

# Chiropractic Comes of Age: A Reflection on the Thirty-three Principles of Chiropractic as a Foundation for a Contemporary Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

Chiropractic is based on a philosophical construct focusing on health, while our current health care system is built on a Newtonian model that focuses on the treatment of disease. Despite this fact, some professionals in the traditional health care system are beginning to explore the concept of wholeness, recognizing the presence of a universal energy as it expresses itself within the physical body. Still others acknowledge the existence of an organizing and central intelligence, one that is capable of leading us to a new experience of health and fulfilment. These changing attitudes in the field of traditional health care lead us to believe that chiropractic is coming of age, for they seem to reflect the insights of our chiropractic forefathers, especially those of B. J. Palmer who was writing in the first part of the last cen-

ture. In 1948, R. W. Stephenson set out B. J.'s Thirty-three Principles and, despite the fact that some practitioners today question the need for a chiropractic philosophy, these principles continue to resonate for practitioners in the 21st century. Reflecting on the thirty-three principles one by one, I proceed to incorporate them with contemporary scientific thought, challenging members of the chiropractic profession to use these principles as a foundation for a strong personal and professional philosophy, which can be clearly and uniquely expressed in today's terms.

**Key Indexing Terms:** *wholeness, universal energy, intelligence, principles, innate, vertebral subluxation, chiropractic*

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## Introduction

Our current health care system is based on the Newtonian model that focuses on the treatment of disease. Chiropractic, since its inception, has been based on a philosophical construct focusing on health. This stems from the first principle of chiropractic which acknowledges and identifies a universal power and intelligence. It is the principle upon which all other principles of chiropractic stem and it has made our profession unique. Recently however, several groups both within the current health care system and outside it are beginning to recog-

nize the validity of this principle, and are looking for answers beyond their present models.

Reviewing their work – generally referred to as Era III medicine or the Einstein Model of Health Care<sup>1</sup> – it is interesting to discover the extent to which this current mode of thinking reflects many of the concepts and principles that were established by our chiropractic forefathers at the beginning of the last century. Indeed, many of those working in the traditional health care system today are talking about the wholeness and oneness of the universal energy as it expresses itself within the physical body. For instance, the following quote might appear to have been taken from the writings of B. J. Palmer. In fact, it was written by a contemporary health care professional:

I have defined health as the harmonious integration of environment, body, mind, and spirit. And what is the body but the perpetual recycling of the earth, water, and air that we exchange with the universe around us? From the time we were one-celled organisms to the development of the trillion cells that comprise our fully grown human bodies, our biological functions ebb and flow with the tides of nature. Every cell and tissue in our

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body expresses a rhythm, with times of vigorous activity and times of quietude. When our internal rhythms are in tune with the rhythms of nature, we experience vitality and joy. When we are out of sync with our environment, we notice dis-ease in body and mind.<sup>2</sup>

Others coming from the traditional health care system are willing to go still further:

Our old models were based on limited information. New discoveries now reveal that within each of us there exists an organizing and central intelligence that can lift us beyond our problems and into a new experience of fulfillment even in the midst of chaos. It's a high-speed, intuitive source of wisdom and clear perception, an intelligence that embraces and fosters both mental and emotional intelligence.<sup>3</sup>

It would seem that chiropractic is coming of age. Certainly, it is apparent from the writings of B. J. Palmer that he was a philosopher ahead of his time – such is the case with many great thinkers. So in light of this new awareness on the part of Simon, Gaynor and others, it seems a good moment to review some of B.J.'s ideas – or 'thots', as he referred to them – and incorporate some ideas and scientific thoughts of the present time. This will, I believe, help to instill the power and the wonder of our initial premise into each and every practitioner of chiropractic, helping us to better express the fundamentals of health care. Such a process involves going back to the basic principles of chiropractic that were established by B.J. more than half a century ago. Making these principles our own, cementing them into our neurology will have a significant effect on our lives, on our practices, and on who we are as individuals. I will therefore review the thirty-three principles as laid out by R. W. Stephenson more than fifty years ago<sup>4</sup>, and reflect on what they mean today.

## Discussion

### Principle 1

*A Universal Intelligence is in all matter; and continually gives to it all its properties and actions, thus maintaining it in existence.*

In any environment or field of study there is an initial premise to explain the concept of origin, or beginning. As we consider our physical realm, we ask what

it is that makes us distinct. Are we distinct? Is there a difference between the atoms that make up our physical bodies and those that are in the objects around us? We observe the smallest portion of matter – the atom – and appreciate its structure and organization. We believe this organization to be a function of an intelligence, one that is universal and present in everything and everybody.

We further believe that this intelligence is part of the immaterial universe, and that in the beginning it created matter. It now holds the vision, maintaining matter in existence. Thus 'physical' matter is simply an expression of the energy and the force of this immaterial intelligence. It is an intelligence that controls and coordinates all properties and actions of matter.

### Principle 2

*The expression of this intelligence through matter is the Chiropractic meaning of life.*

In mathematical terms, an 'expression' is the representation by symbols of an idea or thought. In physical terms, the phenomenon by which spirit or intelligence makes itself manifest or expressed is what we know to be life. The chiropractic meaning of life is an unlimited universal intelligence expressed through matter both organic and inorganic.

### Principle 3

*Life is necessarily the union of intelligence and matter.*

This energy, or force we call life, is the union of intelligence and matter. These factors are interdependent. Without intelligence there can be no matter; without matter intelligence cannot be expressed. It is the expression of this intelligence in life that creates motion in matter.

### Principle 4

*Life is a triunity having three necessary united factors, namely, Intelligence, Force, and Matter.*

By 'triunity' we are stating that three factors – intelligence, matter, and force – are all necessary for life. Force is the link, and Chiropractic is the study of all three.

### Principle 5

*In order to have 100% Life, there must be 100% Intelligence, 100% Force, 100% Matter.*

The three factors of the triune are inseparable. Intelligence is infinite and perfect. Force transfers intelligence to matter perfectly. Matter is always perfect in the moment. Any limitations in the structure of matter are a reflection of an imperfect organization or arrangement of the matter. It therefore follows that any imperfection in the expression of intelligence is due to a limitation of matter.

### Principle 6

*There is no process that does not require time.*

Any motion passing from one given point to another will take time to transfer. The force is a process – a series or sequence of events. Although these events may appear to happen quickly, any measure of time can be broken down into pieces. Time can be compressed or expanded, depending on our perceptions and viewpoints.

### Principle 7

*The amount of intelligence for any given amount of matter is always 100%, and is always proportional to its requirements.*

Response from intelligence is always appropriate to the request – 'in the moment'. This holds for both organic and inorganic matter. The perfect amount of intelligence is bestowed according to the amount of matter – no more, no less. This amount is always 100%.

### Principle 8

*The function of intelligence is to create force.*

The activity for which intelligence exists is to create force. The thought flash is intelligence in action, which is where the

force originates. Creation is the unfolding of these thoughts and thoughts are the basis of all energies.

**Principle 9**

*The amount of force created by intelligence is always 100%.*

The quantity or amount of force created by intelligence is always exactly proportional to that which is required. The force is immaterial. There is no limit to the amount that is created; it produces precisely what is needed in the moment.

**Principle 10**

*The function of force is to unite intelligence and matter.*

The purpose of force is to unite and link intelligence and matter. Intelligence is expressed in matter, which would not exist without it. Abstract intelligence is shown to us by matter and reflected in the organization of matter which it has created.

**Principle 11**

*The forces of Universal Intelligence are manifested by physical laws; are unswerving and unadapted, and have no solicitude for the structures in which they work.*

Universal intelligence has created the master plan and holds the vision of this plan within itself. It has also created all the physical laws that affect matter. Innate intelligence can at times adapt these physical laws but it cannot change them. Whereas universal intelligence is destructive in nature, innate intelligence is constructive. If the forces are too strong the innate cannot adapt and there is destruction in the matter.

**Principle 12**

*There can be no interference with transmission of universal forces.*

The only limitation in the perfection of the triune is matter. Innate intelligence is the energy force conducted by the nervous tissue of our physical matter. Because there can be limitations in any conductor, an interference or impingement in the nervous tissue will affect the flow of energy.

**Principle 13**

*The function of matter is to express force.*

Matter expresses the force and the energy of universal intelligence. There is intelligence within all matter which is watched over by universal intelligence. Even the management of matter is a function of innate intelligence.

**Principle 14**

*Force is manifested by motion in matter; all matter has motion, therefore there is universal life in all matter.*

All matter, both organic and inorganic, has varying degrees of motion or vibration. This is universal life expressing itself in matter. Wherever there is increased organization there will be increased life to maintain the structure in organization. This principle is linked with the second principle, which states that the expression of intelligence through matter is the chiropractic meaning of life. Matter expresses the force which universal intelligence has created. Our ability to perceive life is directly proportional to our recognition of the universal intelligence that is all about us.

**Principle 15**

*Matter can have no motion without the application of force by intelligence*

Matter has no motion or vibration without the application of force, which is created and directed by intelligence. Matter without motion cannot exist. Even matter at rest has a molecular motion, so although it is not moving from one point to another there is motion within.

**Principle 16**

*Universal Intelligence gives force to both organic and inorganic matter*

Force is applied not only to organic matter but to inorganic matter too. Organic matter is simply a collection of inorganic 'pieces' or units that have been organized. Therefore all the parts of organic matter – the inorganic pieces – must have life too.

**Principle 17**

*Every effect has a cause, and every cause has effects.*

There can be no effect unless there is something that has first caused it; and without the presence of something to act on, there can be no cause.

**Principle 18**

*The signs of life are evidence of the intelligence of life.*

Evidence of the intelligence of life can be measured by the extent to which matter fulfills the five criteria for signs of life. These criteria are assimilation, excretion, adaptability, growth and reproduction. An organism must contain some level or amount of all these criteria, and all organisms contain the perfect amount of life for their level of organization.

**Principle 19**

*The material of the body of a 'living thing' is organized matter.*

Complex, organized matter is built of molecules and atoms. It is an organization created for the purpose of adaptation. The structure of this entity is created and maintained by innate intelligence and fills a role in the universal scheme: to create more complex and organized structures which allow the universal laws to unfold.

**Principle 20**

*A 'living thing' has an inborn intelligence within its body called Innate Intelligence.*

There is innate intelligence within all 'living things'. The infinite wisdom of this intelligence has mapped out an architectural plan for every living organism, planting all the magical keys of the universe within a single tissue cell. The creator has locked this plan into all codes of matter from the infinitely small to the infinitely large. As a result, each and every body of a living thing contains this inborn, innate intelligence.

**Principle 21**

*The mission of Innate Intelligence is to maintain the material of the body of 'a living thing' in active organization.*

This innate intelligence has been created to maintain the structure of each living thing. It is a constructive force,

designed to balance the destructive forces of the universal laws and to create a complete cycle with them. Innate intelligence allows adaptations to occur should any adversity affect the structure.

**Principle 22**

*There is 100% of Innate Intelligence in every 'living thing', the requisite amount, proportional to its organization.*

This innate intelligence is perfect and 100% present in each living thing. The quantity or amount of this intelligence is governed by the unique demand of each living thing but it is always 100%.

**Principle 23**

*The function of Innate Intelligence is to adapt universal forces and matter for use in the body, so that all parts of the body will have co-ordinated action for mutual benefit.*

The purpose of innate intelligence is to create adaptive forces within the body of all organic structures. This innate intelligence creates complex structures, brings them into existence and continues to maintain them.

**Principle 24**

*Innate Intelligence adapts forces and matter for the body as long as it can do so without breaking a universal law, or Innate Intelligence is limited by the limitations of matter.*

Innate intelligence must work within the boundaries of universal laws. Adaptation occurs only to the point at which all molecules, atoms and subatomic particles continue to obey the universal laws that have created them.

**Principle 25**

*The forces of Innate Intelligence never injure or destroy the structures in which they work.*

Innate forces are constructive. They do not break down or destroy the tissue in which they exist. This force, or energy, flows directly from the creator. It is the force that gives a structure its adaptability.

**Principle 26**

*In order to carry on the universal cycle of life, Universal forces are destructive, and Innate forces constructive, as regards structural matter.*

All matter is affected by the universal cycle of life – universal intelligence releasing destructive forces, innate intelligence releasing constructive forces. Encircling all structures and contained within them is energy. This energy can be expressed at great distance from its source. It can travel at varying rates depending on the properties of the matter to which it is directed, and it is during this conduction of energy that interference can occur.

**Principle 27**

*Innate Intelligence is always normal and its function is always normal.*

Because we acknowledge the perfection of the triune of life, we also acknowledge that intelligence is 100% perfect. Since the role of innate intelligence is to ensure that every cell and of every part of a structure is functioning to perfection, adaptation has to be a function of this intelligence. Any imper-

fection in adaptation must be due to a limitation of matter, because innate intelligence will always act in a perfect fashion based on the information provided.

**Principle 28**

*The forces of Innate Intelligence operate through or over the nervous system in animal bodies.*

Innate intelligence operates through a conducting system – the nerve system. As the brain cell receives a message from this innate intelligence, it transmits the message into and over the entire nervous system. The spinal cord and nerves transmit the message from the brain cell to the tissue cell – the peripheral nerves sending out efferent messages, and responding back to the brain cell with afferent messages. This transmission occurs by conduction of a mental impulse through or over the nerve axons. Innate intelligence corresponds with living cells.

**Principle 29**

*There can be interference with the transmission of Innate forces.*

There can be interference with transmission over the conducting system, the nervous system. Any impingement or irritation of sensitive nerve tissue creates a situation where the mental impulse does not pass along the length of the axon.

**Principle 30**

*Interference with the transmission of Innate forces causes incoordination of dis-ease*

Any interference with the transmission of innate intelligence will cause a change in cell coordination and motion. This, in turn, alters adaptation and results in un-ease or dis-ease. Any change of vibration in the transmission cells will cause the tissue cells to receive an altered mental impulse. These cells will then act out of coordination, allowing the destructive universal forces to act on the tissue cells and inflict wear or injury. Any alteration in the flow of mental force will result in an alteration in the adaptability of a complex structure or organism.

**Principle 31**

*Interference with transmission in the body is always directly or indirectly due to subluxations in the spinal column.*

Any interference with the transmission of a mental impulse is directly or indirectly related to a subluxation. Subluxation is the condition of a vertebra that has lost its proper juxtaposition with the one above or below, or both. This juxtaposition impinges on nerves, and interferes with the transmission of the message.

**Principle 32**

*Coordination is the principle of harmonious action of all the parts of an organism, in fulfilling their offices or purposes.*

A mental impulse is a piece or a unit of overall universal intelligence. The body is matter with organization and coordination. Mental impulses conduct innate intelligence over and through all nervous tissue. It is innate intelligence that coordinates the actions and interactions of all the cells and tissues of an organism.

### **Principle 33**

*The Law of Demand and Supply is existent in the body in its ideal state; wherein the 'clearing house' is the brain, Innate the virtuous 'banker', brain cells 'clerks', and nerve cells 'messengers'.*

By understanding the perfection of the triune, we are able to see the Law of Demand and Supply. Universal intelligence is infinite. Innate intelligence is a coordinating principle. It is the force by which intelligence is linked to matter in amounts determined by demand. In this way, matter becomes an expression of intelligence. Any limitations in matter – an oversupply or an undersupply – will cause changes in the transmission of mental impulses, altering the adaptation which is controlled by innate intelligence.

### **Conclusions**

These are my own personal reflections, but I would encourage all practitioners of chiropractic to personalize the thirty-three principles for themselves. Although there are some within our profession who say we do not need a philosophy, who say this is not who we are, it is my belief that a firm philosophical foundation provides strength both to the profession in

general, and to ourselves in particular as individual members of our profession.

For it is as individuals that we must find our own answer to the question "What is your 'house' or your practice based on?" We must each of us decide whether we want a philosophy we've simply accepted at face value or whether we want something that speaks more powerfully to us – something we can draw strength from and express clearly in a unique and individual way. It is a decision I invite you to make now.

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