

Secrets of the Chiropractic Masters

by Marc Heller, DC

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What makes a chiropractor a master, with patients flocking to his or her door? How are the chiropractic masters different from an ordinary doctor? As a clinician, you face an incredible challenge in finding your own way through the maze of choices and information available to you. Here are some considerations to help you navigate the maze. This article was primarily inspired by a seminar I took featuring James Oschman, PhD, who wrote the Scientific Basic of Energetic Medicine. The seminar was mostly about cold laser therapy, but went far beyond that.

One – passion and connection! If you aspire to mastery, you love your work. You appreciate the gift of being part of the healing process. This passion can be quiet or forceful; it shows up in different ways in different doctors. You make a connection with your patients, not just because it speeds healing, but because that is the kind of human you are. You also connect with, honor and appreciate your staff.

Two – the master chiropractor is always learning and changing. This includes the willingness to be surprised and learn every day in the office. This includes reading the literature and taking frequent seminars. This includes changing what you do when the patient is not responding.

Three – the master thinks outside the box by looking for interconnections, listening to the patient's history, and paying attention to his or her intuition and deeper knowledge. I'll again recommend the book *Blink*, by Malcolm Gladwell, for understanding how our brains come to conclusions far beyond our linear thinking.

Four – the master, whether treating back pain or balancing the whole body, addresses multiple areas of possible dysfunction. This can include the spine, the extremities, the brain, the viscera, biochemical balance, and emotional tone. There has been an explosion of knowledge in the alternative healing arts in the past 25 years. There are wonderful tools available; find the ones that speak to you as a practitioner and that you can make work for your patients. The spine and extremities can be addressed by many different techniques. For the brain, think cranial, think NET, think neuromodulation technique, think frequency specific microcurrent or laser, think Carrick neurology. The viscera can be addressed through visceral manipulation, through George Roth's matrix repatterning, through acupuncture/acupressure, through various reflex methods

found in AK and its variants and SOT. Biochemistry means nutritional balance, whether you keep it simple or delve deeply into this area. Emotional tone is affected by your every action toward your patient, the way you talk, the expectations you have, and your eye contact. Beyond this, many chiropractic methods address more specific somato-emotional connections; think NET and others. Find your own technique package. Figure out a way to connect the dots, and you will move toward mastery. The corollary: The doctor aspiring to mastery is willing to go beyond what is currently accepted into newer areas of study and practice.

More technique: The master addresses soft tissue through hands-on methods, instrumentation and rehabilitation. There are many tools and techniques that can enhance your soft-tissue work. Graston Technique, lasers and percussors all complement the changes you can make with your hands. Myofascial release, in all its permutations, is a powerful way to change the function of the myofascia and its neurological connections. Rehabilitation works on multiple levels. It empowers the patient and makes them feel part of their healing process. Appropriate exercise and movement powerfully changes neuromuscular habit patterns and motor control. Motion stimulates the brain. Repetition (think daily exercise) changes chronic pathophysiological neurological patterns and habits.

Five – document and measure. A master is not satisfied to have the patient walk out of the office "feeling better." As a chiropractor, you are trained as a physician, and you are both ethically and legally held to a high standard. You also need to be able to communicate with other doctors. You use standard orthopedic and neurological evaluation tools and unique chiropractic tools to determine what has changed. Clearly measure and document your results in a way that others can understand. This is particularly important when you use low-force manipulation or subsensory modalities such as laser or microcurrent. Documentation can include changes in range of motion, tenderness, muscle function and/or pain levels. Document these in a legible, understandable fashion. The master is also intellectually honest with himself. The patient who says, "I'm a little better," is just trying to please the doctor. Look for and intend profound changes; changes that last between office visits.

Six – the chiropractic masters of the past, present and future use energy medicine. A simple aspect of energy medicine is your mental process; how you subliminally communicate with your patients. Think about D.D., Gonstead and other clinical leaders of our profession. They were masters of intent. They knew that their adjustments would help their patients. Get your purpose and intent lined up with your actions. When you adjust, let go of all uncertainty and use your whole body/mind/spirit to adjust. This doesn't mean pushing harder physically; it means putting 100 percent intent behind that movement. Find the exquisite alignment of your own intent and action with the patient's present state.

Besides your intent and focus, there are expanding sets of energetic tools available to you. They include acupuncture, homeopathy, specific equipment such as microcurrent and laser, energetic techniques such as neuromodulation, prayer, and others. Prayer is perhaps the best researched energetic modality.^{2,3} My patients have been asking me for the past 25 years, "Are you using energy to heal?" Only in the past five years have I begun to acknowledge how much of what I do daily is influenced by and part of energy medicine.

Seven – you walk the walk, you don't just talk the talk. The master really lives the chiropractic lifestyle. You get treated regularly, and go far beyond that. You have found and practice the inner disciplines that help you, whether through prayer, meditation, sports, *tai chi*, yoga, *chi kung*, or others. You eat a healthy diet and take the right supplements for your body. You continue to do the inner work that keeps you in sync, through growth workshops, through support groups, through counseling, through energetic inner work. You know that your every intent and action inform your life and affect your effectiveness as a doctor.

You don't have to have all of these qualities all the time to excel. Just find the ones that speak to you, that challenge you, and move forward. Bob Dylan said, "Those not busy being born are busy dying." Are you more and more alive because you practice chiropractic, or is it dragging you down? It's your choice.

Resources

1. Gladwell M. *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. Little, Brown and Company, 2005.
2. Dossey L. *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine*. Harper San Francisco, 1993. A well-referenced book on the power of prayer.
3. Heller M. The evolution of chiropractic. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Jan. 15, 2005: www.chiroweb.com/archives/23/02/11.html.
4. Oschman, James, *Scientific Basic of Energy Medicine*, Churchill-Livingston, 2000
5. Oschman, James, *Energy Medicine in Therapeutics and Human Performance*, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003