



Market Share

Chiropractic: Be Proud of it!

The perennial question in chiropractic is, "Why don't we have more than a 10% market share?" Stanley Greenfield, a decade ago, wrote that chiropractors competed for the same 10% of the population. He did not understand why. We are still locked in at this low level percentage, but I think I know why.

To sell something effectively, you need two things. First, a clearly identified product is necessary. Second, you need a way to educate your market as to why they need your product. Businesses that are successful have these. People know why they want to go to McDonalds, Wal-Mart or a Hilton. They tend to order their soft drinks by brand. These businesses have market penetration because they are known. I would imagine almost 100% of the people in America know what they sell at McDonalds and know to go there when they want it.

The problem with chiropractic marketing is most people have no idea what they will get. Some have no concept of what a chiropractor does. Those who do know about us may have different expectations based on past experience. "You are a chiropractor, what do you mean you do not do acupuncture (or substitute nutrition or therapy or weight loss or wellness)?" You see the problem? The public confuses chiropractic with all the other things being done by chiropractors. Let me say clearly I am not opposed to ancillary procedures like these and know they definitely can have healing benefits.

We just need to clearly define chiropractic to increase our market share. People need to be educated to the fact chiropractors, and only chiropractors, "palpate and adjust with an incredible sense of touch and healing."¹ Useful as other stuff may be, it is not chiropractic and confuses people as to what is chiropractic. A clear definition will not only give us a unique product but a platform and something identifiable to sell. Fortunately, we own the adjustment of the spine. And it should have 100% market penetration like medicine, dentistry and Wal-Mart.

I practiced for 40 years in a building labeled as a chiropractic center. I have seen a number of fads come and go. The present craze is "wellness." The problem is you cannot guarantee the product. Even if a patient does everything they are supposed to, wellness may not result. And while the goal is noble and chiropractic should be a part of the process, we need to be careful to label and define what chiropractic is and how it is important to health.

So why would you want to chuck the uniqueness of chiropractic for a generic term that costs you market share? Also, take note there is a current ground swell movement in churches to promote a "wellness" program or hold "wellness seminars." Although this may sound good, it's a wolf in sheep's clothing and often promotes the "multiple paths to eternity" thinking prevalent today.²

Just as we embrace Christ as The Way to heaven, we need to own chiropractic differentiated from other things we do. The hang-up is with us since we do not own it and sell it. Chiropractic is nothing to be ashamed of - it is a God-given way to bless people. Be proud of it and love it, and you will be blessed. Your market share is there and needs you. Identify your product. In Matthew 7, Jesus says by their fruits you will know them. *I say know your fruit!*

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¹ Petersen, *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Volume 29, Number 6

² Jennifer Pekich, *Lighthouse Trails, A Visit to Rick Warren's Health Seminar*, January 20, 11