

Health: Whose Responsibility Is It Anyway?

It was a chilly winter afternoon in a Detroit suburb hockey arena. Parents cheer and scream in support of their young boys giving it their all on the ice. In an instant the arena goes silent, every face in a state of complete shock.

“Somebody call 9-1-1!” the referee hollers with a tremble in his voice. There lay a young boy on the ice, not able to move from the neck down, tears rolling down one side of his face. He looks up to find a familiar face of comfort in the crowd that had now surrounded him. “Coach, Coach” he whimpers. “Yes, I’m here” he replied. “What happened? I went into the corner to get the puck and... and I didn’t do anything wrong, I looked behind me and no one was there,” the boy stuttered.

“He came out of the penalty box after you looked, you couldn’t have seen him” coach mumbled.

“Mom!” he cried out.

“Yes, sweetie I’m here, it’s going to be ok, alright!” she was crying but almost expressionless.

“Mommy, I can’t feel my legs or my arms, I’m scared,” he says.

“I know honey but don’t worry you’ll be ok, just lay still ok. The ambulance is almost here,” she says as she frantically looks over both shoulders almost as if to reassure herself.

Gradually over the next few hours he began to regain feeling in his legs, then arms until he had complete recovery. He was released from the hospital shortly thereafter with a collar on his neck and instructions to see his doctor when he got back home.

Fortunately, he recovered from the paralysis and even went back to playing hockey although the doctors said he’d never play contact sports again! He had experienced migraine headaches in the past, however, never this frequent or severe. The migraines had become debilitating since the injury, rendering him catatonic in a dark room with a cold face cloth on his head for days on end. Many hours were spent in doctors’ offices in search for the cause. The multiple diagnostic tests performed gave no insight to the root of the migraines. The only solution was noxious medication that seemed to knock him out, worse than the headache. At least without the medication, he would have a few normal days between headaches. He merely wanted to be like every other boy his age, go to school or play hockey, but the migraines prevented that. He couldn’t understand why he had to suffer so much; he just wanted to be normal.

His parents were watching one of his games and discussing with the other parents how severe the migraines had become. One of the other parents asked if they had tried chiropractic. His parents responded “no, the doctors had never mentioned anything about that”. One of the fathers told them that he was a chiropractor and that maybe he could help the boy. They didn’t know much about chiropractic and found it so difficult to see their boy suffer that they were ready to try anything. The next time the boy suffered from a migraine they called the chiropractor and rushed him to the chiropractors’ office. The chiropractor did his assessment and went on to perform an adjustment. Almost

miraculously, for the first time since the injury, the young man experienced relief from a migraine. After fifteen minutes it was gone and the boy was out playing street hockey with his friends!

I hope you find this dramatic story very touching because it's about me and how chiropractic saved my life! By suffering so much and finding health through chiropractic, I was inspired to become a chiropractor and devote the rest of my life to helping others.

How many people today feel confident in placing their health and wellness into the hands of provincial or state run health care system? How many think "There is no need to worry, if I get sick I can always rely on the government to take care of me"? Does that seem like a good idea? Wait times in Canada are at an all time high because of significant pressure on manpower and facilities. We are in a healthcare crisis because of the current sickness trends in our older population. As the baby boomers age into their 60's and the disease care model continues to demand extreme financial support, the western world economy will not be able to keep up with the current level of spending. How confident do you feel that you won't die before you get the necessary medical service? Medical wait times are forcing many Canadians to go to private clinics or even other countries to have medical procedures performed sooner. We know that politicians receive illegal "kickbacks" from pharmaceutical companies for lobbying efforts. For example, Mr. Dingwall of the former liberal government illegally received \$350,000 from a Belleville pharmaceutical company to lobby the government. Many politicians seem to do what is in their best interest not the best interest of the public at large. Is it wise to trust your wellbeing and that of your loved ones to these people?

How confident do you feel with placing your health and wellness into the hands of a pharmaceutical company? If you are confident in this model of healthcare, I invite you to take a look at how this industry is performing. In 2003 the Canadian Medical Association Journal revealed that 38,000 people died due to adverse side effects from properly prescribed medicines! That means the right drug, for the right condition at the intended dosage, killed 38,000 people. The Journal of American Medical Association reports an estimated 28% of all hospital admissions are due to problems caused by these physiologically incompatible prescription drugs. There is increasing awareness of pharmaceutical companies withholding information from research studies on the safety of their drugs. This also includes misinforming medical doctors who distribute or prescribe them. A classic example is the drug Vioxx, an anti-inflammatory drug in the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory class, similar to aspirin and ibuprofen. Vioxx was marketed worldwide, prescribed to more than 20 million different people, with 2003 reported sales of \$2.5 billion. Studies revealed that those who had taken Vioxx had double the risk of suffering a heart attack. Despite having preliminary studies show a risk for cardiovascular events, Merck, the pharmaceutical company that produced Vioxx still heavily marketed the drug. Finally, in September 2004, Merck withdrew Vioxx from the market, making this the largest drug recall in history. A study published in the prestigious medical journal The Lancet, authored by Dr. Graham, found that 140,000 cases of heart disease in the United States and 58,000 deaths were caused by Vioxx during its five years on the

market. It is seemingly obvious that pharmaceutical companies are more concerned about their bottom line profits than the health and wellbeing of our community. In 2005 The Center of Public Integrity published that most pharmaceutical companies spend more on marketing than on research. Mega producers Pfizer and GlaxoSmithKline topped the list by spending twice as much on marketing than they did on research. Pfizer spent \$16.90 billion on marketing and \$7.68 billion on research, while GlaxoSmithKline spent \$12.93 billion on marketing and \$5.20 billion on research (Ismail, 2005). Do you trust the responsibility of your health in the hands of a pharmaceutical industry?

As a society we were brought up to hold medical doctors on a pedestal, listening and following every recommendation. Understanding that much of the information utilized by medical physicians is actually provided by pharmaceutical companies are you willing to put trust for your health and wellness strictly in the hands of your medical doctor? Let's take a look at how our doctors are performing in that respect. The Canadian Medical Association Journal exposed that 40,000 people die in hospitals due to preventable medical error (Baker, 2004). This statistic only relates to hospitals, and does not include private practice. The number one killer in Canada is heart disease taking approximately 100,000 lives each year. If you combine adverse effects to medications killing 38,000 people per year and medical errors in hospitals killing 40,000 people per year, you discover that 78,000 deaths per year are preventable, and we still haven't accounted for private practice errors. I'm also guessing that not all preventable deaths are appropriately accounted for. This would just be bad business. Personally I would be extremely reluctant to enter the present medical system unless it was an emergency. The Journal of American Medical Association published that a whopping 250,000 deaths per year are caused by preventable medical error in hospitals alone. That is the third leading cause of death in the United States, second only to cancer and heart disease! How many of you feel confident relying on that system? With the advent of the internet and an abundance of information available on to healthcare consumers, the population is more knowledgeable than ever before. Many people are going into their doctor's office with a list of potential diagnoses based on their symptoms, information gained from the internet. What most are looking for is a drug or surgery, probably because they know little else of what is available for them.

Now the information presented in this chapter is not meant to bash our government or medical doctors, it is solely meant to educate and open your eyes to the actual picture of the system in which we are living. In fact I am very grateful that we have government funding for healthcare, some medications do save lives and I sincerely believe that most doctors are there to help people and have the best interests of the patient in mind. However, they can only perform to the level of their competence based on what they have been taught, and the education is in some ways flawed, because it focuses on what needs to be added to the body or taken away to help people be healthy. Physicians can only practice what they have been educated to perform. I eluded earlier to the information supplied to physicians by pharmaceutical companies and to the role of our current medical system, a medical system that functions from crisis to crisis in a chronic manner. There is no doubt that it serves a purpose in times of crisis, but true health care that would serve to improve quality of life is not what is offered.

The way your body can adapt to lifestyles and chosen behaviours is nothing short of a miracle. The human race is under enormous stress especially in the western world. Obesity levels are at an all-time high; smoking, alcohol and drug consumption are soaring and more people suffer from insomnia and depression than ever before. Yet somehow with all this stress the human body adapts and maintains function, often with dysfunction that is hidden and unapparent until one day your body starts to breakdown and symptoms appear. Here is where the medical system kicks in and for many it may be too late. In such instances we accuse the human body of being unintelligent, having a chemical imbalance or an excess of body parts, and major interventions are suggested. Do you think it would be wiser to respect the body, understand how intelligent it really is and believe that it always responds intelligently to the demands placed upon it? If as a society we chose to look to what causes the body to breakdown, a solution would be imminent and the suffering would decrease, ending this healthcare crisis. Clearly people aren't sick because of a lack medicine, and are not usually born with too many body parts. People are sick because they make sick choices. These sick choices force our body to adapt, driving us into a state of dis-ease. If this di-ease persists for a prolonged period of time our body breakdown further. Symptoms do not occur by mistake, they appear to tell you to make changes to your internal environment, to make better choices for your health.. Symptoms are not to be suppressed they are a manifestation of the cause, just like the oil or engine light in your car. When you engine light turns on should you ignore the light, unplug the fuse, or pay attention to what it is telling you? If you ignore it, does the problem typically get better or worse? The answer to this one is quite simple, isn't it? You pay attention and get your vehicle checked and repaired, or more serious problems occur. Disease is the result of a breakdown in adaptation where the organism can no longer cope with excessive demands in its environment. If changes are not made, sickness leading to death is the ultimate result.

When you go to your medical doctor, what are you looking for, something to relieve a symptom or something to get you well? Does high blood pressure medicine actually get you well, so you can stop taking it? No, you take it for the rest of your life. Is this in your best interest or the pharmaceutical company's interest? What if there were other options? Would you be willing to consider a new model for true health? It should be evident that health doesn't come from a pill, just as money doesn't grow on trees. Do you think people experience headaches because they have a lack of Tylenol in their system? Sounds foolish to ask such a question, doesn't it? I had severe headaches, and not until the cause of the symptom was discovered and corrected did I rediscover health. People are not sick because they are born with a lack of drugs in their body, nor are they sick because they were born with too many body parts! Doctors removed tonsils for years thinking they were causing sore throats. In reality, having swollen tonsils is just a symptom of the cause of the problem. Many of us have known people who had their tonsils removed, yet this intervention had no effect on the number of sore throats the individual experienced. Tonsils serve an important role in immune system function by producing cells that actually help you get rid of infections – T-lymphocytes. Without tonsils, you lose one important avenue to ward off infections.

You are taught that when you are sick you go to the doctor and they cure you. In reality, there is only one thing that can cure you; that is the innate intelligence within you, the inner wisdom that resides in all of us, a wisdom that through your nervous system controls and coordinates the one hundred trillion cells within you. This innate intelligence is responsible for every physiological function that takes place within you! Even when medical professionals apply an intervention; it's still your innate intelligence that does the healing. What happens if you apply a medical intervention such as a drug to a corpse? Nothing of course. Can you think of any more scientific evidence needed to make this point? Life heals! The inner wisdom in living beings dictates healing.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result. We need to look no farther than our senior population to get an illustration of this insanity. Would you say our senior population is the healthiest population you've ever looked at? Of course not! Many people are afraid of living into their sixties and seventies because they see the suffering in our senior population. Our population has been getting sicker and sicker every year, yet we continue to do the exact same thing when it comes to health. This is insane! One of my favourite questions to ask others is, "How many of you would like to grow up and live like your parents or grandparents?" Well then what are you doing to ensure that will not happen to you? Our seniors grew up in an era where they entrusted their health and wellbeing to the government and the medical community (who is strongly influenced by the pharmaceutical industry). Most have taken little to no responsibility for their health. If they get sick they believe they have a system to rely on. Yet they have been getting sicker, suffering more and draining the so-called healthcare system. I sincerely believe this is not by choice, simply ignorance. Who can we blame for this lack of education?

The Public Health Agency of Canada reports that the average senior over 65 takes up to 4.5 different medications, I have had patients present to my office with shopping bags of medication some taking more than eighteen different meds at one time! Many seniors are taking medications for side effects of other medications. When researchers study a particular medication, they try to isolate all other variables so they can identify how their intervention or drug affects a certain condition. Therefore, they are not studying the interaction of multiple other medications on an individuals overall health. According to Health Canada, seniors comprise 13 percent of our population and account for 44.4 percent of all deaths due to adverse drug reactions. Health Canada also noted, when compared to the rest of the population, drug use was significantly higher among seniors accounting for 40% of all medications consumed.

Continuing on this path of destruction will not only create more suffering, it will also bankrupt our economy. We desperately need to change this attitude toward healthcare and start taking responsibility for our own health. If you don't respect yourself enough to start making changes, you are bound for disaster and there is little hope for humanity!

Some seniors have chosen not to follow the norm and have taken responsibility for their health by choosing to exercise, take vitamins, eat healthy, and develop stress reduction mechanisms to name a few solutions. Are these the people suffering in nursing homes?

No, they are the people enjoying the so called “Golden Years,” living vibrant, healthy lives, contributing to society and enjoying time with their grandchildren well into their late years. They are an asset to the world, providing support, wisdom and hope. Why could others not look at them as an example for good living and choose to make similar choices? Yes the sick and suffering are often a major burden to their families and society in general. Is it not time that we educate and empower people to take responsibility for themselves so they can create a life of health and wellbeing rather than a life of sickness and disease?

We are a reactionary society, waiting until we get sick or have symptoms before we act. We determine our health based on how we feel. If we feel good, we must be healthy, right? However, heart disease and cancer are the top killers in North America, and in most cases these conditions progress for years asymptotically. In other words, the condition is destroying someone’s health and they don’t even know it. The most common symptom of heart disease in 50% of case is sudden death. That means that no one knew this person had heart disease until they suddenly have a heart attack and die. One day you FEEL perfectly healthy on the golf course, the next day you are dead from a heart attack. Is that the kind of life you deserve? Many people have grapefruit size tumours in their intestines before they FEEL any symptoms. How we feel and look is a very poor barometer of how healthy we are. Skinny people have heart attacks too. We can no longer wait until crisis occurs before we react. We must be proactive and do whatever it takes to stay out of our current sick care system, and at the same time be grateful that this system exists in case of a crisis. Taking pills is passive and easy, true healthcare takes effort. Our medical model serves to treat disease not promote wellness. Passive healthcare has not worked and will never be effective at maintaining your health and preventing disease, even though it may save your life in an emergency. What will you do different to stay out of the current “sick care” system?

Health is a simple concept. How would you tell an obese person to get well? Modify their diet, exercise daily, reduce stress and ensure their nervous system is functioning optimally. Why would these recommendations be any different for someone with heart disease, cancer or diabetes? These conditions are a manifestation of the same cause... poor lifestyle choices!

We are led to believe that these conditions are the result of our genes and there is nothing we can do about our genetics. Most of the conditions suffered are degenerative in nature, meaning breakdown occurs slowly over many years. These conditions, most cancers, heart disease and type II diabetes have very little to do with our genes. They are the adaptation of your body to poor lifestyle choices for so long that your body begins to break down. Of course many people in a family suffer from similar conditions, though it is not because of bad genes. It is because they are brought up in similar environments and make similar lifestyle choices. If it was based on genes, everyone in your family would have the condition wouldn’t they? You have the same genes. The whole gene concept has been studied extensively. When identical twins with the exact same genetic make-up are brought up in completely different environments, they have completely

different disease presentations. Their environment and lifestyle are better indicators of what types of illness may manifest, especially regarding cancer, heart disease and diabetes the most common diseases of adaptation. We can no longer take the easy road and blame our genes; this theory has little substance. Our genes haven't changed much in the last 40,000 years, but our lifestyle has. The genes have stayed the same yet the expression of these genes has changed drastically due to the environment we expose ourselves to. You would likely agree that the general population is under more stress than ever. People don't eat as healthy or exercise as often as they could, and genes cannot be blamed for how your body adapts to this lifestyle. Your body adapts to the environment it is exposed to, but its process is not in error. The response your body has to the environment is incredibly intelligent. If you go for a run what happens to your blood pressure? It goes up! Is that an error? Are you sick, should you take a pill? No, that is the body's response to the metabolic demands of the environment. The innate intelligence within you ALWAYS adapts appropriately to the environment. Your goal should always be to respect that response and provide it with the best potential to heal, with the ultimate goal of adding as much health to the system as possible, so it has the highest probability to function optimally. You face many environmental stressors that are unavoidable, however, the healthier your body is, the better able you are to adapt to these stressors. Improve the environment within you and you will be better suited to adapt to the environment around you! Treat your body like a temple and it will show you miracles.

Do you ever wonder why certain people always seem to get sick, while others don't? Why does one person in your family get the flu and the others don't? If you are exposed to them wouldn't you CATCH it? Most people have microbes within them all the time, the issue is whether your immune system can control them so you don't manifest symptoms. If your system is overwhelmed with internal stress, it can only provide so much attention to healing, growth and repair function. Cancer for example is mostly an immune issue. We all have cancer cells in us right now. What prevents you from experiencing the disease depends on how effectively your immune system can prevent these cells from reproducing and multiplying.

Ultimately, if you want to be healthy you have to provide yourself with what is genetically required for you to be healthy. The fundamental question being, "what are the genetic requirements for a human being to express health?" We know that if every cell in the human body functioned optimally, you would virtually never get sick. If sickness manifests, something must be interfering with the body's natural ability to express health.

If your dog is sick, you might ask "Honey, what did you feed the dog or did you take the dog for a walk?" Yet, if a human being is sick the most common question is, "Did you take anything for it?" Shouldn't you be looking for what may have caused the problem instead of searching for what you might do to eliminate the symptom? What did you do that inhibited your body's natural healing ability? What did you eat last week? Have you been exercising regularly or have you lived a sedentary lifestyle? Are you practicing proper stress relieving techniques? Most seem to look for external solutions that have nothing to do with the cause of the problem, only masking the symptom. The

requirements for a healthy body are quite simple: a healthy diet, physical exercise, controlled stress and a properly functioning nervous system.

What is a healthy diet? Many would look to the Canadian Food Guide as a resource for a healthy diet. However, this is absolutely not based on research. The Canadian Food Guide is heavily influenced by lobby groups, with the base of the pyramid recommending most of your daily consumption should be from the grains and dairy categories.

According to the research, a diet high in both grains and dairy is significantly related to increased incidences of heart disease, cancer, type II diabetes and yes, even osteoporosis. Unfortunately, our dairy and grain farmers have heavily influenced political policy makers. It is uncontroversial that the North American diet has negatively impacted our health.

The healthiest populations ever studied seem to have similarities in diet. The research reveals that these people have very low incidences of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis and many of the common ailments of today. Their diets consist of vegetables and fruit, some nuts, protein mostly from chicken and fish, and some red meat as well. The majority of your diet should come from vegetables and each meal should contain some protein. Very little grains are consumed and essentially no dairy products, outside of the mothers' breast milk. Humans are the only mammals that drink milk from another mammal, and I don't know of any other mammals with osteoporosis. If you want to be healthy have a breakfast primarily made up of fruit and vegetables with some protein, and you are sure to have a better start to your day and on your way to being healthier. A blended shake is a great way to combine them and have it taste good! Before lunch and dinner add a salad with a good variety of raw veggies combined with some cooked vegetables accompanied by some animal source of protein. Try to eat frequently, 6-8 small meals per day with lots of water in between, approximately 4 litres per day. These simple modifications will provide your body with the nutrients to express wellness. I do recommend some supplementation for nutrients that we cannot get from our diet. For example, the North American diet is almost completely devoid of omega 3 fatty acids. Therefore, it is important that you supplement with high quality fish oil. I recommend Innate Choice an incredible product by Dr. James Chestnut, one of my mentors. His research is the root of much of the information I have shared in this section (Chestnut, J). I also recommend a high quality multivitamin, because soils where fruits and vegetables are grown have become devoid of many of the essential nutrients required for health. If fruits and vegetables contained the nutrients they once did, you wouldn't need to supplement, and you would get all the vitamins from your diet in a whole food source which is best. A multivitamin is just a top up. Remember you eat healthy not to look good or lose weight but to give your body the best opportunity to function.

It is also incredibly important to exercise daily; we all know the global health benefits of regular exercise. That doesn't mean you have to go run a marathon, but you need to do some form of activity everyday. Many little things like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, parking farther away and walking add up. Try to do a variety of exercise, from flexibility or yoga, strength training, pilates and cardiovascular or aerobic. The body benefits from all types activity. To express health you require regular exercise.

Stress has a huge impact on your health, therefore, finding appropriate ways to reduce stress will have tremendous health benefits. There are many techniques out there; it's important that you discover what works best for you. Exercise is probably one of the best to control stress. Other suggestions include meditation, visualization, reading, goal setting, time management, planning, making lists, purposeful living and letting go of fears and guilt. Be grateful for what you have, being grateful attracts more of what you are grateful for. Be humble. The definition of humble that I like is "the degree to which you see yourself in others". Start by loving yourself first and look for characteristics of yourself in others. If someone cuts you off while you are driving, ask yourself if you ever cut someone off, even by error? Of course, nobody is perfect. Love people for who they are and for their unique differences. Remember the law of attraction states that whatever you focus on you attract into your life. Try not dwell on problems, and instead choose to focus on solutions.

In Chiropractic, we understand the scientific fact that your body is a self-healing, self-regulating organism and your nervous system is the master system, controlling and coordinating the vital life force. Chiropractors recognize that interference in your nervous system decreases your body's ability to function optimally. That nerve interference creates more stress within you and your nervous system has to attend to it, disrupting the health, growth and repair functions. These stressful impulses take precedence as your nervous system places them higher on the survival hierarchy. For example, if you are stranded outside in a snow storm your body will pool blood away from the extremities to the core, to ensure that the vital organs get the necessary blood supply to keep you alive; the hierarchy being that in an emergency like this you need your vital organs more than your foot. Your body is so intelligent it will virtually sacrifice its own tissue for the survival of the whole. In understanding this hierarchy and intelligence, chiropractors do not focus on changing the internal environment of the body but ensuring its proper functioning. Again, if every cell in your body was functioning optimally, you would never get sick. Therefore, to remove the interfered distorted nerve impulses, chiropractors look to the spine as it is the most highly nerve dense area in the body. Every adjustment performed by a chiropractor sends a healthy impulse to the brain called proprioception. These proprioceptive (good) inputs override the stressful or nociceptive (not so good) inputs from fixated or misaligned spinal joints, thus, creating healthier outputs. As your brain receives more healthy input, it produces more healthy growth and repair output. The old adage of garbage in, garbage out, or good in good out definitely relates to nervous system output and ultimate health results. As a result of chiropractic adjustments and normalized nervous system function, many patients have experienced miraculous global health changes from chiropractic, not because chiropractic is a specific treatment or cure for these conditions, but because chiropractic adjustments increase your health potential allowing your body a greater opportunity to heal. If you go out and have bad sushi and you begin to vomit, is this an unhealthy response? Should you try to suppress the vomiting? No, this is a healthy response! If you don't get rid of the toxicity, it could kill you! Many people choose to take something when they don't feel well and this interferes with the body's natural healing ability. Did you know that many microbes cannot reproduce in a temperature between 102 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit, and

since they have a life span of 24-48 hours, when the body temperature is elevated for this time period the microbes that were noxious to your body have died and since they were unable to reproduce your body becomes well? Should you take an Aspirin to reduce your fever if that is the natural response of the body?

Chiropractic is the foundation of health requirements, as all other components are completely dependant upon the proper function of the nervous system. If your nervous system is at optimal function, you will experience the true benefits of a healthy diet, exercise and reduced stress.

Believe in yourself and take action today and everyday to create the healthiest body you can. Don't focus on the past, look to improve in the future. Take responsibility for your health today and healing will begin tomorrow! Respect the inner wisdom and it will show you miracles.

Biography

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