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A Lifesaving Adjustment

By Victoria Arcadi

During the hundreds of emergency situations which I have been involved in, for example when called to a birth with a newborn unstable and in trouble, I have experienced the miracle of chiropractic and the intense power of an adjustment.

I have seen babies and adults (my mother for example) very close to death, and witnessed the result of an adjustment. The story I'm about to tell brings home the power we possess in our bare hands.

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon, and I was attending the first birthday of a child I had helped deliver. The party was at pool side with 30 adults and several dozen children. There were also two other chiropractors sharing in the celebration. The party was wonderful, and everyone was enjoying themselves.

All of a sudden there was shouting: "Is there a doctor here? Does anyone know CPR, there is a little boy at the bottom of the pool!"

"Call 911, I've pulled him out of the pool," someone else shouted.

I saw one of the chiropractors and others running to the scene. My office manager and good friend shouted to me, "Vicky, get down there NOW!" I took off and ran to the little boy. Three people were working on him and the other chiropractor was administering CPR.

The boy had no respiration, a faint pulse, and his pupils were fixed and dilated. Clearly the child was on his way out, and in fact it horrified me because he already looked dead. All I could think of was I wanted to adjust him. I had my hands under his head and I palpated his neck and occiput. His head was hyperextended and his neck extensor muscles were extremely hypertonic. We rolled the boy on his side and a little mucous came out of his mouth. Everyone thought he was breathing, but I yelled to the chiropractor (Dr. L) to listen with his ear next to the boy's mouth to hear the breath sounds, if any. There weren't any.

As the nerve innervation to the heart and lungs is T1-T3, I screamed to Dr. L: "Do an anterior on his upper thoracics now." "Listen to me, just do it!"

"I can't," he said.

At that moment I decided to lift the occiput off the atlas to take the pressure off the boy's brain stem. I did an occipital decompression adjustment with my fingertips in the suboccipital muscles, allowing the occiput to drop and lift superiorly off the atlas. This cranial adjustment, described by osteopaths such as Upledger, is important for the vagus nerve release and stimulating the involuntary centers of the brain stem responsible for heart rate and respiration, and therefore would increase oxygen supply.

The boy was supine for a moment, and then we rolled him on his side again, and I continued the adjustment. All of a sudden the hypertonic muscles relaxed and the occiput moved and just then the boy started to wimper. The release occurred surprisingly very easily and quickly without resistance. I motioned everyone to get out of my way and I picked the boy up and administered an anterior adjustment to the upper thoracics. I gave a forceful adjustment with a great release, and the boy started to cry vigorously. He started to scream "Get off of me!"

We got him up and he vomited and expelled all the water inside of him. He continued to cry, and I instructed the other woman helping to continue rubbing his back where the nerves exit in the upper thoracic vertebrae. He sat up again and vomited a little more. I saw at least a bucket of water come out of that little boy. He had come back to life. He continued to cry very hard.

Just then the paramedics showed up and took over, but the worst was over. He went to the hospital, spent the night, and was released the next morning perfectly fine. His mother wrote me a letter to thank me for helping to save her son's life, and she said that he was swimming again two days following his near drowning.

I read the letter and cried with gratitude that I am part of this great profession, and by doing the only thing I really know -- chiropractic, I helped save a little boy's life. It was quite an unbelievable experience.

Don't question or cut short the power of a single adjustment: it can save a life. You know, all we need is our hands and innate intelligence.

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