

Education Resource Center

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The Magic Bullet



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Everyone in the world is looking for a magic bullet. A magic bullet for my personal life, a magic bullet for my love life, a magic bullet for my business, a magic bullet to get rich and famous! Your patients are looking for a magic bullet, too. You are constantly fighting the magic bullet mentality, aren't you?

Almost daily a patient presents to you with a multitude of problems and expects an immediate solution. After all, they are bombarded daily with quick-fix solutions delivered by the drug companies. Drug companies spend millions daily on commercials that lead us to believe a cure is just a pill away. Subsequently, we as Chiropractors are continuously battling the quick-fix mentality and attempting to re-educate our patients.

The dialogue goes something like this: "Dr. Smith, I am in a lot of pain! I know I'm asking a lot, but I'm going on a golf trip tomorrow morning. What can you do to fix me up now?" Or, the Medicare patient who shuffles in—totally unable to do anything but stare at his feet—with a lifetime of degeneration, who expects to be cured in one visit and says, "Dr. Smith, I have sharp pain in my low back, my knees, my legs, my hip, and I can't lift my arms. What can you do to fix me up? Oh, by the way, I have really good Medicare coverage, so I won't need to pay anything."

You know you have your work cut out for you, don't you? My guess is you begin the re-education process with this sentence, "You didn't get this way overnight, and you're not going to get better overnight!" You then begin to educate your patient on the purpose of Chiropractic and how it helps the body from the inside out, not outside in. You explain that drugs only cover up the symptoms, while Chiropractic gets to the cause of the problem. You, as a Chiropractor, will give his body the tools to heal itself.

You would tell the patient there is no magic bullet, that returning the body to health is a time-consuming process,

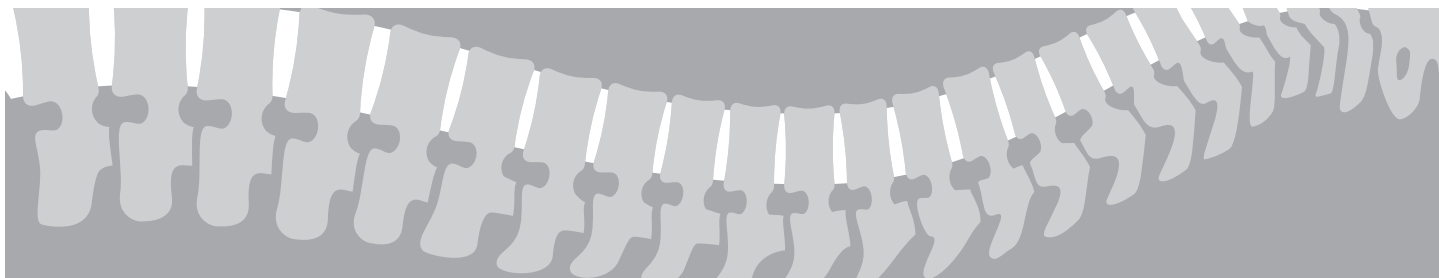
where the patient is as responsible as the doctor in regaining health. More than likely, you would explain to the patient that you must take a methodical approach to his problem(s). Slowly, you will begin to focus on the most serious problem and systematically help the body return to health, all the while explaining to the patient that this process takes time. You also advise your patient that, during the first phase of care, they may actually get worse before they begin to improve.

If you've done a good job, you get a commitment from your patient and the process begins. If your patient allows you to take the time you need, he begins to make slow but steady progress. Secretly, you hope this patient doesn't give up before you've had time to make the necessary



changes needed for improvement. You know this will not be a simple process, but you believe you can help him. Your goal for your patient is eventual supportive or maintenance care, whichever is appropriate.

Do you realize that many Chiropractors suffer from the same magic bullet syndrome when it comes to improving their practice? I get so many calls from Chiropractors who want a magic bullet cure. They expect a consultant to visit their practice and in one visit make their practice better! As a consultant, the following is advice I would give to a Chiropractor who is expecting the magic bullet:



Your practice didn't get this way overnight, and your practice isn't going to get better overnight. Most practices have a multitude of problems, resulting from years of lack of systemization, organization and follow through.

The cure must come from the inside out; not outside in. As a consultant, I realize that I cannot heal your practice any more than you can heal your patient. I can only give your practice the tools to heal itself. As with patients, the healing comes from within, because of a commitment you and your team make together.

You are just as responsible as the consultant for making your practice better. You must be willing to change. Go out and get the book, *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Dr. Spencer Johnson, then share it with your team. You can read this book in an hour and it will totally change your attitude about change. Once you and your team make a commitment to regain a healthy practice, you must work very hard to create a positive result. A constant commitment to excellence that never ends. There will always be room for improvement.

You must take a systematic approach. You begin by identifying your areas of concern. Once you have identified those areas, focus on the most serious problem first. You know that if you try to focus on every problem your patient has, all at once, it will create too much confusion, and the body will be overwhelmed. It is the same way in your practice: Trying to fix everything at once will be overwhelming!

Usually, it will get worse before it gets better. Any change in procedure will initially create frustration. Expect some frustration and confusion—but work through it.

Never give up...never give in. Isn't it frustrating when a patient gives up, just before the improvement kicks in? Don't give up prematurely. Give your plan an opportunity to work. Just keep tweaking your system until you see positive results.

You must continue with maintenance or supportive care. Once your patients begin to improve, they often return to all their old habits. Suddenly, they begin to lose the forward progress and start having the same old problems. Once your practice begins to improve, don't stop! Continue to maintain all the systems you put in place. Plan your work and work your plan consistently.

The bottom line: There is no magic bullet. Success is a methodical, systemized approach that is a continual and never-ending process. One thing builds on another. It takes planning, effort and consistency. You must be willing to change. Some people dream of success, others wake up and work for it!



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