



Compassion and conception: Back to the basics of being a person

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Abstract: It's easy to get caught up in the clinical side of lab results, range of motion tests, pain scales, and whatnot, and we tend to forget the big picture: to recognise the reason why they really came to us for care in the first place. We can help their journeys be one of growth and appreciation for their extenuating circumstances. That no matter the result, they reach that destination as an individual that values themselves, believes in their worth, and carries the conviction that they were born to win. It is not about what you get at the end, but whom you get to become by the end of it

Indexing Terms: chiropractic; acupuncture; compassion; patient-focussed care

One of the most revolutionary changes I made in my practice was also the simplest of changes.

It did not involve new techniques, gadgets, marketing, or whatnot. It was all about going back to the basics. The basics, meaning the foundation of what it means to be a person in this world: fostering human connections.

When patients come to our clinics, more often than not, they not only want their problem solved but they are also looking to be heard. How often do you hear your patient complain about how their doctor barely talked to them for 5 minutes or they felt unable to ask their questions or they felt like they weren't being listened to? More often than not I bet.

What is prized more than ever in today's healthcare environment is an attitude of compassion and empathy. Patients want to be heard, they want to be acknowledged, they want to be understood.

It's easy to get caught up in the clinical side of lab results, range of motion tests, pain scales, and whatnot, and we tend to forget the big picture: to recognise the reason why they really came to us for care in the first place.

For the 70 year-old lady with lower back pain that came into our clinic last week: her real concern wasn't getting that picture-perfect range of motion or getting her pain down to 0/10; after chatting

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with her a bit, we realised all she wanted was to feel confident picking up her 2 year-old granddaughter. She worried so much that she would drop the baby because of her back issues, that she felt insecure and scared to spend time alone with her little grand-baby.

Compassion helps us identify what's most important to our patients. It also helps us guide them mentally along the journey to their goals. Because you see, as Zig Ziglar so aptly puts it: *'What you get by reaching your destination is not nearly as important as what you will become by reaching your goal'*. (1)

A great deal of my clinical work is spent working with couples that are having difficulty conceiving. You can imagine the stress and overwhelm that surrounds these patients: worries about their age, that their body is 'broken,' the cost of having to possibly do in vitro fertilisation, etc. Every month that goes by can feel like having salt rubbed into an open wound that just won't close. In these types of situations, the desired end result is as clear as night and day: a pregnancy and healthy baby.

And yet for many couples, this will not happen. An equally distressing situation is the Pyrrhic victory: getting what you want but at what cost? A life devoid of joy, daily anxiety, a constant self-condemnation and lack of trust in one's self?

So how do we ensure that both of these types of individuals reach the end of their destination, regardless of what they're getting, with a sense of value and growth?

Again, it is not about what you get at the end, but whom you get to become by the end of it. By holding compassion and empathy for our patients, by encouraging gratitude and joy in their life we can help their journeys be one of growth and appreciation for their extenuating circumstances. That no matter the result, they reach that destination as an individual that values themselves, believes in their worth, and carries the conviction that they were born to win.

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About



Dr. Jafari is a Licensed Acupuncturist specialising in women's health and fertility issues. His practice is located in Los Angeles.