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The Heart Brain

As chiropractors, we emphasize the importance of the brain as the master controller of all body systems and functions. When misalignments to the cranium and spine impair our brain signals then important body systems begin to lose their optimal function.

In 1991, new scientific discoveries revealed that there are sensory neurites in the heart. This discovery became known as “the little brain in the heart.” Now, undeniably, we recognize that the heart has the neurological capacity to think, learn, remember, and feel, just as the brain does. Discussion abounds about these two organs and the potent neurological network between them.

Although this is a new discovery for western culture, indigenous peoples have understood its basis for centuries. In their cultural customs they have recognized the importance of tuning in to this heart intelligence, as it is the essence of their way of life. In fact, these indigenous people prepare themselves in such a way that the head brain actually receives instruction from the heart brain.

Chiropractic has recognized that physical, chemical, and emotional stressors affect neurological function. We also see how adjustments can stabilize and heal physical traumas and chemical deficiencies. This is largely by recognizing the brain as the master controller of all systems and functions. But what about those patients who report outstanding changes in their emotional and social well-being once they start chiropractic care?



Photo Courtesy of Jamie Siever

Perhaps their heart brain is activated with the adjustments, and performance is enhanced in these cardiac sensory neurites.

This is where Porges’s theory of the vagus nerve and the little brain of the heart both connect with the chiropractic adjustment. After all, the heart is innervated by the social vagus. Chiropractic care directly affects vagus nerve function. And the vagus nerve stimulates the production of oxytocin, the hormone of love.

It is my humble opinion that we are entering a new story, one in which our realization of the importance of this neurological expression becomes paramount in the life choices we make for ourselves and our children. One in which we recognize how the chiropractic adjustment restores our innate capacity for this to occur. One in which we open our hearts to new possibilities and regain a more profound expression of human potential.

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