

Chiropractic Newsletter | Well-Being

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Innate Potential

Chiropractic is about the birth and wellness of families, recognizing how we are each an integral part of a larger whole. What is chiropractic all about? Many think of chiropractic as an alternative form of healthcare, but this may miss the point. The term healthcare has become so consumed by a conventional model and paradigm of thinking that it distracts us from the larger premise which chiropractic lives to serve. Perhaps there's a better way to recognize the larger premise of chiropractic to convey what it is really about.

Such a recognition would have to harbor a respect for the body's nervous system, which is much more than the sum of neurons controlling the cells and organs of the body. The nervous system is the basis of our experiences as living human beings. It is the means by which we relate to one another at the physical and emotional level. Are my relationships healthy? Am I choosing to relate in an optimal way, for each given situation? Am I connected with my loved ones across time and space, and are we attuned to each other's needs? These are questions that pertain to the health and vitality of our nervous system!

In truth, the larger premise of chiropractic asks us to go one step further and recognize our nervous system within its optimal, natural habitat, which, as humans, is undoubtedly centered within family. Thinking of the nervous system within the dynamics of the family brings us much closer to understanding the larger premise of chiropractic. Chiropractic is about the birth and wellness of families, recognizing how we are each an integral part of a larger whole.

From the earliest days of life onward, chiropractic care seeks to awaken the nervous system, to open the individual's higher capacity for relationship and trust facilitated by the activation of our higher cortical brain centers. At birth, and in early infancy, chiropractic works to help establish this connection, and to evolve uniquely alongside each individual and family, helping to unleash and advance that family's "higher innate potential."

What does this higher potential mean? It could mean greater physical performance in life, or more robust health outcomes, as well as greater coherence and personal or family success. However, one way I like to summarize the idea of a higher innate potential is to remember how we are each responsible for our own direction in life, and that each of us must derive the capacity to make the right choices for our unique situations. Our higher innate potential is the capacity to remain open and receptive to the instinctive wisdom that acts in accordance with our highest good, which knows the best possible way forward from the present moment. This is especially relevant in times of acute need, when a situation arises without a moment's notice, when discerning the right action matters most, such as a moment of physical or emotional intensity. But it may also be needed in a seemingly ordinary moment when we are faced with a simple everyday choice, one that ends up being something that defines the very course of our future. Do I go up to this person and talk to them? Do I say yes or no to this opportunity?

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The "why" of chiropractic adjustments is to prepare us for our life's many choices and adventures, by instilling the great expectation that we can meet our highest calling if we are able and willing to connect to the indwelling wisdom that formed us and gave us birth in this world.

Some of us were lucky enough to be adjusted in the first days of life. I was one of these lucky babies, as were each of my siblings. At that time in our culture, this was quite rare. Now it is becoming far more recognized as a foundation for advancing a family's resilient start to life. For us, these childhood adjustments represent fond memories filled with joy, connection, appreciation, and pleasure, as we all gathered into the adjusting room and spent our time chatting and playing while taking turns getting adjusted by our parents who were (lucky for us) both chiropractors. For me, these moments were also tied to a strong sense of a deeper purpose—to protect and honor this precious way of life despite the forces of opposition which might seek to prevent our family's way.

As I've grown up, taking on the role of provider and guardian for loved ones who will live after me, I can understand that chiropractic for the family is about something far bigger than healthcare. **It's about establishing and advancing the family's living connection with each other.** Somehow, through the ceremony of interpersonal recognition involved in a family adjustment, chiropractic awakens more trust and love for one another and for life itself. It is something that, looking back, is clearly one of the key cornerstones of my own family's present-day connection, our commitment to one another, and our trust and love for each other.

Many still use terms like alternative healthcare to explain chiropractic. But it doesn't do it justice. **Pathways has worked to expand our vocabulary with terms such as salutogenesis—meaning "the birth of health"—and Germanische Heilkunde—meaning "family healing knowledge"—to help us evolve into a newer paradigm with fresher insights and holistic perspectives.** We love to write and speak about key chiropractic principles like "adaptability," "subluxation," "psychoneuroimmunology," and nervous system "coherence," to describe the natural order and behavior of health in biology. And with the chiropractic premise centering on nervous system coherence within the emotional and relational well-being dynamics of the family, we are approaching the true philosophical and practical keys of optimal biological health. **Health, we are learning, is a matter of honoring Nature's holistic, biological design.**

Still, with all that in our purview, when I think about chiropractic with my heart, I think mainly of my father's hands under the back of my head as a young child, supporting and adjusting my cranium as I mentally and emotionally overcame the challenges of the week—the school tests, or the big basketball games—or whatever might silently lie ahead needing my greater awareness and discernment. I think about all the supporting hands like his in the world, and it becomes clear that this thing we call chiropractic is so much more than healthcare. Somehow, it is the greatest discovery of the hands-on contact that awakens our soul-to-soul recognition, connecting us onward to our higher, innate potential.

So whatever we might think is the truth of what constitutes health today, I know that chiropractic will always be the art of bringing our best ideas into hands-on practice for the family. And for that, I will be forever grateful to this profession, for bringing such a practice into my family life, and helping me and my family grow.

By John Ohm

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