

Channeling healing energy: The power of words in the chiropractic clinical encounter, Part two

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Abstract: Philosopher Gariss is credited as saying 'We create the world we live in by what we pay attention to.' Words are powerful and when we internalise what we think based on what others tell us, we may be sabotaging the opportunities that lay before us.

Indexing Terms: chiropractic; chiropractor; internal dialogue

In the early 1970s I had the opportunity to work with an amazing innovator, philosopher, and teacher named Jack Gariss. (1, 2 3) When I started working with him (1974-1985) he was pioneering the study of using biofeedback as an assessment tool to direct the effectiveness of various types of meditation. He was an avid reader and researcher and had studied how biofeedback found a specific signature trait in Zen Buddhist meditating monks, who had meditated regularly for 50 years or more. (4) He pondered if using those findings as 'goal posts' could meditators use biofeedback to guide their meditation and determine if they were actually achieving their sought out goals. (5)

As part of a group that studied with him we explored primarily EEG, muscle feedback, and temperature reading comparing temperatures of the forehead to the fingers and toes. We tried things like galvanic skin response, blood pressure, pulse and other parameters but they seemed too easy to influence and the responses were not stable. So we ultimately stuck with EEG, muscle, and temperature biofeedback.

With EEG we would listen to the sounds of our brainwaves with the goal of producing more alpha wave amplitude, with muscle feedback we would listen to a baseline sound of our muscle feed back with the goal of lowering an electronic sound which related to decreased muscle firing, and with

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temperature feedback we would attempt to focus on cooling our forehead while warming our fingers and toes using the sound of the feedback to determine if we were achieving our desired outcome.

After years of practice and working with hundreds of volunteers we began to see trends. It seemed as though using the biofeedback we could begin to feel things internally that would have never seemed possible otherwise. Even though none of us had findings like the Buddhist monks we all improved our abilities to direct our conscious minds and saw a direct correlation between the biofeedback responses and our depth of meditation and relaxation.

Since Jack was never one to rest on his laurels he constantly was investigating what it meant to find a place of calm peace within our minds and bodies. He started studying and teaching what he called, '*Self Hypnosis*.' Essentially he taught us how to use self-guided hypnosis on ourselves for health and relaxation. He felt that it was a completely different path than meditation but that the path of relaxation took us a point where we could go deeper into meditation or self-hypnosis using biofeedback.

It was during this time that Jack shared some things that have forever changed how I relate to others and myself. He said many times on his radio program and in group classes, '*We create the world we live in by what we pay attention to.*'

As he dove deeper into teaching and leading self hypnosis internally guided '*tours*' he would let us know that the words we say to others and to our selves have power. Essentially every day with every thought we think, we are giving ourselves self-hypnotic suggestions. Each and every word and gesture we have with others can have a lasting effect on their internal dialogue. In my mid 20s I had a bit of trouble grasping the importance of his words, but watching and listening to him as he spoke with others I was impressed with his compassion, empathy, and the words he used.

Essentially there are no wasted words when speaking with others. An unconscious word could affect a person for their whole life. When I was 16 years old I had no idea what I would become. I had begun to realise a professional career in baseball was not possible when I couldn't even make my high school baseball team. So when I had no idea what I should look to for the future and even what to study in college, my parents sent me to a psychotherapist that specialised in helping guide high school students to make educated future decisions.

After about 16-hours of testing and some question and answer sessions, he told me that essentially I would be best off considering a 2-year commercial art design college since a 4-year college would be too challenging for me. Graduate school was not something I should consider since I wasn't cut out for it. Even though I was in the top of my mathematics, chemistry, and physics classes I never questioned him but instead felt relief that now I had a guide for what I could and should do.

While I got into *Pennsylvania State University* I thought they let me in by mistake. College study was very difficult for me and I kept coming against barriers that prevented me from performing well during test taking. When it repeatedly happened I just chalked it up to acknowledging that the guidance psychotherapist was right.

Fast forward to after I had left college in my 3rd year and then moved to California about 4 years later, I had begun seeing a psychotherapist, Ruth Coppage, PhD, for life and emotional related stress. I have discussed Ruth in [part one of this series](#) (6) and she played a potent part in my adult maturation. I had moved to California to go into business with my brother and when it wasn't working out, she asked me what I might want to do. I replied that, '*I don't know.*' So she said '*What about going back to college.*' Without thinking I replied '*I don't think I am smart enough to go back to college.*'

I remembered that Ruth had a quizzical look on her face and asked me '*Why do you think that?*' to which I replied '*I don't know, I just don't think I am smart enough.*' We talked for a time and that was when I remembered my conversations with the guidance psychotherapist when I was 16 years old. I internalised his suggestions and interpreted what he told me to saying I wasn't smart enough. I realised that internal dialogue continued whenever I would be getting tested in college and it would seem to block my ability to concentrate and access information cognitively.

So Ruth told me she wanted me to go through another series of tests at another facility, which I did. Interestingly they said I had the highest aptitude of anyone they had tested in 5 years and recommended that I consider working towards becoming a biochemist, physician, or college professor. At first I thought when Ruth told me about the outcome that she was joking with me but she showed me their report. So I then considered maybe it was possible that I could go to college and finish an undergraduate and even consider a graduate degree.

Going back to college with a different internal dialogue was a fascinating experience in a way that is hard to describe. Instead of the constant internal dialogue telling me I was mentally challenged, I now had a new voice that said I was smart and capable. Instead of college being difficult as it was in the past it actually became relatively easy. I seemed to know what to study, what would be tested, and when I would be challenged, if I relaxed my mind, I would remember what I needed for examinations. It was very profound and almost shocking how a difference in perspective could affect my ability to function in a college setting.

I remember discussing this with Ruth during one session and she said to me *'Charles the psyche is a very fragile thing and a wrong word said at the wrong time can adversely affect someone their whole life.'* Imagine what the *'right words'* might be able to accomplish?

In part three I will continue to discuss how palpation is both a passive and active event for both the patient and doctor and how this can be used to channel healing energy.

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About

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Editor's note

This theme will continue in the *Journal* over the months to come. We are grateful to Dr Blum for sharing his personal experiences.