

18. Why Patients Stay for a Lifetime

“Jim, we’ve busted our tails going through relief, correction, and strengthening, and I’m proud of both of us.”

“Me, too.”

“You know what most people do when they get to this point?”

“I know. They get a monthly checkup to stay healthy, right?”

“No, Jim. They fight like crazy to get right back down to where they started.”

“You’re kidding?”

“Wish I was. May I tell you what I’d like you to do instead?”

“I hope you will.”

“Jim, welcome to the club.”

Years ago, I was frustrated with the low number of maintenance and wellness patients my practice had. There were a few, but not enough by my liking. Plus, smart people who owed everything to chiropractic were frequently nowhere to be found.

For a fresh perspective on my missing maintenance patients, I hired a public opinion research company to study the problem. And after spending lots of time and money, what I discovered was disturbing.

“First, Dr. Lloyd, you have the highest-rated business we’ve ever measured. Your patients are very satisfied. Second, they don’t think they need any more care.”

I was livid. “That’s impossible! I tell them, then I tell what I told them again.”

“Dr. Lloyd, the research is clear, and I’m just telling you what they told us.”

I didn't like that answer, but I had to believe it. However, I was going to get to the bottom of this. Since I'd already asked the "lost" why they strayed, now I'd ask the committed why they stayed.

We asked some of our best patients, "Are you a lifetime chiropractic patient?" A good number said they were, and I set up interviews with eight of them. What I learned was priceless, and it literally doubled my retention.

The entire group had received monthly checkups for at least three years and had been under care for at least ten years. Half were insurance, and half paid cash. No one was wealthy. Six of the eight had tried to live without chiropractic and couldn't.

Like so many, we had dozens of patients who used chiropractic for crisis care, sometimes over decades, but as wonderful as these folks were I was looking to learn from those who didn't need pain as a motivator.

The following is my report on what my real-life lifetime patients taught me, and how you can help others use chiropractic like we do – for maintenance and wellness. Here we go:

All of the patients were educated in chiropractic. Each one could explain how chiropractic worked and understood subluxation or "nerve pressure." They knew they could skip a correction and not feel it initially, but it was "bad ju ju," as one man put it, and *that* was why he got checked before any symptoms showed up.

They agreed that "everyone should be at least checked for subluxation" and that subluxation caused "nerve energy to be strangled" and caused "almost anything."

They were believers. Each had their own story, but the result was the same – they believed.

With the war raging for the hearts and minds of people everywhere to put their faith in medicine, drugs, and surgery, we need true believers in chiropractic.

One man parroted a phrase I taught him: "I believe in chiropractic first, drugs second, surgery last." Amen, brother!

They all had a good relationship with great DCs and CAs. We've all heard that people buy the messenger before they buy the message, right? I'm feeling a bit immodest here, but remember, these people rated our clinic sky high for customer service. Translation? They knew we loved them and put their interests first.

They had good results. Each one found that chiropractic was the best and only way to live healthily. Everyone loved their adjustments and, as one woman put it, "I CAN'T miss my monthly adjustment."

They had enough money. Remember, none of these folks were very well off, but all made sure they had enough for their chiropractic care. Not one person got any discounts on our reasonable adjustment prices.

Okay, now how do we "activate" these five common elements in patients today to produce real, lifetime chiropractic patients? Here's what I did:

1. In the Report of Findings, speak about relief, correction, strengthening, and maintenance of health as the goal from the start, and always point the way to the next level.
2. Make your New Patient Orientation class a "conversion experience," where people are preached to and hear great testimonies of miraculous recoveries.
3. Train DCs and CAs on great customer service in everything you do. A full sixty-seven percent of customers leave a company because of poor customer service.
4. Work on your technique: Never forget that great chiropractic technique gets the best results. My friend Jeff Ricks is going for his Part Three NUCCA certification at age sixty-four. Keep pushing.
5. Don't price yourself out of the market, but don't cheapen what we have to offer with discounts.