



Dynamic Chiropractic – September 12, 1990, Vol. 08, Issue 19

A Voice in the Silence

By Richard C. Schafer, DC, FICC

It was a hard day, and I fell asleep the minute I hit the sheets that night. Then I had a dream -- at least I think it was a dream. I remember that first I perceived a shadowy figure within the darkness. "Who are you?" I asked. The figure spoke -- slowly, with strong conviction, but the firmness could not hide the paradoxical joy and stifled sorrow:

"I am the one who chose a minority profession to express myself: one subject to insults, unfair criticism, degrading whispers, and poorly disguised snickers -- in the media, at social gatherings, almost wherever I stand before strangers and announce with pride who I am. Yet I refuse to consider my minority profession an inferior profession.

"I am the one who holds out a hand in friendship to the seemingly receptive attorney, judge, legislator, medic, or reporter only to find out later that I was tolerated only because I could be used for personal gain: a sheep among a greedy wolf pack.

"I do not revere the establishment. I establish reverence for what works.

"I am the one who motivates a chiropractic student because he or she was healed by a DC when so many 'orthodox' physicians failed. Such inspired individuals feel it is a mission, a quest to pass this knowledge on, and I grow stronger, enthusiastic, and become a beacon of light. People become awed by my presence. I am also the one who is injured by those who become a chiropractic student solely because they could not get into medical school, and then I grow weaker, excusing, a burning match -- because, as such, they do not have the experience necessary to prepare them for greatness. They pour from an empty cup. They have nothing to give except the mechanics of what they have been taught. Their hands are only wrenches and pliers. They do not understand that there is more to healing than engineering.

"I am the one who looks like a doctor, acts like a doctor, and thinks like a doctor for the ill and disabled, and am so recognized as a healer. I am also the one who is injured by those who pretend to be a doctor, and because of this, am so stereotyped by the easily prejudiced.

"I am a thinker, a developer, an inquirer, a seeker of the better. I clear the clouds by asking, 'Why?' 'How?' 'When?' 'What if?' I am also the one who is injured by those who do not think for themselves but parrot the words of another; do not develop, but strive to clone the deeds of the dead; do not plod forward, but look backward to days long past in the river of time.

"I have wide arms, but I am restrained by those who strive to chain my hands, my mind, my heart. My substance is not, cannot be composed of 'should not's.' I express myself best in people with a vision, not reactionaries or those who view life through a rear-view mirror.

"I am the one who pines with the hypocrisy of those who demand a 'pure unadulterated concept of chiropractic' yet adorn their offices, houses, and automobiles with some of the finest technological achievements available. Walking is the pure form of transportation. A cave, lean-to, or tent is a pure form of shelter. The pioneer's life-style was pure by place and time, not by choice. I am directed by foresight, not hindsight. Thinking, not aging, makes me mature. It is I who inclines the wise among us to say, 'Come, let us reason together.'

"I prosper by getting results quickly, economically, and proving 'I care.' I incline the sincere to take time to listen, to explain, to personalize and humanize, and thus restore hope to the fearful and misled. I am degraded by those who overtreat so they can overbill, who advertise like merchants of elixirs to health, pass out twisted pens or use other vitiating gimmicks, associate themselves with give-away inducements, and announce their profession on T-shirts or doormats for people to wipe their feet. Can you imagine a respected surgeon passing out pens in the shape of an inflamed appendix or wearing a T-shirt depicting heart surgery or a vaccination for rabies?

"I do not teach that the cause of disease is a 'bone out of place or fixed.' That is only one static, mechanical etiologic expression. There are scores of dynamic functional causes. Thus, I teach that a frequent cause of disease is the abnormal expression of neurologic tone -- and so directed D. D. Palmer to state that fact on the title page of his first book.

"Belief enslaves; knowledge frees. I grow stronger by assimilating truth but am injured by those who teach that theory is fact, history is future, men should be measured by selfishly chosen arbitrary standards, opinion must go unquestioned by the disciple -- the true believer with the 'Big Idea.' Folly draws false conclusions from just principles, while madness draws conclusions from false principles.

"They put me in jail because I healed the sick when they could not, but I was not imprisoned. They influenced judges, legislators, insurance companies, columnists, and bureaucrats to stymie my progress, but I pushed forward with determination. They constantly try to divide me, but deep down I remain whole and holistic among the thinking majority.

"Who am I? you ask. Do you not recognize me? I am the spirit of chiropractic."

"I know, I know," I replied -- slowly, with strong conviction, but the firmness could not hide the paradoxical joy and stifled sorrow.

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You can take advantage of the special pre-publication price of Dr. Schafer's latest textbook, Clinical Chiropractic -- The Management of Pain and Disability Upper Body complaints. To order your personal copy, please turn to page XX for ordering information.



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