



Chiropractic Newsletter

Discover Chiropractic

A Healthy Nervous System

Understanding Dis-ease From Another Perspective

Disease is not something to be feared, but rather understood as a natural adaptation to negative stress. Many people think that the flu season, for example, is like a game of roulette—that it's a matter of chance whether or not we “catch the bug.” But this is a narrow view that takes only one piece of an intricately balanced picture into consideration, namely microorganisms. Our cultural hyper-focus on “pathogens” in the environment has resulted in a fearful victim mentality, and it's now preventing people from taking greater control of their health.

With some key concepts and practices, health can become much more a matter of choice than we have been led to believe. As we move through the flu season, let's consider some of these key concepts, and see how they contribute to greater health and resilience.

Two kinds of stress

Most people are aware of the negative effect stress has on health. Numerous studies show that overwhelming stress leads to dysfunction and disease. However, fewer people know that there are two kinds of stress: distress and eustress. The first causes dis-ease and illness, and the second builds resilience. What we need to recognize in order to improve our health on a basic and profound level is that we each have a choice whether stress harms or benefits us.



Many people intuitively understand eustress, even if they have not heard the term before. They know that challenges can build character, for example, or that grief can lead to witnessing beauty, or that learning hard lessons makes us smarter and more prepared. Overcoming these challenges makes us more resilient. Our ability to resolve our stresses depends on our state of mind and the underlying nervous system function of the body.

The nervous system's natural habitat

The nervous system, the central processing center of the body housed by the spine and cranium and comprising millions and millions of neurons that send and receive electrical signals, forms our perceptions of the world and maintains healthy biological function all the way down to the cellular level. The nervous system does a whole lot.

The best way to understand the nervous system for practical purposes is to see it in its natural habitat. The nervous system evolved for millennia in a specific natural context that includes natural

rhythms in the environment. These natural rhythms sustain and guide the nervous system. Sunrise, sunset, seasonal changes, lunar tides, and countless internal biological cycles determine so much about our ability to express health when we are coherent with them. Along with this symphony of rhythms there is something else that's of paramount importance—the goal-directed activities that comprise our lives, which we have evolved to experience within the context of a close-knit tribe or familial community.

Despite all our social advancements and improved standards of living, it has become more difficult to adapt to stress. Why? Because we have lost something vital along the way from “primitive man” to modern man. While we have life-saving technologies, people are becoming chronically ill. To understand this, we need to remember our nervous system's natural habitat. We need to remember the importance of reconnecting with the natural source of our health and the importance of being together as we face challenges.

Improving adaptation with chiropractic

The nervous system has an incredible ability to function, adapt, and heal despite challenges. What is needed is not a reversion to some distant past, but a regeneration of our ability to adapt as we move forward, by restoring some key conditions, in the body and in our outer environment. One of the gravest symptoms of our modern culture is our tendency toward isolation and fear; these two states decimate the body's ability to adapt.

Seeing this, we can begin to improve our situation right away. We can dissolve our perceptions and limiting beliefs that are culturally designed to make us afraid, and we can reconnect the nervous system to its natural state of function. The chiropractic adjustment allows us to reconnect in a powerful way to the source of healthy expression. It brings us to a new place of trust in our body's ability to be well amid the ongoing stresses laid upon us.

Having failed to overcome disease through isolation and control, we remain fearful of it as a culture. Rather than more control, we need our bodies to adapt more effectively. Seeing disease as a function of stress opens up the horizon for improved adaptation, and chiropractic helps take us forward to exciting possibilities. Chiropractic is about supporting the ideal conditions for the nervous system to overcome stress. It can help us create a new dynamic in the body that changes our reactions to life experiences. For ourselves, our families, and our community, we can begin to make a lasting difference in our experience of health.

-By John Ohm

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