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Doug Stokes, my father, has been my inspiration throughout my life. Doug was at the height of a multimillion dollar career when he left all his business enterprises to pursue his life long dream of becoming a professional stock car driver.

My father’s support has been instrumental in my success. His energy and drive to pursue life to the fullest has motivated me to always be the very best that I can be for both myself and my patients.

I have been blessed to have such a man to be my father. For all that he has given me, I most appreciate him teaching me not just to dream the impossible dream but to pursue it.

-Buckwheat
Acknowledgments

With joy and pleasure, I thank all my clients, teachers, family and friends who have totally supported me throughout my career and encouraged me to share my knowledge through the many years it has taken me to write this book.

I wish to first thank my wife Katherine, who has made all things possible in my life. You are the reason I consider every day a gift. You are my best friend and I love you. In a sense you are the reason I wrote this book because you kept telling me I would be able to write it, even when I doubted myself you always had faith in me.

My mother, Rosalind is also instrumental in who I am today. She was the perfect mother and provided an upbringing that can only be summarized as magical. When I was a young boy every day was exciting, mainly because of the active role my mother took in raising her children. A great cook, caring parent and not bad poet, my mother was the philosophical doorway to the esoteric. I remember, even at an early age, long conversations around the fireplace concerning life after death, metaphysics and the realm of possibilities. Great memories I often revisit.

How can I not thank my sister Raylene. She was always the Yin to my Yang personality. Always taking up for me, even when I was at fault and really just being there for me as you would expect a great sister to be. I am inspired by her ability to maintain a successful law practice while being the perfect mom to her 3 beautiful children. She is deserving in every way.

There are many others who have had a role in shaping the physician I have become. Thank you, Dr. Joe Rogers, Dr. Michael Gillespie, Dr. Gary Goerg, Dr. Mike Fiscella, Dr. Robert Wootton, Dr. John Amano, Dr. Ted Carrick, Dr. Jeff Rockwell, Dr. Jeffery Bland, Dr. Karel Lewit, Dr. Alan Dyer, Paul Ellis, Dr. Brain Synder, Dr. Hans Jurgen, Dr. Phillip Greenman, Dr. John Sarno, Dr. Richard Preblish and Dr. David Seaman. I am humbled by your wisdom and dedication to the healing arts.
Forward

This book, Heal Yourself: The 7 Steps To Innate Healing, will present, in detail, a logistical road map to rediscovering your health. Regardless of the diagnosis, this approach works. Unlike many doctors who publish books, Dr. Stephen Stokes is a working physician who treats patients everyday. Frustrated with traditional allopathic treatments that just masking the symptoms, Dr. Stokes developed an effective protocol to help patients overcome illness and pain without invasive procedures or dangerous drugs. In the doctor’s own words,

Disease is a systemic event and not isolated or compartmentalized as modern medicine claims. Everything is connected and you cannot treat one area of the body without affecting another. When I stopped treating the condition and focused on healing the patient, that is when I began to experience miracles in my clinic. Why? The answer is simple. I had tapping into the most powerful medicine available, the body's innate ability to heal itself. Innate is a term that has been shelved in today's drug driven culture but it is still the only way our body’s get better. I listen to innate, offer my help and then get out of it's way. All true healing happens in this way.

Anyone looking for a more healthy life filled with energy and freedom from pain will find essential information within these pages. I would encourage all readers to study the information within these pages and if in the Southwest Florida area, make an appointment to see Dr. Stokes. I use these very same protocols on my own patients and family with unsurpassed success.

Dr. Michael P. Gillespie DC, B.Sc., BSE
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Health Professions
CUNY York College
Testimonials

The pain that I was experiencing was crushing. It was hard and heavy and it felt like something was compressing my spine. Sleeping was a major problem for me and if you don’t sleep you end up miserable. Dr. Stokes gave me the breath that I hadn’t taken in years. I mean you just stand around gritting your teeth and being horribly in pain and then all of a sudden you get relief and it’s like aaaaah! At the 11th treatment I was a little better, by the 20th treatment I was like wow... it was better. You should try everything you can to correct things without going to extreme measures. I have to say that this was not the place that I started but inevitably it was the place that healed my wounds. Dr. Stokes is very friendly, down-to-earth, the medical assistants are very sweet, they know what they’re doing. It puts you at ease when somebody can answer all your questions without hesitation that’s a bonus to me in any kind of work.

-Cara V. Naples, FL

I don’t even know how to explain the pain. It was really bad and I could hardly walk. Now after treatment, I can get out of bed without pain and that’s a biggie for me. It stretches the disc and helps bring the fluid back in and that’s what it did. Come to Dr. Stokes, he’s one in a million and his treatment is a real help to all humankind. -Rosamond D. Ft. Myers, FL
Couldn’t sit or lay down, couldn’t stand, couldn’t bend, could not do anything. I was in constant pain. Now I am lifting more than I was before the injury. I had these pains, tweaks and aches. I thought it was just the work I do. Turns out I had underlying problems going back years. After the first treatment and cheating by being on pain medicine I thought I was cured and started jumping up and down acting crazy, just happy that I had less pain. They calmed me down and explain what was going on. They had to ween me off the painkillers and continue treating, then after two weeks I was feeling really good, was walking normally, was lifting, I could bend over and I was sleeping at night. I was noticing changes. I had met a couple of people that had surgery and they had lost function. They were never the same. I need to be mobile, surgery was not an option for me. I love the staff, they work with you. I never had insurance coverage, I had a little bit of money in the bank but not much. I let the doctor know up front I probably couldn’t afford the treatments. They worked with me, they said don’t worry about that, we are going to get you better and they did. Robert S. Ft. Myers, FL

I guess I could say I had severe pain a minimum of 10 years. Well, it sure is better and it’s amazing, it forms a suction I guess and it sucks the disc back in. It’s amazing. I don’t know anything else that can do that. Dr. Stokes treatments have helped alot.
I had a very hard time straightening up in the morning, had to stand in a hot shower to get the pain to subside a little bit. Now I feel like a new person. I went from 60 down to 40. I am kidding, I am not really 60 but I really, truly think this is the greatest thing that ever happened because I didn’t need surgery or anything. My office noticed a big difference in how I walk. I was walking without a limp, I wasn’t bent over, you know, just tremendous change. I have an ex-wife in Pittsburgh who had back surgery, she’s never been the same. This was my very last option and it worked, nobody cut me or anything. Definitely come in and see Dr. Stokes and he’ll talk with you, do an exam and tell you what the problem is. I would just come in and relaxed on the table and after I felt like a new person. -Don D. Ft. Myers, FL

I was in tremendous amount of pain, my hobby is horse back riding and I just had no interest in it whatsoever. Well, I’m back horseback riding! I have a 10 year-old and I enjoy activities with him. Before it would hurt to do anything. So it’s really made a huge difference in my life. It has turned out to be a permanent fix for me. You know it beats surgery any day. Dr. Stokes and the staff treated me like I was part of the family, so to speak. An overall great experience. -Sandra N. Ft. Myers, FL
A recent picture taken while doing research in Mexico. I am constantly exploring ancient healing rituals including the use of native herbs to better help my patients. Many traditional treatments are quickly being replaced by prescription drugs despite them being more safe and effective. -Dr. Stephen Stokes
Introduction

The Journey

During the 5 years it took to write this book, I involuntarily went on a life changing journey. I watched helplessly as my back ache worsened and eventually developed into a chronic pain disorder. It took over my entire life and destroyed my health. It forced me to question everything I had learned in school about treating patients. Fortunately, this story has a happy ending, I did get better and the experience opened my eyes to the body’s innate ability to heal.

In the early days of trying to help myself I would read hundreds of medical journals every month and speak with doctors from all over the country about my pain. I found myself repeating therapies and protocols because the “experts” said it was the right thing to do. These treatments did not help and most of them made me worse. In retrospect, I now realize this is the greatest injustice we can do to ourselves, ignoring our “gut instinct.” As my physical diagnosis professor once remarked,

The retroscope is always 20/20.
-Dr. Norman Kettner

Many doctors write about pain but have never experienced it for themselves. They are theorists, who prescribe text book reci-
pes for patient symptoms. I remember being told that I just needed to exercise my back. No pain, no gain I was reminded. This turned out to be horrible advice that rapidly advanced my journey into the depressing world of chronic pain. Today with the research of scientists like Stuart McGill, of the University of Waterloo, we know that strengthening the spinal muscles through exercise can actually increase occurrence of low back pain. How many times have we been told that all you need to do for back pain is exercise? As you make your own way to recovery always remember that nothing has more credibility than your personal experience. Don’t be misled into doing the same thing over and over when you “know” it’s wrong.

**The definition of insanity is repeating the same action over and over expecting a different outcome.**
- Albert Einstein

Slowly I got better gaining the confidence and credibility to tell my story. In the last decade I have used this experience to guide thousands of patients towards living a pain free life. There is never one way and never a single solution. Patients, including myself, who have succeeded did so because they never gave up the hope to be better. They were convinced that tomorrow would be a better day. As my dad always would say,

**Never give up, never ever give up!** - Doug Stokes

So I watch my patients regain their health and in every case there came a point where they turned inward, stopped fighting the condition and allowed innate to take over. This is what researcher William Collinge calls the “turning point.” Take a look at the diagram that follows. Healing is represented as a wavy line with a series of ups and downs but there is a point that marks the shift to higher highs and an upward trend. This is the turning point that we all strive to achieve when trying to overcome any health problem.
Throughout this book I will present methods for removing obstacles that may be standing in your way of reaching your “turning point”. By following my instructions you will connect to the Universal Power that creates everything. It is this power, the same power that created your body, that will heal your body. Your innate intelligence is the conduit that can connect you to these higher levels of potential.

In traveling this path you are following in the traditions of the early alchemists. It is well known among all esoteric societies that the transmutation of lead to gold or the “philosophers stone” was a metaphor for the elevation of soul. It is impossible to experience pain and healing without undergoing change. Be prepared, you may end up a completely different person.

The Early Years

I have always been healthy and I never feared getting sick. As a young man growing up in St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada, I was exposed to many harsh elements. If you have never been to St. John’s it can easily be described as the city on the edge of the Earth. Picture a harbor surrounded by high cliffs. A city that is constantly beaten by the icy winds blown off wandering icebergs as they make their way down from the North Pole only to get melted by the warm waters of the Gulf Stream. The result of this collision is rain, snow and sleet. St. John’s summers are measured in weeks, not months. I grew up there, in this harsh climate. I played rugby against the sailors from the passing ships, scuba dove in the whale invested waters of Conception Bay and
ate the traditional diet consisting of salted beef and potatoes. Not much grows in Newfoundland and everything is imported. Fresh fruit and vegetables are a rarity. Still in spite of these facts my constitution was very strong and I was rarely sick as a child. Things always just seemed to come easy for me despite the less than perfect environment. I never had to work very hard at anything. I did good in school, excelled in sports and succeeded at everything I did.

I guess things were a little too easy because at 23 years old I had been in and out of several university programs with nothing to show for my efforts. I would notoriously switch majors mid year, lose credits and in some cases not even show up for the final exams. I just wasn’t interested. My father recognized I was having trouble and offered me a job running one of his shopping centers. At the time this was a blessing that gave me some direction. I packed up my new wife Danielle, young son Micheal and set out for Amherst, Nova Scotia. I was excited to be starting over in a new place. I was full of energy, healthy and knew absolutely nothing about anything.

Life in the small town was good and the job allowed me extra time to develop hobbies, one was martial arts. I began training in my backyard and before long I attracted local group of university students that would come over to workout. Although I had practiced traditional forms of martial arts in the past, they all seemed to be lacking continuity. Judo, for example was great for fighting on the ground, boxing had powerful punches, Muay Thai was all kicks and elbows. Each system had strengths but when taken out of it’s environment was exposed to weaknesses. I became bored with the traditional martial art systems and started to combined techniques. This was more than 20 years ago, before the current trend of mixed martial arts and ultimate fighting events. By taking a bit of boxing and blending it with kicks and wrestling, I created an effective system of self defense that was more useful than each technique when used on it’s own. A style that was not bound by any one system but instead dependent entirely on flowing with the opponent. I named it Bu-
doshin Jitsu, which translates as the way of the warrior. I didn’t know it at the time but it was this out of the box thinking that would eventually allow me to create a more effective system to heal my patients. Using the best techniques from many different approaches to form an entirely new and more effective approach was first made famous by martial art legend Bruce Lee. Although I no long practice martial arts, Bruce Lee’s philosophy has stayed with me to the present day.

Absorb what is useful - Bruce Lee

Before long I had quite a following and we moved this grass roots movement to the local YMCA. Budoshin Jitsu became quite an attraction even getting a few articles in the local newspaper. My journey into martial arts only lasted 5 years but it sparked an interest inside of me to learn human anatomy. As I struggled to understand the biomechanics of joint locks, knockout strikes or nerve pressure points, I fell in love with biology. Since I lived across the street from the local university I had access to a huge amount of reference material. Soon, I was spending more time studying medical textbooks and less time teaching martial arts. I remember everyday driving through the campus on my way to work and thinking to myself, those lucky kids, walking around drinking coffee and not having to go to work, what a great life. Then one day on my way to work, I just turned off the highway and into the university admissions office. I quit my job that very day and went back to school full time as a biology major at Mount Allison University.

At the time I really didn’t know what I would do with this education. I thought about being a teacher or maybe working in research. My dad, being the ever supportive father, asked me if I knew anything about chiropractic. Turns out he had hurt his back on several occasions while lifting weights and found great relief when a chiropractor adjusted his spine. Dad told me that a chiropractors were a doctors who never prescribe drugs, by choice, and instead used their hands to fix people. I started look-
ing into chiropractic and the more I learned, the more interested I became. Chiropractic seemed like the ultimate healing profession, sort of like the Budoshin Jitsu of medicine. The best chiropractic school in North America was located just outside of St. Louis, Missouri. I applied and was accepted to Logan College of Chiropractic. I packed up my family (again), sold my little farmhouse across from the university and moved from Canada to Chesterfield, MO. USA.

**Chiropractic School**

Did I mention I was never sick? I continued to carry this feeling of strength and vitality with me throughout my 20’s and 30’s. Even while studying disease and pathology at Logan College, I always felt distant from the information because I was in such perfect health. Eventually this would change and a personal experience with chronic pain would bridge the gap between being just technician and becoming a doctor.

My time spent at Logan College was intense. Instead of a normal university program where you are tested once or twice a semester, Logan College tested every week. Many of these exams were oral and they were conducted without notice in front of the entire class.

**Mr. Stokes could you please retrace the biological pathway a red blood cell takes as it leaves and then returns to the heart... Mr. Stokes? Please sir, could you stand up and address the class?**

Insane stress. There was nowhere to hide and if you didn’t know your stuff you would get called out. Frequently students would break down in class and have panic attacks. Looking back it was complete madness. I would attend school all day from 9 am to 4 pm and then have to study from about 7 pm until midnight just to keep up. This went on for just over 4 years! Try to balance this with any type of family life and you can see the conflicts. As my first year at Logan ended, so did my first mar-
riage. Later I learned this sort of collateral damage was common. More than 30% of my married classmates had a divorce while at Logan College. No one should have to choose between career and family. As it turned out I never had to because my wife decided for me. Like I mentioned, after less than a year of student life she left, taking the children, the car, and the silverware. It was a tough time for me but I decided to stay and endure. In the end it would be the right decision. Now more than ever I felt purpose in my life. I had paid a great price to be at Logan College and through that sacrifice I was determined to evolve.

In becoming a doctor of chiropractic I developed the unique skill of correcting spinal subluxations. When spinal joints get injured they can move slightly out of alignment and stop functioning correctly. The correct term for this is a spinal subluxation but the medical community calls it by names like spondylolisthesis, facet syndrome, lumbago, sprains and strains. This condition can pinch or irritate surrounding nerves. A subluxation can stress a spinal disc causing it to herniate and produce the dreaded sciatica.

I had seen the benefits to correcting subluxations while working in the student clinic. People would crawl in and literally leave standing up straight without pain. A chiropractor is the only physician, by law, that is trained to diagnose and correct a spinal subluxation. Your spine should be checked regularly for subluxations just like you would go to a dentist to keep your teeth healthy. Chiropractic is an essential part of keeping your body healthy before you get sick and that is why it is so unique and needed in today’s profit driven medical system. This best approach to health is not a better drug but instead not getting sick in the first place. I also like to kid around with closed minded doctors who tell their patients chiropractic adjustments are dangerous... I also agree with them, they are very dangerous if done by an untrained medical doctor.

It was around this time, perhaps half way through my schooling, that a classmate, Joe Rogers, invited me to have dinner with
his girlfriend’s family. Her dad was Dr. Mike Fiscella, a local chiropractor with a completely different way of correcting subluxations. He didn’t use the traditional bone adjusting protocols I was learning in school. Joe told me Dr. Fiscella rarely even touched the vertebra to correct spinal alignment. I was skeptical but like all students I couldn’t afford to turn down the free dinner. With a smart ass know-it-all attitude I headed out for my free dinner.

What I experienced that evening was something that would forever change the way I viewed chiropractic. After the very best Italian cooking I had ever tasted (this still holds true today) Dr. Fiscella, his daughter Tammy (also a chiropractic student), Joe and myself all went down to his basement. There was a chiropractic table, some basic therapy machines and one of his neighbors waiting patiently to get treated. This was Dr. Fiscella’s “Sanctum Santorum”.

So the first thing Dr. Fiscella does is he turns to me, puts his hand on my shoulder and in his Mid Western, Italian drawl he says,

Muscles move bones, bones don’t move muscles. Unless you balance the muscles you will never completely cure the problem.

From the corner of my eye I see the neighbor nodding in agreement as he is taking off his shirt. Muscles? What? Remember I had just spend several years being taught traditional chiropractic methodology, that bones are everything and that the bones move the muscles. As a chiropractor I had developed a love affair with moving bones. This muscle talk was straight out blasphemy! I snarled in protest but unmoved by my rudeness, Dr. Fiscella just smiled and proceeded to treat his neighbor. I watched in disbelief as he completely eliminated all the man’s pain in less than 10 minutes without a single pop or crack. There was no chiropractic adjustment preformed but still when Dr. Fiscella was finished the patient reported complete relief and amaz-
ingly the subluxation was gone. I was speechless, well not completely, I managed to ask, “Where do I sign up?”

The more I studied muscles, the more I began to suspect they could be the underlying cause of many spinal subluxations. I started to attend train sessions with Dr. Fiscella and began making regular visits to his St. Louis clinic where I could observe the master at work. His protocols were individualized to the patient’s needs. People would show up in pain and Dr. Fiscella would work on them until they were fixed. Sometimes 10 minutes, sometimes an hour. In school, I was being taught to see patients on a treatment program consisting of several times a week for 3-4 weeks and then reevaluate for benefit. With Dr. Fiscella there was no set plan, you asked the patient how they felt after each treatment and then decided if they needed to be seen again. This whole process infatuated me. It was so honest and pure. A big departure from mainstream medicine where patients are treated according to their insurance coverage or ability to pay. Dr. Fiscella’s patients really loved the treatments, it felt good and there was very few conditions that never responded within a few sessions. I would hear patients talking in the lobby giving testimonials, laughing, sharing stories about how Dr. Fiscella ended their pain in one or two treatments when no other doctor could. As I started becoming proficient in this treatment style, I learned it was originally developed by a brilliant man, Dr. Raymond Nimmo. I also learned that Nimmo’s work was the basis of Janet Travel’s secret therapy she used to help President John F Kennedy with his chronic back problem. The only treatment, I might emphasize that helped the President despite his access to the country’s best doctors. This was powerful stuff.

Dr. Fiscella remains a strong influence on how I treat patients. Many times when faced with a difficult case I ask myself, “What would Dr. Fiscells do?”. I have never met a more sincere, dedicated physician and I owe him my career. Dr. Fiscella also helped me after my wife left with some great advice. One day when I was working at his clinic (painting ceiling tiles) he noticed I was a little depressed and he handed me two movie tickets. You see Dr.
Fiscella would always send patients free movie tickets on their birthdays so he always had some on hand. He gives me the tickets and says, “Stevie, the girls, the girls love the movies.” and just like that I was back in the dating scene. Just like that, thanks Doc.

Moving Around

After graduation I spent my first year out of school working as an associate doctor in Battle Creek, Michigan. It was an opportunity to get experience and make some much needed cash. I joined the prestigious practice of Dr. Prebish. We would work 6 days a week seeing over one hundred patients a day. Treating that amount of people was hard work and required spending all day bent over a chiropractic adjusting table. We usually split the patient load between us but when Dr. Prebish took his family on vacation to Ireland, I was the only doctor. One hundred visits in a single day was extreme chiropractic but somehow I got through it. During this time I started noticing a small tingle in my lower back. Not much of a problem just a strange sensation that something was different or “out of whack” in that area. I never paid any attention to it and just kept on working. At the time I was making good money and running on adrenalin. Over the years this tingle in my back would return, sometimes after a heavy workout, a tough day at the office or strangely enough, when I was under stress. The last part was unacceptable to me because despite my extensive training in the physiology of stress I refused to believe I could ever be effected. Stress disorders were for the weak, the sick or at the very least, it was for a patient. I am a doctor after all. So I kept pushing myself and I mean pushing hard. I stayed with Dr. Prebish for exactly one year. It was a great time in my life with many fond memories. If ever in Battle Creek, make sure you get adjusted by Dr. Prebish, he is a true master of what he does and a man of the highest integrity (and a killer golf swing).

While in Battle Creek I married my best friend Katherine Park who I met while at school in St. Louis and yes she likes movies!
We decided to move to Florida and be close to her aging parents. Things were picking up for me, I was very busy and that little tingle in my back seemed a million miles away. My back would hurt from time to time but then quickly disappear. The pain never stayed around very long so I wasn’t concerned. We left the cold weather in Battle Creek and headed south for Cape Coral, Florida.

After passing the Florida State chiropractic exam Katherine and myself opened our first clinic together, Primary Care Chiropractic, located on San Carlos Blvd in Fort Myers, Florida. The office was small, only 550 square feet and was attached to a gas station. It was so unusual that other doctors frequently stopped in just to see if it was real. Patients would run in and get an adjustment while they were filling up with gas. I learned how to be very fast and efficient without sacrificing quality. We started helping people and I began to grow in many ways, gaining confidence as a doctor and attracting tougher cases. I think the universe works that way. When you master one thing it starts sending you other opportunities. I would say at this point I had mastered the art chiropractic. I do not mean I was better than everyone else but I had mastered the skills and reached my maximum ability to help people with that modality. Honestly, I was getting a little bored. I saw the same people everyday, non complicated low back and or neck pain and occasionally I would get a headache or a tennis elbow. Most people would get a couple of treatments and the pain went away. Occasionally I would see them in a few months if it came back. Yes, it usually came back but it was not chiropractic’s fault. I remember what my supervising doctor told me in student clinic,

**Patients are always in a hurry to get back to the things that got them sick in the first place.**

So after 5 years of chiropractic school, multiple state and national examinations and a few years of associate doctoring I was essentially settling in. Things were good and I was happy. Every-
thing seemed to be in place however I still was lacking the one important quality that all healers require, a personal experience. Regardless of how successful I became there would still remain a disconnect between the patient and myself. After all I had never really been sick and I certainly never had any major problems with my back. Although unfair, I always considered my patients to be weak. They just need to take better care of themselves I thought. They needed more exercise, to lose weight or just stop feeling sorry for themselves. I known this sounds horrible but it was how I felt. Of course the Universe was listening and saw an opportunity to teach me a lesson that would ultimately make me a better doctor.

Adventures In Chronic Pain

It was great day. Katherine and I had gone to the local high school to run track. We did this a lot and enjoyed the opportunity to exercise together in the beautiful Florida sunshine. There was always a variety of people there, a mix of school kids, soccer moms and ex-athletes like myself. We were just finishing up our normal jog when I decided to run the stairs. I guess I thought I was back in my old glory days playing for the Swilers rugby club in Newfoundland. Whatever I was thinking on that day my body had a different agenda. I ran up and down the bleacher stairs for 30 minutes, twisting, jumping and torquing my spine. This felt so good I decided to go home and lift weights for about another hour. The main exercise I did was the dead lift. In this movement you grab a 7 foot steel bar with 315 pounds balanced on it’s ends and slowly pull it off the floor to waist height. One swift expression of perfect human biomechanics. “Wow”, I thought, “I am really strong, maybe I should start teaching martial arts again?” This would be the very last time in my life I would experience that overwhelming feeling of invincibility. The tingle in my back remained quiet for the remainder of the day.

The next morning I opened my eyes at 6:00 am and I could not get out of my bed to go to the bathroom. The anticipated tingle had no shown itself, in it’s place was a severe, tearing sensation
that ran across my back and down into my buttocks. It felt like I had broken my spine and I mean this in the most literal sense. Even the slightest movement caused a jolt of electricity to shoot from my spine into my right leg. I slid slowly off the bed and onto the floor. I began to crawl, on my hands and knees to the bathroom, every motion met with an uncontrollable twitching of my lumbar and pelvic muscles. When I got to the toilet, I grabbed the bowl and then the wall. Slowly I crept up, inch by inch, until I got on the toilet seat. “Oh my God,” I thought, “What have I done?” My wife called out, “Honey you okay?” She had never seen me in pain like that before. I was in shocked but at that time I was not afraid. The fear would come later, when I learned the extent of the damage I had inflicted on myself.

Somehow I managed to take a hot shower, get dressed and drive to my office. I started seeing patients and survived the morning. I was thinking all I needed was to stretch out a little, and loosen up. I even considered maybe going back to the track and doing a little jog. This is how out of touch I was with what was going on. I decided to strap myself to a spinal traction table and crank it open. This table, in case you are not familiar with traction, looks like a medieval torture rack. You lie on your stomach, secure the ankles down with leather straps and slowly split the table in half. As it opens up, while you are holding onto a metal bar, the spinal vertebra are forced apart and the muscles are stretched beyond normal capacity. The theory is to restore normal muscle length by forcing them into position. I did this for maybe 20 minutes and when I was finished it was impossible to get off the table. I was in extreme pain and I had tears in my eyes. I was paralyzed. My wife called some people from the gas station to come over and help me up and into my car. I had to be carried because my legs were numb and the muscles were not working. I laid down in the back seat of the car and Katherine drove us home. So much for needing a little stretch.

I remained in bed for several days, unable to work, feed, bathe or look after myself. This, I thought, is what it is like to be dis-
abled. The days became weeks and to my surprise the pain did not go away. Weeks became months and slowly, Little by little, God granted me a small bit of relief. He knew I was approaching my limit. The pain became tolerable but it never went away. Whenever I tried to regain a little bit of my lost life, exercising, dancing or fishing, the injury would teach me a lesson about who was in charge. Months turned into years and finally I understood what had happened to my spine and yes, now, I was afraid. The diagnosis was a torn L5/S1 lumbar spinal disc that had set off a series of neurological events in my brain to cause a chronic pain syndrome. You can call this fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome or reflex sympathetic dystrophy it does not matter what you name it, the prognosis was poor and any sort of recovery was unlikely. For me this was simply unbelievable and most importantly the prognosis was unacceptable.

So I made a promise to myself that I would learn how pain worked and I set out to overcome it. Up to this point everything I had studied in school was not working for my condition but I was just getting started. Finally, I had being given the precious gift, the one missing element that is essential to becoming a great healer, empathy. It was time for me to see the patient’s journey through my own eyes.

Desire is the starting point of all achievement, not a hope, not a wish, but a keen pulsating desire which transcends everything. -Napoleon Hill

Getting The Tools

I started looking for answers, turning over the stones I once never noticed. The process reminded me of looking for crabs on the stone beaches of Newfoundland. If you have a big area to cover, even turning over stones that do not contain hidden crabs is considered progress because it shrinks the size of the beach. Remember this on your own search. My first stop was acupuncture. I would spend 2 years studying and eventually becoming a fellow of the International Academy of Medical Acupuncture.
under Dr. John Amaro. He was the first person to teach me that a doctor should treat the patient and not the disease. During my training whenever I questioned acupuncture treatment methods Dr. Amaro would say,

**The frog in the well knows not of the great ocean.**

This is my favorite quote and of course Dr. Amaro was correct. So I continued my journey out of the well. I helped hundreds of patients with acupuncture but failed to get relief myself. I was jaded and angry. I decided I would never practice acupuncture again and I threw away all my books and needles. Of course acupuncture had not failed. It works, just like it has worked for thousands of years but I was not ready. Fortunately in these hard times my wife Katherine was always there to encourage me to keep searching and not forget about the frog in the well.

I started intense, obsessive research. Neurology, physiology, anatomy, pathology, I was constantly learning and consulting with specialists. Later, I realized this was the exact opposite of what I needed to do. I learned the hard way that,

**A specialist is a doctor who knows more and more about less and less.**

These guys, in my experience turned out to be complete idiots. Every specialist said something different from the last one. After a few thousand dollars I realized they didn’t have a clue about how I could heal my pain. One even suggested traction! I realized they were not even listening to me. My recover would be up to me and no one else.

Then a friend suggested I attend a presentation by a Canadian chiropractor, Dr. Ted Carrick. I had nothing to lose at this point so I was agreed. Dr. Carrick is the creator of what is now called functional neurology, also known as brain based therapy. Dr. Carrick’s treatments are able to activate specific areas of the brain that are responsible for healing. In preparing for the semi-
nar my friend gave me a video of a PBS documentary of Dr. Carrick treating a Parkinson patient with a hand tremor. After about 2 minutes of therapy the patient’s tremor stopped. He never once touched the patient’s hand. What was going on here? I had to understand the mechanism, it seemed like a magic trick. Turns out I would spend many years studying with the Carrick Institute, attending weekend seminars, learning how the brain worked and realizing the importance of something called, the central mechanism. This is a very extensive and complicated topic that can take a lifetime of study to fully appreciate but let me give you a summary. Everything in the body is controlled by the brain and spinal cord. This is known as the central nervous system (CNS). It is impossible to successfully treat any type of chronic condition without directly altering the CNS. Let me give you an example. A patient complains of writers cramp. This means whenever they try to write the fingers curled up and cramp. Normally, therapy would be focused on treating the hand including the surrounding muscles, joints and nerves. A traditional treatment approach would be therapy directed at stretching the hand, home exercises and maybe some ultrasound over the sore hand muscles. In contrast, a physician who practices functional neurology would first test the patient to see if the CNS was malfunctioning. In other words, is the problem in the hand or is the problem in the part of the brain that controls the hand?

Through a series of tests it is possible to pinpoint not only the existence of a central problem but also the exact location in the brain where the lesion exists. The clinician then formulates a treatment plan to correct the brain imbalance which stabilizes the CNS. Of course not everybody with writers cramp has a brain based dysfunction, most cases are simply some form of overuse syndrome, but for those patients who do not respond, functional neurology provides a permanently correction. Research shows that in the majority of chronic conditions there is usually at least one brain lesion present. Here is a simple test that checks for a one of these problems.
Sit in a chair and extend both your hands out in front of you. Now close your eyes and slowly try to touch the tip of your nose, one hand at a time. If you have trouble finding your nose or you miss your nose then you may have a brain based condition. It is important to resolve this dysfunction in addition to treating any symptoms you maybe experiencing, otherwise the problem may keep coming back.

Studying the works of Dr. Ted Carrick was like stepping through the looking glass. Never again would I examine a patient the same. I was starting to realized the complexities of treating chronic pain and that there was no simple, one size fits all solution. For me it was sort of like finding out there was no Santa Clause but at least I knew I was on the right path. I continued studying the brain and functional neurology. Soon I was helping more and more patients who had been told there was nothing that could be done for them. The clinic started becoming a place of hope. People were getting excited. I often heard patients talking in the waiting room, “I can move my foot after 5 years” or “I was unable to smell but this morning for the first time since I can remember, I could smell my wife making coffee.” This was powerful stuff. I gained a reputation among other physicians for helping people with idiopathic conditions.

**Idiopathic is Doctor talk for, “We really have no clue what is going on.”**

The patient cases were unique and the days never boring. For the first time in my career I was getting referrals from local medical doctors. Of course it was not because they had so much faith in my methods but rather they simply had no idea what else to do for these patients. I think they got tired of not being able to help these patients and just wanted them out of their clinics. It is the craziest thing but once I started helping these tough cases the medical community stopped referring them to me. It was just to
much for their egos. Hard to believe but very true, I am sorry to say. Of course at the time I was not completely honest myself. Little did anyone know at that time I was hiding a big secret. Dr. Stokes the super doc, who helped all those people, was personally suffering from severe chronic pain. I have a sense of humor and so the irony would have been funny in a Monty Python sort of way except that the pain was so devastating I did not think I could continue living with it. Here I was, helping so many people but still unable to fix myself. I started praying several times a day asking the universe “why?” I became paranoid and started to think I was being punished for something I had done in a past life or maybe this life. I had no idea what was going on but it seemed to be a very cruel joke. Luckily my faith pulled me through those hard times. I would say to anyone who feels they are in a hopeless situation, hang on, God will never give you more than you can endure. Pray, meditate, chant, do whatever you must but hang on and if you feel yourself losing grip ask for help. There is no shame in needing help, we are all one being and what happens to one effects us all. If you are at the end right now and are ready to end your life, wait one more day and contact me. I promise you respect and unconditional support. Let’s talk, I promise I understand and I will ease your pain.

Yeaa, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Psalm 23:4

So I held on and then when I was at my lowest, suddenly the universe responded. At the time I was studying vertigo and the use of balance boards for treatment. While looking online to buy some of these boards for my clinic I came across the Belgau Balance Platform. The ad stated the device was for improving memory and brain function. It never said anything about balance. Eureka, this guy was using functional neurology and not even aware of it. Here was the connection. The part of the brain that controls balance is called the Cerebellum. In addition to
balance the cerebellum also regulates nerve signals coming from the spinal muscles into the brain’s pain centers. In fact, it turns out the Cerebellum helps to regulate just about every nerve signal coming into the brain. It acts like a neurological amplifier and has the ability to increase or decrease signals thereby assigning priority. I observed the following demonstration.

**A stuttering child trained on the Belgau Balance Platform for 10 minutes then was given a random page of Shakespeare to read out loud. Not a fumble, not a single word was misspoken. This was after only 10 minutes.**

If the Cerebellum could be accessed that easily maybe balance training could help me heal my back pain? I bought several Belgau Platforms and started working on my balance. I also bought several pieces of 2x4 lumbar and created balance beams in my back yard. I added hand movements, like juggling and touching my nose, while I balancing to further stimulate the Cerebellum. I tried to balance with one eye closed, in bare feet and eventually by walking backwards. Anything I could think of to increase the intensity. My neighbors must have thought I was training for the circus. Many days when I got home from work I found the local kids in my back yard messing around on my equipment. Other adults in the community were laughing behind my back, “There goes that crazy chiropractor again.” My wife remained supportive. She didn’t care what people thought because for the first time in years she was seeing improvement in my condition. Not only did I learn to juggle but I also taught all my friends. To this day I display my original Belgau Balance Platform in my office alongside my degrees as a reminder to think outside the box.

After 3 weeks of this specialized rehabilitation my pain reduced dramatically and my function started to return. I was getting excited and decided to have another MRI scan of my back. It showed no change in the protruding spinal disc between L5 and the Sacrum. I was upset with these results. The back was still in-
jured but I was feeling better because my body was better able to deal with the problem. I knew if I wanted a full recovery I would needed to get that disc off my spinal nerve. Although I was definitely in less pain I knew the longer the nerve was compressed by the disc the greater my chances of permanent damage. At this point I had two choices available, spinal surgery or wait until the protrusion degenerated naturally and hope it did not kill the nerve in the process. Neither sounded very promising and since I was starting to feel better I decided to hold off on surgery. I told myself I would wait 6 more months and if nothing changed I would get the surgery. The countdown had started.

Every time I ask a question to the Universe, one way or another I receive an answer. I just pray on the problem and ask for help. This is the most important part, you must acknowledge you need help. You must surrender your ego. Prayer is not difficult, it’s just thinking while you are in a very relaxed state. I say to myself, “How can I solve this problem?”, then I relax, breath deeply and clear my mind. Who am I asking? I don’t know maybe it is Jesus, Allah, Buddha or maybe my prayers are just an exercise in self fulfillment. I just don’t know but someone always responds.

The man who thinks that he is receiving response to his prayers does not know that the fulfillment comes from his own nature, that he has succeeded by the mental attitude of prayer in waking up a bit of this infinite power that is coiled up inside of himself. -How To Know God by Patanjali

Prayer works but if religion and faith are uncomfortable terms for you then just use the accepted scientific name, meditation. If you ask with sincerity and focused intent you will always get a response. Again the surrender is essential. You will not be able to hear a response if you do not think you need help. Trust me, I learned this lesson the hard way. So scream out to God, gets his attention, let him know you are serious. Then wait in silence. It has already happened.
Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
-Matthew 7:7

This has been a reoccurring truth in my life. Anyone who claims to be a healer and does not submit to a higher power is just a mechanic. The more you learn about science, the further away from spirituality you will be pulled, until ultimately you will find yourself sitting on God’s knee. There comes a point where all the data and research will point to the same place, regardless if you are a person of science or religion. We all end up being students of faith. There is a very powerful little book,

The Law of Success by Paramahansa Yogananda

This book is only 34 pages long but it teaches you how to listen to the Universe. Here is a story that illustrates my point about listening to what God is trying to tell you.

The Drowning Man
A fellow was stuck on his rooftop in a flood. He was praying to God for help. Soon a man in a rowboat came by and the fellow shouted to the man on the roof, “Jump in, I can save you.” The stranded fellow shouted back, “No, it’s OK, I’m praying to God and he is going to save me.” So the rowboat went on.
Then a motorboat came by. “The fellow in the motorboat shouted, “Jump in, I can save you.” To this he stranded man said, “No thanks, I’m praying to God and he is going to save me. I have faith.” So the motorboat went on. Then a helicopter came by and the pilot shouted down, “Grab this rope and I will lift you to safety.” To this the stranded man again replied, “No thanks, I’m praying to God and he is going to save me. I have faith.” So the
helicopter reluctantly flew away. Soon the water rose above the rooftop and the man drowned. He went to Heaven and when he finally got his chance to discuss this whole situation with God, he exclaimed, “I had faith in you but you didn’t save me, you let me drown. I don’t understand why!” To this God replied, “I sent you a rowboat, a motorboat and a helicopter, what more did you expect?”

So I am wondering about this disc in my back and I am seriously thinking it looks like surgery because I have to get the pressure off the nerve and there is just no other way to do that. I am praying, meditating and listening. Suddenly my phone rings and there is a doctor that I have never heard of on the other end of the line asking me if I am interested in a job. I already had a successful practice so why would I want to go work for someone else? I don’t know what made me do this but I get into my car and drive down to his clinic. The sign on the door read,

**The Back Pain Institute**  
**Dr. Robert Wootton, DC**  
**VAX-D Disc Therapy**

I was greeted by a doctor is in his 70’s wearing a blue physician jacket which I thought was weird because they are usually white. He talks really slow with a southern accent and he tells me his entire practice is focused on repairing damaged spinal discs without any drugs or surgery. At this point the doctor has no idea that I have a damaged disc and it is the first time we have ever met. Here is what he says to me,

**You see here Dr. Stokes, well It’s all about VAX-D**

As he spoke the doctor stared right through me and fixed his gaze upon a before and after MRI hanging behind me on the
view box. The films clearly showed a lumbar spinal disc that had apparently healed, completely. The doctor continued...

It stands for vertebral axial decompression, VAX-D for short. Dr. Stokes, I specialize in the treatment of disc problems in the low back.

He grabs an old bone model of the lumbar spine and palms it between his two hands

This is a model of two vertebrae in the low back. These are the bumps you feel down your back called spinous processes. The spinal canal is where the spinal cord goes down through the spine like a telephone cable from the brain and the nerves branch off between the vertebrae. The disc is a pad between the vertebrae that holds the vertebrae together and acts like a shock absorber. It consists of a ring of cartilage that contains the nucleus, which is a spongy cushion that bears your weight. If this cartilage ring stretches out or breaks down, it can bulge or herniate into the spinal canal and press against the spinal cord nerves causing stenosis of the spinal canal. The VAX-D treatment creates a powerful vacuum in the disc that draws in bulges and herniations and stimulates repair cells to heal the disc. It also draws fluid into the disc to rehydrate the disc and supply nutrition to the disc. It works like traction, but it is totally different. Traction does not help the disc because when traction pulls on the spine the muscles feel the pull and resist it, so it is always pulling against muscle guarding.
Right, I thought to myself, I learned that the hard way, I almost killed myself on a traction table trying to force my muscle to relax. That was something I wanted no part of.

Now Dr. Allan Dyer is a well-known medical doctor. He was the Minister of health for Ontario, Canada and he also did research that helped invent the heart defibrillator – those paddles that start the heart. He had research that showed if the pull is increased on a logarithmic curve – that’s a mathematical formula – the pull is so gradual that the muscles are not aware of the pull, so they stay relaxed. That allows it to pull directly on the disc. If you stretch the disc itself, it is like pulling on the plunger of a hypodermic needle – it creates a powerful vacuum inside the disc. The pressure inside the resting disc is 75 mm Hg. No traction can lower the pressure to 35 mm Hg. With VAX-D I can routinely lower the pressure to 100 mm Hg below 0. That’s a powerful vacuum that draws in bulges and herniations and stimulates repair cells that heal the disc. Come with me and let me show you what we are talking about.

We walked into a small room filled with two over sized metal consoles complete with pressure dials, buttons and graph paper print out. Each unit was attached, by what looked like an umbilical cord, to a futuristic looking exam table that was split in the middle. The whole scene was like something you would find in a NASA research department. I remember thinking, there is absolutely no way I am ever getting on that equipment.

You lie face down on the table and this harness goes around your waist and attaches to this post at the foot of the table. There are handles to hold on to or we can use a strap to hold you in place. It pulls for
one a minute, releases for a thirty-seconds and then rests for another thirty-seconds. This repeats fifteen times. So, you are on the table for thirty minutes. We start with twenty visits done daily. It is computer operated and it records the pounds of pull of each cycle. It works by air pressure so it is very smooth acting. This is the control knob that sets the pounds of pull, but, no matter how many pounds we set it at, the computer keeps it exactly on the logarithmic curve and that’s what makes it work. It’s a very high-tech treating table that gets great results in disc problems of the lower back.

He turns a large dial and pushes a yellow button. I hear an air compressor turn on followed by the sound of a piston firing. An alarm bell sounds, “Beep, beep, beep” and the table begins to separate.

See how slowly it moves? It goes slower and slower as it pulls harder and harder. That’s the logarithmic increase and the muscles aren’t aware of the pull so it is pulling directly on the disc and creating a powerful vacuum that draws in herniations and bulges. Let’s go back to my office and have a seat. Now when you first start the treatment your disc is all stretched out. On each pull the disc is drawn in, but in the beginning it goes back out. As you continue the treatments the disc begins to heal and by the time you’ve had twelve to fifteen treatments the disc begins to hold. Some people feel better in a few treatments when things begin to loosen up, but the average person may not feel any relief at all until they have had about twelve treatments. Then the disc begins to hold and pressure comes off the nerves and they begin to feel better. By the time they have their basic twenty visits they have a fairly
strong disc. If you get five or six treatments and stop, you’ll lose it all. It’s like if you have a cast on a fractured arm and take it off in two weeks it might be strong for a day or two but it will probably break down. If you leave it on for the six to eight weeks that it takes to heal a bone, you’ll have a bone that is stronger than the original because the repair cells are the strongest tissue in your body. The same with a disc – once it is healed it is stronger than the original. By the time they have their basic twenty visits 35% of the people are pain free and 45% of the people are better. 15% of the patients do not respond very well. If they don’t respond at all we don’t go any further. If they go on to thirty visits, they have a stronger disc and 70% of the people are pain free. If they go on to forty visits, 80% of the people are pain free. If they go beyond 40 we can help about 5 or 6% more. So the VAX-D gives a very high potential for improvement for disc conditions of the low back. By comparison, surgery – not that I recommend surgery – surgery helps one out of three cases, and one out of three are worse and one out of three are no better. VAX-D helps eight out of ten. So VAX-D is more than twice as effective as surgery. With surgery you have a list of risk factors like scar tissue buildup, infection, nerve damage, paralysis, and even the anesthesia is a high risk factor. VAX-D is noninvasive so it has none of those risk factors making it far safer than surgery.

He paused, expressionless, waiting for me to comment. Nothing was said, he looked into my eyes, I swear he looked right into my soul. There is about 10 seconds of total silence when finally he makes a slight smile and simply says,

You’ll start tomorrow.
There was no mention of hours, contracts or wages. That was it, interview over. I had a new job. We shook hands, I went back to my office and told my wife what happened. I would transfer my current patients to the new office and close Primary Care Chiropractic. I didn’t care about going to work for someone else. The Universe was presenting my Guru. Once you get a glimpse of the truth you have to follow it because everything else is just a lie and no matter how attractive or easy that path maybe it is still a lie. In the Book of Secrets, Osho explains to his followers how we must follow the truth despite potential hardships. No matter how easy, the false path will not led to enlightenment.

The Street Light
Late one evening, a man who was walking his dog comes upon another man who is searching the ground under a street light. The passerby asks what he is doing. “I'm looking for my lost keys,” says the man searching the ground. “I dropped them on my way home” he says. The passerby offers to help search for the keys, but after several minutes of searching under the street light they have no luck. “Are you sure you dropped them here?” asks the passerby. “Oh, I have no idea if I dropped them here," says the man. “Then why are you only looking under this street light?” “Well…” replies the man, “Because this is where I can see the best.

Finding My Path
Over the next few years I became a master of VAX-D therapy, serving as the medical director for 3 of the states largest, most successful clinics. I oversaw locations in Fort Myers, Naples and West Palm Beach, helping thousands of people avoid back surgery. Everything the wise Doctor Wootton said turned out to be true, for many people VAX-D was nothing short of a miracle. I cannot tell you exactly how many lives I changed but I still oc-
casionally meet someone at the grocery store or at the beach who knows someone that I helped. As for my own back pain, VAX-D removed the pressure on my spinal nerve. That’s right, no more nerve compression. Yes, the disc protrusion was corrected with VAX-D but I did not completely recover from my injury. Turns out that when the body is hurting for a long time it changes. It learns to compensate and essentially it rewire. Your pain threshold alters and over time the way your brain runs things is never the same. I have learned from personal experience that the body does not completely repair; instead it heals and there is a big difference. Damaged tissue will never be exactly the same as healthy tissue just like a scar is less mobile. This is not the end of hope for all you pain sufferers, listen to me, I am no longer living a life ruled by pain. Today I am essentially normal but that little tingle in my back has left its mark. It changed who I am. If you are suffering from chronic pain your journey will change you as well. No one gets to stay the same. By following the advice in this book you will learn to heal and regain your life. You will have the tools to make sense of your condition. Life is a beautiful experience but remember it is only by feeling bad we understand what it is like to feel good. So what happened to the rest of my story? Well, it did not end there with VAX-D. Turns out there were more secrets to discover. As my knowledge of how the body heals grew I could no longer only see patients with back pain, soon I was seeing many different types of illnesses. The word was out and I started getting referrals from local medical doctors, massage therapists, physical therapists and acupuncturists. I remember one case where the referral was a patient with Lupus. This is a serious autoimmune disease for which there is no cure. When I called the doctor and told him I was a back pain doctor his response was,

Well, look Doc, she has heard about you from her friends and is convinced you can help besides she is having back pain, so why don’t you just give her a crack.
Crack is a slang word used by uneducated people to describe the chiropractic adjustment of a subluxation. To me crack would be a more appropriate slang for the medical doctors treatment, but anyway. I started working on her back and every visit she asked me if I could suggest anything to help with the Lupus. She had heard people in the lobby reporting improvement with all sorts of conditions and figured out that I may have some answers. This was my big chance. I remember exactly what I did for this patient. It was no big deal. I mentioned she may want to try Echinacea, specifically a combination of E. angustifolia and E. purpurea root. This herbal product does not stimulate the immune system but balances it. Since Lupus is an autoimmune disorder I figured it would be a good place to start. That was all I did, nothing else. Her back pain went away in a few treatments and I lost contact with her. I bumped into her at the Publix grocery store 6 months later. She told me her Lupus was under control and she was no longer taking steroids, only Echinacea. I had totally forgotten about the whole thing and had to act like I knew what she was talking about. Later I pulled her chart and realized what she was talking about. I was impressed. I wondered how many more patients I could help if I started to focus on the biochemical aspects of disease.

I dug out my biochemistry textbooks and start to obsessively study metabolic pathways. I contacted one of the top pharmaceutical companies, Roche, and they sent me a huge wall chart that showed every chemical reaction produced in the body. This would serve as my initial road map. I studied the mechanisms of disease and pain and how the drugs altered those reactions. I realized quickly that there were many opportunities to influence those reactions using herbs and natural materials. This was exciting and felt like another secret door had opened in my professional life. At first I though I was alone in my research but I soon found an emerging branch of healthcare called Functional Medicine that was publishing studies in this area. It was at this time I discovered Jeffery S Bland, PhD, FACN, CNS. He was the
chief science officer for Metagenics. Dr. Bland was publishing research that showed you could make objective changes on many diseases through proper nutritional supplementation. He used the term “nutraceuticals” to distinguish the products he was formulating from the unregulated, untested vitamin market. High blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, all improved with Dr. Bland’s protocols. As I included functional medicine into my treatment plans patients experienced dramatic changes. I became thirsty for more. No longer was I content to just see back pain patients, I wanted to help as many people as possible.

I resigned my position as Medical Director for the Back Pain Institute and left the company. Another doctor who shared my vision, Dr. Gary Goerg joined my quest. Together we set out to create a clinic that would help people suffering from chronic illness and pain. This would be accomplished without using drugs or surgery. I wanted better results than the medical community were getting and I wanted the ability to help anyone that walked in the door. Regardless if you had a sprained ankle or pancreatic cancer, I want to provide help and hope. Dr. Goerg owned a phase contrast microscope and was an expert of nutritional analysis using saliva, urine and blood. We could test our patients initially and then retest at frequent intervals to validate the effectiveness of the treatments. We began to acquire data and our protocols became more effective. There was no turning back.

The goal was simple, all treatments would help the body in dealing with whatever disease it was experiencing. The names, labels or diagnosis did not matter. I was interested in treating person who had a disease and not a disease that had person. This is a simple idea that has been lost in medicine today. To do this and be successful, I had to look beyond the illness and the labelled diagnosis. I needed to understand how the body worked and then apply treatment that would help the body heal itself. You see the body does a good job at taking care of itself without any intervention from the outside, but if something goes wrong it may then need a little help. I found the best way to do this was with a systemic approach. So I did what I alway did, I asked the
Universe for a solution. This time the answer would be me. I had gone on the journey and survived. By retracing my own steps in healing, I could formulated a treatment philosophy and set of effective procedures that worked regardless of the specific diagnosis. There are common elements like inflammation, pain and immune response to all chronic diseases, correcting these problems help the body heal any condition.

At the time this was a hard path to follow. Many physicians consider my model backward thinking. They are obsessed with symptoms and providing drugs to suppress those symptoms without digging deeper to correct the cause. I frequently was criticized by other doctors. Patient’s were told not to go and see me or that I was a running some sort of a scam. When blood pressure came down with my treatment the primary doctor would say it was a placebo. Of course he was right. The whole idea was to get the body to heal itself, in a sense the placebo is the most powerful medicine. At the time all this negative feedback really hurt my feelings but eventually I stopped trying to win recognition from the medical community. We played for opposite teams and they were not going to go against the drug companies, there was just too much money at stake.

So the work goes on and along the way some people, “get it” but still many do not and it has become my life’s work to preach the truth to those who will listen and to accept those who will not as merely unwilling to acknowledge at this time that they need help.
ZEN gives you the discipline, to become a mirror, in such a way that you can reflect that, what is. Everything that you need is perception that not is distorted by thinking. -OSHO