



# Chiropractic Newsletter

## Well-Being

### Emotional Integration: A Chiropractor's Perspective

We all know that it is important to process emotions, that every little tool and strategy available to an open mind will be beneficial for this amazing process we call life. But how often do we fully implement these tools? We can talk about solutions to stagnated emotions and recurrent patterns, but how often do we find ourselves actually making the shift we yearn for? Did you know that chiropractic is one of those tools?

Sure, everyone knows that chiropractic can help with your neck and back pain. Further, we know that a chiropractor can even help someone improve their digestion and overall physiological balance. When the nervous system operates better, everything in the physical body works better because the messages are getting through. Yet when it comes to the emotional processing, it can become a somewhat uncomfortable conversation. Why?

Emotional processing looks different for everyone. There are lots of unknowns that scare us from stepping into it. This is because we have this amazing reality called "biodiversity." Our physical body compositions vary based on the unique expression of our genetic coding. Our brain and nervous system vary in their nerve connections and overall distribution of neurologic tissue throughout the entire body. This leads to differences in how we physically function. It also leads to differences in how each of us uniquely process the emotions of life.

Whether it's a devastating death in the family, an end of a relationship, a really challenging life transition, or some other trauma, the body does in fact keep score. If the energy of the emotional experience cannot be processed in the Now moment, the nervous system will find a way to store it as potential energy somewhere else. How this happens will vary, of course. We are each different in how we process energy and store trauma, although there are trends. However, why this occurs is all the more important!

We store the energy trauma so that we can process it at a later time. We get to process the energies of Life whenever



our nervous system feels safe and adaptable enough to do so. The body holds on to the energy of that past experience or trauma, so that the wisdom of that experience does not simply slip away. Another way of saying that is: Our physical tissues hold on to potential energy (density) until we are able to "own our experience" (integrate it). This basic, foundational belief system was brought to me through Biogeometric Integration, a beautiful approach to chiropractic that I utilize in my office.

At a certain point, the person on the table gets to decide whether or not they want to jump into the mental-emotional aspect of the care. Many of us feel much more comfortable healing the physical, because for whatever reason that feels more safe. Opening the door to emotions and past trauma can be much scarier. A lot of us have disassociated from these emotions and this vulnerability for so long, it may even feel impossible to consider the prospect of reconnecting.

Here, I would like to point out the magic of chiropractic care. Without it having to look a certain way, each person is able to move through the process of healing on the chiropractic table. The nervous system begins to balance and feel safe. The physical tissues of the body begin to heal and function better once there is increased nerve flow. The basic pressing needs of the body are taken care of, and things begin to feel much more stable and safe. Sooner or

later, the body can access the core patterns and deep traumas. The person gets to decide whether they want to step into the healing, and the chiropractor is simply there to help guide each unique person through that experience.

So often I find myself getting my clients to this milestone on the healing journey and I simply let them know what is happening. “You may feel like your eyes want to water or some emotional release now, or later on this week. That is totally normal. Your nervous system is feeling safe enough to process this. Does this sound okay to you?” They usually nod, because by this point there has been a foundation of trust and clear communication. We begin to understand after consistent care that healing is a journey, and that the emotional integration aspect is a key part.

This journey is reflected by the changes that are made in the brain. Initially with chiropractic, the spinal cord has a release of tension, twisting, and other distortional forces. This leads to decreased nociception (pain signals) and a release of tension on the brainstem. The brain is no longer being bombarded by so many overwhelming inputs, and the brainstem is able to more properly balance and adjust the physiological parameters of the body. The basic physical needs (such as heart rate, breathing rate, pH balance, blood vessel dilation, digestive function, etc.) are taken care of.

Once this occurs, the nervous system is freed up to become more active in the higher processing centers (i.e., the cortex). Heidi Haavik, Ph.D., has done amazing work to show that spinal adjustments do in fact “light up” the frontal lobe of the brain. This most advanced aspect of our neurology begins to fire more and more as it is consistently activated. Our mental decisions and adaptive abilities improve with this increase in function, as the frontal lobe is the “chief executive” of the brain. We gain an improved ability to process emotions at a higher level.

Research is beginning to show that the medial prefrontal cortex is linked into the emotional brain. It is hypothesized to be a higher processing zone in the brain that links into

the lower zones that traditionally process the emotions. What results is this: You are able to choose how you react to the emotion. Instead of falling back into that same emotional reaction pattern, you are able to select a more productive expression of that energy.

*“Many patients imagine that they have tried everything. True, they have used many remedies, but they have never had the cause of their infirmity adjusted.” – D.D. PALMER*

When we show up for consistent care and trust the process, we are able to integrate past traumas in a profound way. We can feel through the layers of our unique body and nervous system and know that there is always wisdom to be had in each life experience. We can make the active decision to love ourselves in this way, committing to the healing journey. The healing journey leads us back to a wholeness and wisdom that sits beneath all the emotions, and we remember our true selves once more.

—Cameron Brownley, DC

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