

How Chiropractic Philosophy Hurts Your Patients' P.I. Cases

Philosophies tend to morph over time. Jesus, for example, taught "Love thy neighbor." Somehow, many modern Christians hate Muslims. I often wonder how one can follow Christ but do the exact opposite of what Christ taught his followers.

Similarly, Palmer taught that his followers that Chiropractic heals the human body from above downward and from the inside out. Inexplicably, many modern chiropractors have morphed that philosophy into "Medical Doctors are evil." These modern incarnations of chiropractic have twisted true philosophy to the point of incredulity. Ridiculous fanaticism has no place in the Chiropractic profession and especially so for any chiropractor that is treating a personal injury patient.

A personal injury case is a legal case. Your patient has ONE bite at the apple. He or she will receive just ONE settlement check. The size of that settlement check is proportionate to the type of treatments that were required to heal the patient. Insurance companies pay settlement based on what a jury is likely to award your patient. Jury awards are based on sympathy for your patient. Painful treatments make jurors more sympathetic and they award more "pain and suffering" money to your patient.

Here is one closing argument by a defense attorney in a case where the patient went only to a chiropractor. "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury. Bob went to the chiropractor 42 times after this accident. Aren't chiropractors wonderful? Many of you jury members have probably gone to chiropractors so you know how good it feels to get that nice hot back on your back, feel that wonderful massage on your neck, lay on that incredible roller table and then have the chiropractor give you that gentle adjustment that makes you feel so good. It's almost like going to the Day Spa it feels so good. So don't give Bob any money for pain and suffering. Bob didn't really suffer at all after this accident. He got to go to the Day Spa 42 times. For crying out loud, Bob should be paying my client for running into him so he could go to the Day Spa 42 times and get those wonderful and relaxing treatments."

Contrast that closing argument with this one by a plaintiff attorney. "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury. Mary went to the chiropractor for 3 months after this accident and after 3 months she felt about 50% better. The chiropractor had diagnosed torn ligaments in Mary's neck that are visible on the x-ray films. After getting Mary as well as he could, the chiropractor referred Mary to a medical doctor for prolotherapy which are injections with a very long needle deep into Mary's spine. In fact, you probably remember seeing the needed that Dr. Jones showed you while testifying. You probably also remember Mary telling you how incredibly painful those shots were and seeing the photos of the bruises on her neck after each prolotherapy session. So Mary's injuries were so bad that she had to have needles stuck deep into her spine 8 different times in order to get well after this car accident. She suffered ladies and gentlemen. She suffered the pain from the accident itself and she also suffered even more from the treatment she had to have because of the accident. Please award an amount of money commensurate with the amount of pain and suffering you believe Mary endured because of this accident."

Now the jury goes into the jury room and starts to talk about how much money to give these people. In Bob's case, somebody is likely to say, "That's right. My chiropractor never hurts me and I love going there. Let's give Bob \$6,000 for his chiropractic bills and \$2,000 for pain and suffering."

However, in Mary's case, some juror is likely to say, "Holy cow! Did you see that needle they stuck in her neck. I wouldn't do that for a million dollars. Let's give her at least \$50,000 for pain and suffering."

Some modern chiropractors tell their patients that medical doctors are evil and going to a medical doctor is like sleeping with Satan. The truth is that there are some very good medical doctors that know *their* limitations and work very well with chiropractors. Prolotherapy is merely an injection of dextrose into the torn ligaments and tendons which inflames that ligament to form new fibrous repair tissue. The ligaments are tightened by this process, the patient's actual injuries are healed and the patient receives a personal injury settlement that is fair based on their actual injuries.

Talk about the benefits of chiropractic and stay away from hatred and demonizing other professions. Your personal "philosophy" that a personal injury patient should never go to a medical doctor is likely to cause you to misdiagnose the torn neck ligaments in your patient and, instead, call it a subluxation. Just like a torn anterior cruciate ligament, torn neck ligaments do not heal from above down and inside out. They need prolotherapy and sometimes surgery (like when there is pressure on the spinal cord.)

You need to treat the *patient* and try to keep your personal philosophies to yourself whenever they get in the way of your patient obtaining the proper treatment for torn neck ligaments. I have handled many personal injury cases where the patient told me 2 years after the accident, "I still hurt just as much as the day after the accident." Those are the cases where the patient was treated exclusively by a chiropractor that told the patient, "Don't go to the medical doctor."

Please don't get me wrong. Statistics show that about 40% of personal injury patients heal 100% by going only to a chiropractor. However, the other 60% will never get better because they have torn neck ligaments and need additional treatment by the medical doctor after you are finished treating them. Don't let your chiropractic philosophy hurt your patient's P.I. case.

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