



CHIROPRACTIC PHILOSOPHY

What Isn't Chiropractic Philosophy

By Rob Sinnott, D.C., L.C.P., D.Ph.C.S.

After over a century the chiropractic profession still finds reason to bicker about its philosophy. It is time to stop the childishness and work out a resolution. There is room on both sides for clearer communication of the realities and myths involved.

This brings me to the use of the word "isn't" in the title. In the early years of chiropractic, patients sought out chiropractors and knew little if anything of this new profession. Chiropractors set out to paint a picture of 'what Chiropractic is' upon the clean, white canvas within the patients' minds. Today's practitioners first have to scrub clean and repaint the surface to free their minds from misbegotten opinion before any substantial education can begin. The tribulations of educating a new patient have that new layer of graffiti removal. The process becomes one of defense and frustration for you, the practitioner, in comparison to a patient who has no personal or 'inherited' wrong views.

In today's world the misconceptions must be addressed before you can proceed in your practice. It is not the patient's fault, they have not been given the proper tools, or worse yet — half-truths, upon which they must make decisions about what you do as a chiropractor. These half-truths may have come from a disgruntled medical doctor, a neighbor, a purposefully placed article in the media, etc. What occasionally can add to the problem is if the patient "knows" the truth and doubts anything different you offer to tell them. How can meaningful understanding be reached when misconceptions rule the dialogue?

The topic of chiropractic philosophy is no different. My goal is to give as much information as we can to dispel rumor and innuendo so that an honest dialogue about the role of Chiropractic philosophy can finally take place. The Hatfields and McCoys waged a war for generations and neither side was willing to consider any discussion, no matter how much evidence may have existed that may have brought about a resolution.

The "Curse" of Chiropractic

Let's start with what has been published in our chiropractic papers. For instance there were a series of articles published by the *Dynamic Chiropractic* newspaper written by Dr. David Seaman, faculty from Palmer Florida. As the ICA Council on Chiropractic Philosophy Chair, I wrote a response that unfortunately was never published and I don't know if it was ever forwarded to the author. For those not familiar with the articles, Dr. Seaman referred to the "curse" of Chiropractic mentioned by R.W. Stephenson, DC in his 1927 *Chiropractic Text Book*. I am quoting a portion of the original text in question.

"As with Central Nerve Cells, for our purpose, a brief description of Peripheral Nerve Cells is all that is necessary. They are tissue cells

(nerve tissue) having a body, nucleus, protoplasm, etc., as any other tissue cell. They are living organisms having adaptability; requiring mental impulses and nutrition as any other tissue cell. The writer is emphasizing these points, for it is the curse of Chiropractic, one of the things that have done much to corrupt the science, that students of Chiropractic will persistently forget that the nerve cell is a living thing, very sensitive and delicate, and mental impulses are immaterial messages and not a material something which can be dammed back in the nerve by an interference, as by the flood gate."

Dr. Seaman explained that Stephenson felt the "curse" was students thinking the vertebral subluxation dams back mental impulse supply. He extrapolated

this paragraph to mean that Stephenson felt the vertebral subluxation does not interfere with mental impulse supply.

A cursory understanding of our philosophy might find one seeing some logic here. In reality, Dr. Seaman has missed the point that Dr. Stephenson was trying to raise. His point is that the mental impulse cannot be dammed back for later delivery. A mental impulse is directed for a particular moment in time. There is no 'backlog' from a vertebral subluxation. A mental impulse designed for a particular moment in time has no value at a later time. Students believing this 'backlog' exists is what Stephenson feels is the "curse of Chiropractic". A finger over the end of a hose may dam back supply and when removed the water that has been waiting there under increasing pressure flows with increased intensity until the 'backlog' returns to normal.

It was with great disappointment that this illogical position took wings. Recently on eBay a Stephenson Text Book was being described as the book you can read about the "Curse of Chiropractic". There is nothing to read and yet this is what is now being taught in our institutions according to students I have contacted. This type of education is a disservice as it is based upon a false assumption.

Universal Intelligence

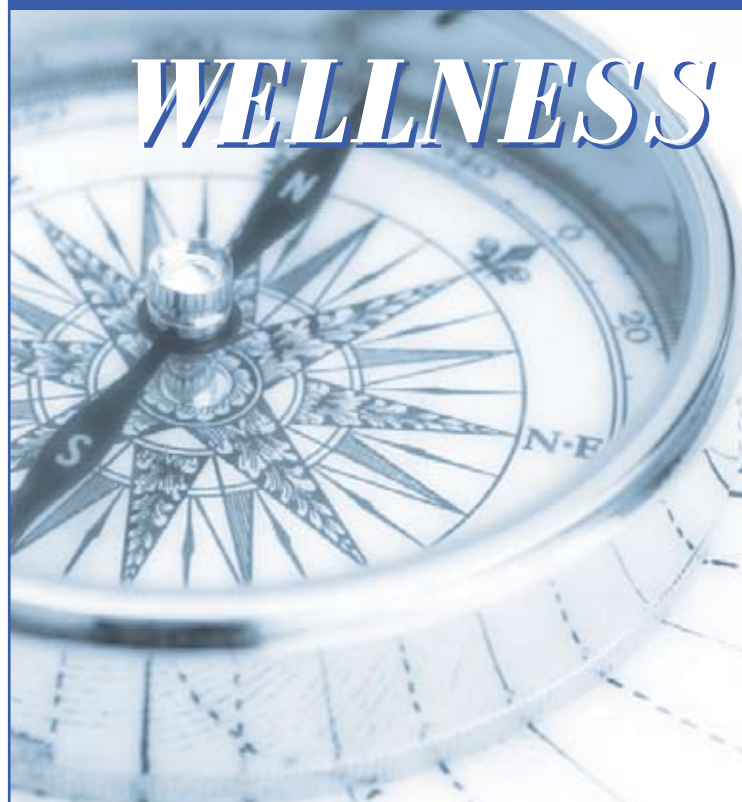
Universal Intelligence is most certainly the most debated subject within Chiropractic philosophy. Sadly, most of what is known from reading the anti-philosophic materials is the wrong impression that there is a religious intent in this term. This has not been helped by many who choose to align their religious beliefs with our philosophy.

Chiropractic's philosophy makes the point that Universal Intelligence has no solicitude for structural matter. Noted metaphysical writer and Harvard Alford Chair, Francis Bowen, made the point that a deity has certain requisite qualities. Not the least of those qualities being a function in line with both moral and ethical law. For instance, praying to a deity is in expectation of moral and ethical influence. This is most certainly not a concept held by our Chiropractic philosophy in regards to Universal Intelligence.

In short, if we recognize the order and organization that surrounds us, philosophically we determine that there is intelligence behind that order. While many make the error of going to another level by determining the source of intelligence, this is outside the boundary of Chiropractic philosophy. The "intellect" behind the "intelligence" raises a question more

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