



Chiropractic Newsletter

Discover Chiropractic

The Bigness of Vitalism

The nervous system is at the interface between spirit and matter

The physical manifest of Consciousness is the Nervous System, providing order so that we can be self-maintaining, self-heal-ing, and self-adapting.

This altruistic, self-organizing philosophy is called “vitalism.” It simply states that the sum of the whole is greater than its individual parts.

The whole body is significant and each part plays a specific role. But the parts are simply pieces of the advanced technology. They do not work very well alone. This is why the body is intimately interconnected, a whole unit.

What connects that body to itself—and to Consciousness—is the nerves. Another way of saying this is: The nervous system is at the interface between spirit and matter. As such, it is an incredibly vital aspect of Self.

In chiropractic philosophy, a branch of vitalism, we maintain an initial, underlying premise that gives meaning to everything we do. All the science and adjusting art stems from this simple statement:

“There exists a Universal Intelligence, present in all matter, continuously giving it all of its animating properties.” –
Chiropractic Principle #1, Ralph W. Stephenson

A rock has Consciousness. A bacteria has Consciousness. A human has Consciousness. The amount of Consciousness available is always 100%. This means that in every moment, Consciousness is available. Our ability to perceive, sense, experience and indeed express this Consciousness is largely decided by our vessel for experiencing life, our body.

The human body is the most advanced form used for Conscious expression that we know of. While a rock has Consciousness, its ability to express it is pretty limited. We, however, can move and digest food and talk and run and scream up into the sky. We could even do all that at the same time if we wanted to (though I would not suggest it!). This is because we have different cell-types, tissues, organs, organ systems, etc., within us. We are

differentiated, multimodal organisms that can perform a wide variety of functions. What directs this medley of communicating functionality is the nervous system.

The body is a complexity that will only be understood by simplicity. This simplicity is that the nervous system is what connects it all. Our nervous system allows organs to communicate with one another. It enables healing on a cellular level. It is the network that connects all of the matter of the human body to the central nervous system. The central nervous system, in turn, is connected to a Consciousness that is beyond our comprehension. Inherent to our very anatomy, is a bigness that words cannot even begin to describe.

Thus, the integrity and coherence of our nervous system determines our ability to perceive and express Consciousness. Life is the expression of Consciousness, moving through matter. Forces are necessary for Consciousness to do work on the matter, for any interaction to take place. When a “corrective force” is utilized and the mind-body receives it, expressed Consciousness can be increased. This is why chiropractic adjustments work and can bring about core level healing. We must always remember that the intention and the love inherent to that force is essential.

A beautifully-specific upper cervical adjustment, with ease and grace flowing through the humble chiropractor, enacts great healing. With this stimulation, the nerves are urged to adapt or “rewire.” The Vagus nerve and parasympathetic branch of the nervous system are stimulated so the nervous system can become more balanced. Nerve pathways that are repetitively stimulated can grow, mold, solidify, or change. New nerve connections can be formed and old coping patterns can dissolve. This all has an effect on the participant’s physical physiology, emotional well-being, and mental cognition.

This is called “neuroplasticity” and it’s a big part of what chiropractors help to facilitate. Vitalism is the idea that we can heal from the inside-out, and neuroplasticity is the science that describes the how of that statement. We know now that when pathways are stimulated within the nervous system and brain, we stimulate a process called “synaptogenesis.” No new nerves are formed per say, but new nerve connections most certainly are!

This means that if we want to feel more stable or flexible or adaptable in our body, then we need specific mind-body practices to guide us towards those outcomes.

Here is a short list of ways we can stimulate coherence and integrity within your body:

Breathwork—To settle or reset the nervous system.

Example: Belly Breathing. Bring palm over palm over your belly button and take deep breaths, feeling your belly push outwards with the inhales and inwards with the exhales.

Meditation—To create more coherence within the nervous system.

Example: Mercy Meditation – Visualize white-light rising up through your lower three energy centers, then down from your upper three, centering and mixing the light in the heart-center.

Functional Stretching—“Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation.”

Example: Cervical Resistance Stretches. Place one hand on top of your head and lightly pull your head and neck in a direction to gently stretch specific neck muscles.

Functional Movement—Activate big muscle groups and posterior chain.

Example: Uphill Hiking. Find a hiking or urban route with plenty of elevation gain and practice taking conscious steps with your spine neutral and upright and your core engaged.

Core Activation—Develop core awareness for proper posturing and spinal cord balance.

Example: Pelvic Tilt. Lay on your back with your knees bent. Pull your belly button in towards your spine and tuck your tail-bone, pushing your lower back into the floor beneath you. Hold for three seconds and repeat.

Emotional Processing—Finding safe-space to verbally express feelings or productive ways to process the energy.

Example: Community groups. Reach out to close friends and other like-minded individuals who want to have real and meaningful conversations. Find a Pathways Connect group or create a group.

Mindfulness—Letting go of limiting belief systems. Slowing down to find stillness and presence in each life experience.

Example: “The Clarity Strategy” —Utilize the key concept from this book to fortify the belief that no matter what happens in our life, we are never truly alone. There is a Consciousness awaiting our embrace.

We can recognize the greater potential of a Consciousness yearning to be expressed through the nervous system and the physical body. This vitalistic expression of force wants us to heal, always and in all ways. As the wiring of the brain adapts and evolves, so too does our relationship to this Consciousness. The conduit changes and we become a more whole and integrated version of ourselves.

Vitalistic inputs have a profound effect on our state of being. We can go to the chiropractor, but we can also show up for ourselves and do the mind-body work that we know will serve us in between visits. We can trust that these repetitive inputs will affect our neuroplasticity in a favorable way.

When we do the things that create coherence and integrity within our nervous system, our life experience changes. We can perceive more. We can express more. We can experience more. We can open up the floodgates to a greater interaction with Consciousness.

When we expand this internal coherence outwards, into our families, friend circles, communities, and the rest of the world, the collective exponentially benefits. This is the “big idea” that chiropractic philosophy sets forth. This is the bigness of vitalism.

-Cameron Brownley, DC

Appears in

Pathways to Family Wellness Magazine Issue #77

