have to start over when the rock rolls down again. I have never met anyone who really had a waiting list practice. Every chiropractor I know could always see more people. I have one of the largest practices around and I could see ten new practice members a day, every day for the next 10 years and still have room for more.

Without question, some of the problem is a lack in our ability to clearly communicate the real idea of chiropractic. That plays a role in the development of the revolving door practice. Another problem is the image of chiropractic that we as a profession have presented to the public as a quick, patch up, get-you-out-of pain therapy. Maybe the need for continual practice building is our punishment for angering the gods of truth. Another part of the problem is that human beings, by their very nature, seem to not take care of themselves until a crisis occurs. That may even be the greatest obstacle we have to overcome. Yet one thing is clear, until we overcome all of these problems we are going to have to keep pushing that rock up the hill.

Some versions of the Sisyphus story say that to get back at

the gods' punishment Sisyphus decided that he would derive pleasure from his work. He would not look at the end result of reaching the top, which he would never be able to do but he would take pleasure in the process and enjoy the work. Perhaps we need to view practice building in a different way. Perhaps we should stop viewing it as practice building and view it as educating the public. Let's look at it as sharing an im-

**Building a practice is tough work. If it were not, everyone would be doing it and there would be no need for practice consultants.**

portant, life-saving message with the people in our community. We should not think of our efforts as getting people into the office but as increasing people's understanding. The results will be the same, people will come in and have their lives changed. However, there is joy and reward in sharing a vital message with people. It should not be viewed as something you need to do for your sake (or the practice) but as something you want to do because it changes lives and is rewarding in and of itself and because you have shared an important truth. We should stop focusing on the outcome (building the practice) and start focusing on the process, changing people's thinking.

As a result, practice members and the public might have a different perception of what we are doing. That little change in our vision might cause our practice members to see our efforts not as a mercenary effort but as altruistic, that we want to inform and educate people. The tone of our

"advertising" might change. We would sound less like salespeople and more like people trying to share an important message about life and health. I believe people will respond to that attitude in a positive manner, and that has to improve our image. It has to improve our attitude. We should resolve to "tell the story" for the rest of our careers, not to build or maintain a practice, but simply because the message is there and it has to be told. Who knows, it may have such an impact that one day we will not have to keep pushing the rock. I would imagine, though, that by that time we would ourselves have grasped the

importance of what we are communicating to people. On that day, when you do your first lecture, not because you need new people; when you give out your first pamphlet with no thought of getting a practice member from it but merely for the purpose of educating someone; when you place an ad in the newspaper simply to increase the public's understanding with no thought of reward, you will truly be able to identify with the King of Corinth with the funny name.  $\Delta$

# Do You Want Science or Do You Want Truth?

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Our profession is fraught with pseudoscientists. “Pseudo” because they really do not understand the role of science. Science is merely a tool that, if used correctly, can help one come to a knowledge of the truth. If used incorrectly it can really make a mess. If used in conjunction with the tool of philosophy, one has a greater chance of understanding truth, or at least the truth of the working of this universe, in general, and the human body, in particular. Philosophy is another tool that can be used to come to this knowledge of truth. Neither of them can be our sole tool. It would be like trying to build a house with only a saw and never a hammer.

Obviously, (or Unfortunately) science is limited by our perceptive abilities. Its purpose is to elicit facts that can be demonstrated empirically. That demonstration can only be inductive and can change from time to time. Every drug that has ever been taken off the market as being dangerous was at one time scientifically determined to be safe. Scientific “proof” can come to a wrong conclusion. If all the facts could be demonstrated empirically, then scientific conclusions could be regarded as truth. But all the facts are rarely known and those facts dealing with metaphysical constructs can never be known empirically. That is why certain drugs are eventually proven to do more harm than good, i.e., more facts emerge. Every person is different. The expression of their intelligence through the matter (what we in chiropractic call “life”) is different. But life is largely a

metaphysical concept. It is not scientific. You cannot see it, measure it, and isolate it in a laboratory.

The true scientist understands this. He realizes the limitations of science and is content to allow it to do what it can. The arrogant, self-absorbed pseudoscientist who does not realize science’s limitations has no ability to perform true science. He ignores the hammer at his side and thinks he can build the house with only a saw. The few successes he has in cutting wood encourage him but he eventually comes to a dead end. When that happens he usually goes back, makes a metaphysical assumption and then goes on from there. He usually pretends that it is not a metaphysical assumption. Or more than likely, he begins with a metaphysical assumption (a philosophical premise) but he just does not acknowledge it as such or does not even realize it.

The pseudoscientist ridicules those who have a metaphysical assumption concerning the order and organization of the universe and the human body, especially those who give names to that assumption (universal and innate intelligence). Yet, whether he realizes it or not he begins with an assumption as well. Metaphysics is “the study of the nature or causes of things.” If you begin with the metaphysical assumption that order and organization in the universe and the body are based upon intelligent design and action, then your choices are either to enhance that action or remove interferences to it. If you are not as intelligent or

more intelligent than this innate intelligence, then enhancing its action would be a poor choice (like getting out to push a 747 at 30,000 feet.) This leaves you with removing interference to its expression. On the other hand, if you reject the assumption of order and organization in the universe, then you must accept random chance as the reason for this universe and the evolution of the human organism. In this case even your finite educated intelligence is better than leaving it up to chance. Consequently, you may feel justified in intruding into the process. That’s the thinking behind medicine, therapies and other outside-in endeavors (including outside-in chiropractic). The bottom line is that either there is an organizing intelligence, in which case you allow it to run the body, or the body is a product of random chance, in which case your four-year education is better than chance.

So how does science fit into the equation? Well, science merely accumulates facts to support either position. Of course, the validity or veracity of science is always called into question. Are the results of the investigations really facts or has someone with a presupposition merely falsified data to make them appear as facts in order to support their position. Recently a chiropractor on the F.A.C.E. message board accused me of being a presuppositionist. I would suggest that everyone goes into any scientific endeavor with presuppositions. Everyone has a preconceived idea of the nature of the universe. Evolution is a pre-

fect example of this process. The theory of evolution is not science. It is a metaphysical supposition (i.e., a theory) as to “the nature” and “cause” of the human organism. No one was there at the creation of the universe or at the appearance of the first living being. So no one has empirical knowledge. Some people have rejected the idea of a Creator for whatever reason so they came up with “scientific” facts to support their presupposition. As I said earlier, some of these “facts” can be untrue. The famous Pilt-down Man Hoax is just one of the dishonest scientific findings that evolutionists have contrived. Some are not even true science, such as geological strata. Now there are true scientific facts that support evolution. But there are also true

scientific facts that support creation. Depending on your metaphysical presupposition, some can be explained. In fact, all can be explained by the Creationists’ presupposition.

There are similar problems in the ADIO and outside-in philosophical conflict. The mechanist wants us to subject our metaphysical construct (innate intelligence) to scientific scrutiny, which simply cannot be done. At the same time, the mechanist contends that because his metaphysical construct (the absence of order and organization) involves no organizing factor, it is not subject to scientific scrutiny. You cannot analyze a void or nothingness. We can analyze light and find its component properties scientifically, but we cannot analyze

darkness. It is not an entity. So the mechanist lets himself off the hook. He says, prove that innate intelligence exists, runs the body, heals the body and uses the nerve system and prove it scientifically, all the while knowing that it cannot be proved scientifically. We are close-mouthed because we know that you cannot prove a metaphysical construct scientifically. Our only recourse is to ask them to prove scientifically that it does not exist, which does not make much sense. So we have this conflict. If we are going to ascertain truth about this world and the human body we must give up the idea that science will reveal it. Science simply does not have the capability of demonstrating this truth. Δ

## Weird Chiropractic

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It’s good every once in a while for us to evaluate what we are doing and make sure we are being perceived correctly. Recently, one of my associates gave me an ad of a chiropractor in New Jersey. The ad was in a magazine he had picked up at a local bagel shop. Ordinarily, I am very tolerant of non-straight ads. I may not like mixing but I respect a person’s right to practice under the law and to allow the market place to determine who succeeds and who does not. In this case, however, I was so outraged my reaction was “I should send this to the state board.” Then I realized that it was not my state and really none of my business. The ad was a case history of a patient named “John” who was in severe pain in the cervical region. “His head and neck were bent to the left...” The man

developed the problem suddenly when leaving his hotel in Seattle for a business meeting. Visiting a chiropractor in the city for “several treatments” did not help. Upon returning home the man visited this New Jersey chiropractor who did muscle testing and found “no physical adjustment was indicated.” Lest someone think I am making up this story the following is the remainder of the ad:

“Further muscle testing determined that one of the colleagues John had met triggered the neck pain, surfacing judgments of anger and fear. Going back to the earliest time these judgments were locked in, it appeared to be from a past life where one

of the men had been his master/owner and he had been a slave. In this memory, the master was angry that his slave had once again run away, so he manacled the slaved around the neck and dragged him behind horses. The slave died cursing his master, his situation, and God.

I started talking John through the forgiveness of the judgments of all that had happened and as we did this, his head and neck slowly moved back into normal position. John turned his head from side to side and said, “It’s all better.”

None of John's symptoms has ever returned."

After my first, second, and third reaction (laughter, anger and disgust) I began to wonder whether we straights are perceived by those who practice a different form of chiropractic as weird kooks, who do not belong in the chiropractic profession. Do they see us with our philosophy of innate intelligence as I do this chiropractor? It made me realize that we need to be crystal clear in our presentation of

chiropractic. Sure, we have a philosophy that seems out of place in the mechanistic, naturalistic, outside-in world of therapeutic health care. It is based on some ascientific concepts. But it is reasonable. It is logical. It is not some strange New Age philosophy. The challenge is for us to elucidate that philosophy in such a way that the logic of it is so irrefutable that those who oppose us, while not agreeing with our approach, will not view us as weirdos and will respect our right to practice as we do. Δ

**News item;  
Wal-Mart the world's largest private employer announces they will no longer cover chiropractic services as an employee insurance benefit. We have done such a great job convincing the insurance companies that we do the same things that medicine does, i.e., treat disease conditions and their cause, that they have decided we are no longer necessary. Now that was really a bright tactic.**

## Vision and Leadership

The straight chiropractic community has always had a dearth of leaders. When B.J. was alive and doing the work of 20 people, it was not so noticeable. After his death it has become painfully clear that there is little vision among the so-called chiropractic leaders. There are definitely exceptions, some very visionary people. But, for the most part, we do not choose leaders with vision or more important, those who will stretch our own vision. Reggie Gold is perhaps the greatest example of a leader who has demonstrated vision over the past 30 years, and a desire to stretch ours. There have been others. Why the present lack of leaders with vision? I think part of the reason is not necessarily the people but the nature of chiropractic today. Chiropractors are being told what chiropractic is by the accrediting agencies, by the schools, by the national organizations, by the state and federal government and by the public. With all that pressure and brainwashing it is difficult for chiropractors to "think outside the box." Without outside the box thinking, it

is difficult to develop a vision and virtually impossible to stretch our vision. As far as straight chiropractic is concerned, if we think the same way as other groups within the chiropractic profession we will have no more vision than they do. Is there any argument that the ACA with its medical model and the ICA with its traditional model of chiropractic have shown very little vision, at least in advancing the profession? I am not talking about advancing the well-being of the chiropractor. I am talking about advancing what we commonly call TIC. If they had vision there would have been no need for an FSCO in 1976. That is why some leaders in our profession have avoided association with other groups within the profession. Everything they do reflects a different vision of what chiropractic should be and is not in agreement with our vision. We must even question joint participation in apparent innocuous activities if we recognize that they represent actions pursuing a different vision.

There are two approaches, I guess you would say there are two ideas of leadership. One is to embrace a vision far ahead of what we can presently see. By this I don't mean an hallucination like "the whole world under chiropractic care, no more medical doctors and B.J.'s utopia." That is not vision, but a pipe dream. I mean a realistic vision, what we have termed objective straight chiropractic: people getting regular, lifetime family care so they can express more of their inborn potential in all areas. This attracts visionary people, true, they are not the majority but they are the potential movers and shakers, those people who can truly change people's thinking or give them a greater vision. This person is out front, ahead of us, challenging us, irritating us, dragging us along (like the cooked spaghetti analogy). This person is not standing among us in his or her thinking. He or she is thinking ahead of us. That person makes us better chiropractors. He is not always popular, especially among the masses.

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The other approach is to have "leaders" who represent the thinking of the masses. They want acceptance, to be popular, to have the majority like them. They want to get along and "work" with everybody. Unfortunately, these are the type of "leaders" we have in state and federal government and we may be following that thinking in the straight chiropractic profession. They are more politicians than leaders. That is not the type of individual that stretches an organization's, group's, movement's or country's vision. It is a safe and easy position to take. It may even be the best way to attract more people to a movement. Take a stance that is comfortable for the majority rather than one that will make the majority uncomfortable or heaven forbid, make them think about who they are, what they are about and where they are going as individuals or as a group.

Another problem is that vision is easily lost. The older you get the more you want acceptance, the status quo, harmony, no one rocking the boat. That is the worst part about the traditional chiropractor. He is stuck in 1923 chiropractic, the cure for the cause of all disease, in a 2003 world. Experience and years of wisdom are valuable to any movement. But, at the expense of vision, the price is too high. With few exceptions, people in practice for years are thinking about their future, their comfort, their ease, their well-being. They are not the leadership types. Leaders get shot at first. People who are looking to retire or thinking about retirement are not the material of visionaries. People starting out with a vision of what chiropractic can be 20 years from now are the visionary leaders. There are no easy ways to determine who is a leader, who has vision. It's mostly trial and error.

But when we identify those people with vision, we need to nurture them but not dim their vision. We need to encourage them and overlook their youthful impetuosity. We need to be extra gentle in checking their slipping. (We in the straight movement tend to do just the opposite..."stragglers will be shot.") I believe we have seriously hurt and probably turned off some people with great leadership and vision because we did not allow them to make mistakes. We older chiropractors have driven them from positions of leadership because we were unwilling to allow them to learn by their error and to give them latitude on non-principle issues. We need to teach them principles of leadership that will enhance their vision, not principles of management which shuts down vision. Unless we put these people in positions of leadership, there will be no vision and the profession will perish. Δ