

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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Validating Chiropractic

I have an issue with those who decry the lack of "scientific proof" of this principle that we straight chiropractors embrace. We hear everything from vitriolic condemnation to condescension because of our "problem." Ironically, our "problem" is not a problem for us, nor for the government, nor for even a single insurance company and most important, not for the public. It is only a few, a very few powerful and influential chiropractors who want to change chiropractic, who have a problem with what we do and what we are failing to scientifically prove. We maintain that there is an in-born intelligence in the human organism which controls and coordinates function through the nerve system and that a misaligned vertebra may interfere with the nerves and affect the proper function of the body.

Here is the problem: these people have already rejected what we hold to, that the innate intelligence of the body works better in all people when there is no interference in the nerve system. That is a pretty simple and straightfor-

ward assertion. They just do not accept it and I have no idea why. Not only do they not accept it, I believe they will never accept it because they have already placed their faith in the religion of the outside-in approach of scientism. They have not proved our approach incorrect, they have simply accepted it as incorrect and are trying to find reasons why it is not valid. That is not only academically dishonest, it borders on criminal for a needy public. There is a significant difference between proving us wrong scientifically and rejecting our assertions outright without any proof except for unfounded reasons. Actually, they cannot even come up with unfounded reasons. The only reason that they can come up with is that no empirical studies have been done. When you think about it, the only argument that they put forward is that we have not done scientific studies that meet their criteria. They have no other argument.

There is a clear reasonableness to our philosophy. The body has an inborn organizing principle. The body has the

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capacity to heal itself. The nerve system is a tool the intelligence uses to coordinate all functions. We make no outlandish claims for cures of diseases (at least we do not in objective straight or non-therapeutic chiropractic).

There is ample scientific proof that the nerve system can be interfered with, proof from the medical community who have nothing to gain from our assertions. There are over 110 years of anecdotal events. All of this counts for nothing to them. It must have had some value at one time, enough to convince them to be a part of this profession. If they have had any clinical experience, they have seen the anecdotal changes talking place in the lives of people.

With all these arguments in our favor, the logic of our approach, the anatomical and physiological basis, the anecdotal events, governmental and third-party acceptance, and an apparently satisfied public, there is every reason to continue our practice. There are absolutely no arguments against the continuation of what we do. If people were being injured or killed by our procedures that would be an argument. However, incidents are so rare in chiropractic that any scientific study would be hard pressed to demonstrate a cause-effect relationship. If we were preventing people from getting necessary medical care, that would be an argument. But modern non-therapeutic chiropractic does not do that. There is, in fact, every reason to continue our practice until such time as we scientifically demonstrate the validity of what we do, if that can be done. There is no reason to stop or alter our practice. This idea outlined above is so wonderful that anyone who is a chiropractor, no, anyone who is interested in serving humanity, would surely want to attempt to prove it, not reject it on such a lame excuse that it has yet to be proved scientifically.

I would suggest that this issue has nothing to do with science, nothing to do with validating chiropractic, nothing to do with us taking our rightful place within the health-care community. It has to do with one group of people, who, for some reason have already rejected, out of hand, what we do and what we believe. Who personally despise us for our beliefs and, for whatever personal and individual reasons they might have, want to destroy us. This is not an issue of science. It is not an issue of raising the level of recognition of our profession. It is not an issue of proving what we do to the government or the public. It is primarily an issue of one group of people who have rejected our approach to chiropractic. Oh, there may be a few people who sincerely think we would be better off as a profession if we proved our theories, but those are very few and probably are not in positions of power and are really not part of this group.

Last evening I watched the President's State of the Union Address. I saw the clear partisanship on the two sides of the aisle stronger than I have ever seen before. I realized for the first time what the issue is with the political environment in this country. You could see it on the faces and in the eyes of the men and women as the cameras panned the right side of the audience. These people absolutely hate the president. They despise him as a person for his core beliefs, his values and his personality, not merely his politics.

This morning I realized what the issue is in chiropractic. The side of the profession who is screaming about the need for scientific proof hates us and what we believe. The issue is not scientific proof. The issue is that we embrace a metaphysical mindset. It is not about science. It is about innate intelligence. It is about removing every vestige of this philosophical principle. Validating chiro-

practic is not the issue. Invalidating the Major Premise of chiropractic is. This battle in chiropractic is not over science. It is over values. It is over a belief system. It is merely an extension of the larger battle in society. It is the battle over theism and atheism, absolutes and post-modern thinking, strict constitutional interpretation and the Constitution as a "living document."

For 200 years, God and His Standards were an integral part of our society. The so-called "separation clause" was put in the Constitution to protect religion from the government not the people from religious tyranny. In fact, almost everything in the Constitution is meant to protect the people from governmental tyranny. We had prayer in public schools, God in the Pledge of Allegiance, the Ten Commandments hanging in the courtrooms and "In God we trust" on our money. None of those things ever impinged on anyone's freedom for 200 years. Well, we see how that is changing from one hateful woman who started by removing prayer in the public schools and has been continued by her God-hating progeny.

For over 100 years, the principles of chiropractic were based on a metaphysical premise. We got along just fine and I would suggest we grew and flourished as a result of it. It obviously was not because of our plethora of scientific proof! Today, the same outside-in, anthropo-centric people who are trying to remove every aspect of God from society are trying to remove the metaphysical underpinnings of chiropractic. They believe that all metaphysical concepts are ultimately grounded in a theistic world and life viewpoint and they are probably correct. Same war, just a different battlefield. They believe we must remove every concept of God from the fabric of society including government, morals, science, politics and culture. They see chiropractic philosophy as a hindrance. It is not that

chiropractic must be scientific, it is that it must not be philosophical and making it into a science seems to be the best way to remove the philosophy because science only addresses the material. The issue is not about becoming more scientific to them. The issue is about becoming less, no, non-philosophical.

So for those of you who do not agree with their direction for chiropractic, who believe that chiropractic must maintain its “innate” philosophy,¹ I make four suggestions:

1. For those interested in research, do not allow philosophical constructs to be removed from that work.
2. Resist the efforts of those who would destroy our philosophy, especially in the name of validation, scientific research or societal acceptance.
3. Increase the exposure of your practice members and the community to the philosophy of chiropractic, particularly concepts like innate intelligence.
4. Support those in the country who are fighting the larger battle of this culture war which is a battle of two world viewpoints, above-down inside-out and outside-in. That battle for the minds of society directly affects chiropractic. Δ

¹ By innate philosophy, I mean the inborn philosophy from the time chiropractic was “born” as well as the philosophy that is founded on an innate intelligence in living things.

Changing People

The greatest task before us in the chiropractic profession, in order to succeed as we would like, is to change people with regard to chiropractic. It has been said that you cannot change people, people must change themselves. With that in mind, let us see what changes people. I would suggest that there are really only two things that can bring about change. The first is crises. How many people in this country were ambivalent toward Islamic terrorists before 9-11 and after that horrible incident became strongly prejudiced against Islam? Many people have their opinions changed about chiropractic after beginning chiropractic care during some symptomatic crisis. Some of those people become good chiropractic practice members but most relegate chiropractic to crisis care because that is how they first experienced it and that is how their thinking was changed, in a very limited way.

The second means by which people change is change in perception. This method of change is especially evident in people who have had their religion or belief system changed or have changed their political or social viewpoint. These changes seem to spill over into every area of the person’s life. Herb Hender, one of B.J.’s closest friends,

once gave a talk entitled, “Changed Thinking Changes Everything.” The question that all of us want answered is what is it that precipitates this change in an individual’s thinking? There is no doubt that when thinking changes almost every aspect of a person’s life changes or else they begin to live a life divorced from the reality of their thinking. That seems to be a challenge for many people. I find it especially common in people of religious faith (above-down viewpoint) who seem to have an outside-in viewpoint of health care. We tend to scratch our head and say, “knowing what they know, how can they think that way?”

That brings me to the importance of what we do as chiropractors. I believe the only way that we can truly get people to see and understand what it is we do is to change their thinking. If we do not, we will spend the rest of our careers taking care of patch-up cases, those people who only come in when they hurt. You can make a decent living on those type of people. Of course, it will take you 10 or 15 years to build up enough people in your files to reach that level. That’s a lot of hot dogs and beans for a lot of years.

You see, I don’t believe it is really enough to explain chiropractic to people because they will invariably

try to fit it into their preconceived idea of chiropractic, which is probably a therapeutic model. Their entire thought process must be changed so that they view health (and disease) in an entirely different way. I am not sure a person is able to change that thinking, at least not in a significant way unless their entire thought process is changed. It’s not about having a mind set that “chiropractic is good and medicine is bad.” It is even a lot more than recognizing that medical practice (disease treatment) has nothing to do with health, although that is a good start. It really takes a complete renovation of their thinking to an ADIO viewpoint of life and health. That must be the thrust of our office educational programs. Δ

Here’s an irony: They say you get what you pay for. Yet, new people that come in the office for free (by referral) are generally better practice members than the ones you pay for (by advertising).

Intelligent Design and Chiropractic

Recently a legal case here in Pennsylvania made national headlines. A judge in Dover, PA ruled that Intelligent Design could not be taught in the science curriculum of the town's local high school. We probably think that it does not impact too many of us unless we are strongly into the Intelligent Design movement or strongly against the theory of evolution. However, I would suggest that this decision has its greatest impact upon the chiropractic profession in general, and the science, art and philosophy of chiropractic in particular.

For any one out there who may not be familiar with Intelligent Design, it is a theory that maintains that the irreducible complexity of living organisms, especially at the molecular level, renders the potential for an organism to evolve impossible. They further maintain that this complexity requires a creative intelligence. Sounds pretty good to us chiropractors doesn't it? They purposely stop short of calling this creative intelligence God and maintain that in doing so, their theories deserve examination by the scientific community and that students in the science classroom deserve equal exposure to the concept. Unfortunately, the scientists disagreed. Those teaching the science curriculum maintained that this is a thinly veiled attempt to bring religion into science. The Courts (at least in Dover, PA) agreed and the teaching of Intelligent Design is not allowed in the science curriculum.

What I find interesting about the issue is that the scientific community is not against teaching Intelligent Design. For the most part, they have no problem with teaching the subject, just as long as it is not in the science curriculum. What they are saying is that since this smacks of the meta-

physical, an "Intelligent Designer," it does not fall into the science curriculum. It can be taught as something else, they don't care what, they just don't want it called science. The scientific community has spoken and the courts have agreed.

So how does this impact upon chiropractic? I see it having a great impact. If science is adamant about Intelligent Design not getting a foot in the door, they are definitely not going to allow chiropractors to get one third of their entire body (the philosophy) into the door. They realize that if you allow Intelligent Design into the science curriculum, you change science forever. They fear it will return to the days of the alchemist and when the church (supposedly) had tyrannical rule over science. Everyone is always afraid of the "foot in the door principle." That's why pro-choice people do not want a grotesque, horrible procedure like partial birth abortions outlawed and the NRA does not want assault rifles outlawed. The pro-choice people can't help but think that the real objective is banning abortion and the NRA believes that the real objective is getting rid of all gun ownership.

In a similar manner, the scientists will not even look at Intelligent Design as science. The Intelligent Design people will just keep on trying, to "scientize" their theories more, in an effort to gain acceptance, but they never will because the scientists believe that in the end, they are presenting religion.

So where does that leave us in chiropractic? Well, those in our profession and outside our profession will never accept our philosophy. They are always calling our philosophy religion. Unfortunately, much of our history gives them reason to say that. Non-therapeutic chiropractic

has clarified the philosophy and taken out the religious overtones. But that is not enough. Chiropractic, in their mind, cannot exist as a science and philosophy. The two are mutually exclusive. We maintain that the philosophy and science complement each other. They maintain there is no relationship and we must make a choice-either we are a science like evolution (which it really is not) or we are a non-science like Intelligent Design. We cannot live in both camps. It is true that there are some vitalistic scientists in the chiropractic community, some that can easily put the science and philosophy together. They know that science can never come up with all the answers in the human experience when there is a metaphysical component to human beings. These are the people that you meet at a Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic International Research and Philosophy Symposium seminar. But by and large they are a small minority and, like the brilliant scientists who are working on Intelligent Design, their voices are being drowned out by the mechanists.

Where do we go from here? I don't know. My inclination would be to follow the lead of the Intelligent Design people who are like the bunny that just keeps on going. Like them, we should overwhelm the people with such a mass of reason, logic, facts and knowledge that the public will sit up and take notice of what we do despite the ranting of scientism. We need to bring so much truth to the public forum that despite the mechanistic outcry that "you're not scientific" the public will realize that science does not have all the answers to mankind's problems and perhaps this non-scientific philosophy has part of the answer. Δ

A Rose By Any Other Name

A former faculty colleague and long-time friend of mine, Brian McAulay, D.C., PhD, recently wrote an excellent paper entitled, *Language of the Philosophy of Chiropractic as a Barrier to Understanding* (The Chiropractic Choice, February 2006) concerning the various and controversial definitions of innate intelligence and universal intelligence and how these terms create animosity within the profession because of their diverse meanings. Dr. McAulay suggests that some sort of chiropractic symposium be created to come to a consensus regarding these terms. I am in favor of any kind of philosophical discussion in chiropractic, but I have serious doubts about the success of such an endeavor. Further, I wonder how valuable the effort would be when we as a profession cannot come to a consensus regarding the definition of chiropractic!

The reason that we cannot agree on the definitions of universal and innate intelligence is because of such wide-spread thinking which is the real problem. Dr. McAulay points out the difficulty when he says that the profession explains innate intelligence in terms of everything from “Viz Medicatrix Naturae” to “God in human be-

ings.” Those descriptions are pretty far apart to expect a consensus definition. That would be like an objective straight chiropractor and a National University of Health Science graduate coming to a consensus on the definition of chiropractic. Any consensus in chiropractic is virtually impossible because people in this profession have such strong feelings regarding their position and consensus requires compromise. Actually, any consensus or middle position would likely be the OSC definition. However, you are no more likely to get the “innatists,” those that accept a religious definition as given by D.D. and B.J., to accept a less spiritual description of innate intelligence than you are to get the broad scope chiropractors to accept a more vitalistic one. They are not interested in anything philosophical within the chiropractic profession. (See lead article). If they were to ever accept the phenomena that we call universal intelligence and innate intelligence into the chiropractic lexicon, the descriptive terms would have to be so watered down that they would be totally mechanistic, thereby denying the real essence of these terms. How can someone who believes that chiropractic should be devoid of vital-

istic phenomena accept any term that describes our understanding of what innate intelligence means? On the other side, will a person who believes that their innate intelligence speaks to them and tells them where to set up an office be willing to abandon that concept for a less spiritual one? Can we get together on consensus? I would suggest that we can if everybody would be willing to accept my definition of innate intelligence. But wait, if everybody is willing to accept my definition, we really don’t have to come up with a new term, we can continue to use innate and universal intelligence. I am willing to get together to discuss the use of these terms. If for no other reason than to get the mechanistic extremists to admit that they see no need for a consensus on meaning because, in their opinion, no term describing a vitalistic phenomena belongs in chiropractic. Actually, I would really like to hear them take that position publicly because I believe that the vast majority of the profession accepts the idea of a vitalistic phenomena in chiropractic. It would prove that the “cult of scientism” that exists within our profession is divorced from mainstream thinking. Δ

We Need to See More New Practice Members

I sometimes think that non-therapeutic straight chiropractors do not like to see new people in the office. After all, new people disrupt the rhythm of an office, they take more time and effort. And no matter how good an education program an office has, a good percentage of new people will not choose lifetime care. So consciously or unconsciously, maybe we try to keep down the number of new people so we will have a high PVA and we can feel good about ourselves. We can say, “We’re doing a great job of educating people, we are great chi-

ropractors.” Well everybody, it’s time to stop feeling so good. If you have a PVA of 50 or more you better be seeing a minimum of 700 visits a week. If not, you are not even scratching the surface of impacting your community and you are doing this great principle a disservice. That means you should be seeing at least 60 new people every month...some of us should be seeing a lot more.

I think we have been using a lot of excuses for not doing what we should. I know I have. “Well, there are more chiropractors now than ever

before.” So what!? There’s a lot more people than ever before and statistics indicate we are not seeing a greater percentage of the public. So all we are doing is dividing the 9-10% or whatever we see among all of us. What about the millions who have never been to a chiropractor? Beside that, unless you are in a town with a dozen other objective straight chiropractors, how many chiropractors there are in town is not even an issue. There are more people in my area now than ever before, so there should be more chiropractors. Somehow we

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think if we have to go out and solicit new people, we have not reached a level of success. Well, guess what, I think if you are not seeing a thousand new people a year, you haven't reached a level of success and maybe you don't need to go out and solicit but you better be doing something to get them in your office. More importantly, you should be doing things to remove the barriers that are keeping them out!

Here's an excuse I used: People have insurance now so its cheaper to have the insurance company pay the chiropractor than pay out of their pocket. (I have a strictly cash practice box in the wall). However, they tell us that 40% of the public does not have insurance and of those who do, many have high deductibles, high co-pays or no coverage for chiropractic. Still, I have many practice members who have insurance and come to me

any way because no insurance companies cover lifetime maintenance care and that's what we are all about.

Of course, there is competition for people, but what we have to offer people makes it about as competitive as a game between the NBA all-stars and a grade school team, unless we are failing to do some very basic things to build the practice. Unfortunately, I think we may be. I have a top ten list of things we do that turn people away from us, our offices and chiropractic. Some of these things are not pleasant to hear. Some of them include the lies that practice management consultants have been telling us. I am not going to expound upon them, just list them. **The Foundation has a CD (and an accompanying booklet) titled "Building a Referral Practice"** that explains all of them and more. Call FACE or check out our web site www:f-a-c-e.com to ac-

quire it for a small donation. Here they are in no particular order. Evaluate your practice.

1. Poor telephone skills with potential new practice members.
2. Inadequate support staff.
3. Long waits to get in the office as a NPM.
4. Too few hours in the day that you are open.
5. Too few days a week being open.
6. Too long a wait to be seen during a visit.
7. High fees.
8. Unfriendly attitudes on the part of staff.
9. Unfriendly attitude on the chiropractor's part (especially with returning inactive practice members).
10. Making practice members feel rushed. Δ