

# What are we really doing as Chiropractors?

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Leonard J Faye

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**Narrative:** The work of Leonard Faye marks the beginning of the Chiropractic profession starting to really seek a scientific basis for its assessment and therapeutic protocols.

Faye's body of work entrenched Motion Palpation as a logical, evidence-based process of spinal assessment, and made a significant social impact within the Chiropractic profession and its education from the 1990s.

**Indexing Terms:** Chiropractic; Motion Palpation, Leonard Faye.

## Introduction

Since I was asked to prepare the technique curriculum for the *Anglo European Chiropractic College* in 1963, I asked myself this question, 'What are we really doing?'

The explanation at the time was pseudo-religious.

### Is it about interference with life-force?

The Palmers stated that it was the removal of interference to the Life Force that came from Innate Intelligence that was derived from Universal intelligence. This was antiscientific and could not be accepted by the philosophy of science according to Kuhn and Popper.

I went to *Foyles Medical Bookstore* (Charing Cross, UK) that was 6 stories high, where I found many European authors had written many books on spinal and extremity manipulation. I spent 1,500 British pounds, at the time worth USD \$3,750, on books that were discussing Manual Medicine, placebo, radiology, diagnosis of soft tissues, the doctor patient relationship and anything else that I thought would help me be an informative teacher. I had 2 years to read these references and prepare a technique and practice philosophy curriculum.

... The clinical practice of Chiropractic has advanced significantly since we learned that restrictions to spinal movement and stability could be identified by Motion Palpation ...'



### Is a curriculum about 'easy ideas'?

The first-year class of 20 students left at Christmas because they wanted the easier 'big idea' of the *Palmer College* and not a more evidence influenced curriculum. One student remained and the faculty kept the program going for him for 4 years.

The second-year class was even bigger and more enthusiastic to study enough to be evidence influenced and skilled in spinal and extremity manipulation. Students even defended an original

research project that required hours of work. When they graduated many returned to Europe to become busy chiropractors and eventually a President of their respective association.

### The evidence-influenced ideas

Up to 1975 students at AECC were taught to be experts in diagnosis of the neurobiologic mechanisms of a dysfunctional musculoskeletal-locomotor system and the non-drug and non-surgical methods of getting the patient to experience a healing. The causes that they were dealing with were biomechanical insults, soft tissue changes, inflammation, dietary deficiencies or obesity and lastly but not leastly, pathological stress responses.

I have discussed the history of my journey and the pushback of the fundamentalists and the recent collection of PhDs that fail to see the complexity of a Chiropractic encounter that can't be parsed to a single therapeutic application to determine its' validity.

The complexity of Chiropractic is that an encounter can't be parsed to a single therapeutic application to determine its' validity

For example, *Motion Palpation* when researched had poor inter-examiner reliability. However Kim Ross PhD and Stuart McGill PhD wrote and published a paper in the prestigious *Spine Journal* that claimed manipulation could not be vertebra specific and affected/involved at least three motion units. This explained why motion palpation was indeed a clinically significant tool.

### Specific becomes the correct direction of the restrictions

My book about those times, *Chiropractic Odyssey*, is now an audio book at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) for just a few dollars. To really understand this paradigm shift you need to read the cited references in this 268-page book or 7 hour listening experience.

We need pragmatic studies that show what we do is therapeutic for conditions that respond to our own immune system responses. Medical doctors are the experts in managing irreversible pathologies with drugs and surgeries. We make great co-treaters, but most MDs don't understand what we do.

If you go to my mentoring website at [www.chiropracticmentor.com](http://www.chiropracticmentor.com) and scroll down a little to the free downloads you can watch and share these files with your peers and any students that you know.

### Conclusion

I have always asked DCs, especially those teaching, to read the references such as *Davis's Law* that is a corollary of *Wolff's Law* that everyone knows about. What could be more relevant evidence for developing a treatment plan for patients that need time and treatment protocols to instigate these tissue changes?

I am sorry that I must refer you to my books and website but there is nowhere else to refer you to if you wish to pursue this type of practice.

You must put in the time and effort to become a master of manual therapy.

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### *About the author*

Leonard Faye, DC, FRCCSS(Can)Hon, practices in West Los Angeles. He changed the direction of Chiropractic in 1989/1990 with his textbook '*Motion Palpation and Chiropractic Technic*.'

This book influenced the curriculum in all Chiropractic colleges world wide, and remains a remarkable contribution which marked the commencement of the profession unpacking what it actually did, clinically, in scientific language.

The idea of bringing the complexities of the dynamic spine into a system of clinical spinal assessment called *Motion Palpation*, was an early and strong contribution to broadening Chiropractic's understanding of subluxation.

See <https://chiro.org/Subluxation/FULL/Subluxation-Complex.pdf> and Google Scholar.

Dr Faye is a Global Treasure among Chiropractors.

### *Notes:*

**Wolff's law** was created by the German anatomist and surgeon Julius Wolff in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a part of bone theory that explains how bones typically respond to stress. It marks the adaptive changes that bones can make internally to become stronger and stronger in order to resist strain. Wolff's law also applies in the inverse case.

**Davis's law** is used in anatomy and physiology to describe how soft tissue models along imposed demands. It is the corollary to Wolff's law, which applies to osseous tissue. It is a physiological principle stating that soft tissue heals according to the manner in which they are mechanically stressed.