

Spinal Research: Our Vision

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As the newest member on the Australian Spinal Research Foundation Board of Governors I would like to share some of my experiences to date from the perspective of a fresh pair of eyes.

To say I've been awed by the dedication and commitment of both the core team at Spinal Research and the Board of Governors is an understatement. Since induction, my eyes have been opened to the fact that a new era is dawning within the Foundation. This I believe is a necessary part of its evolution so that it will continue to flourish and grow. Without constructive change (aka: forces), destruction and decay occurs. (Sound familiar? If not check out the 3rd chiropractic principle)

I can elaborate on this by using practice as a metaphor. A practice seeing 50 patients/week does not have the same systems, procedures and behaviours, and dare I say vision, as a practice that sees 500 patients per week. To make the leap takes courage, commitment, and dedication to a big hairy audacious vision, one that is way bigger than the current status. I have been blown away by the amount of work and formalization of processes that has happened, particularly in the past 22 months since Mr Roley Cook took over as CEO and under the current board leadership of Dr David Cahill, to enable this shift to happen for the Spinal Research.

This article will span the next few updates in which my aim is to share information from each of the following areas, in order to give CAA members more insight into the Foundation and hopefully inspire them to get behind the Spinal Research and support it. A new age is dawning!

- Review the new Spinal Research vision
- Discuss the upgrading of the research grant application process that has been undertaken to ensure our contributions are best placed to support our vision.
- Give a 'nutshell' description of the strategic plan for the coming year.

The Vision

The new Spinal Research vision was enthusiastically voted in at the February Board of Governors Meeting and shared with the DG08 delegates. The previous vision was 'Optimal Health and Wellbeing for All'. Whilst an admirable

vision, it was recognized that it was generalized. It could quite easily have also been the vision for the massage therapists, or medical practitioners' association.

A vision needs to be bold and definite so that by stating it we send a clear message to universal forces... just like JFK when he said, 'By the end of the decade we will put a man on the moon'. There was no 'if, but or maybe' about it; it was a concise, clear, quantifiable outcome.

A vision such as JFK's does not have to be believable at this moment in time, but it must be imaginable. I have observed in my short time on the board that the Spinal Research Governors are not content to let chiropractic research grow at the same rate that it has over the previous 100 years. Opportunity exists to take control of our destiny and embark on bigger, even audacious, goals. Clearly articulated and illustrated goals can only be borne out of a clear, concise vision.

Here is the Vision that drives the Australian Spinal Research Foundation:

"We are the research foundation which demonstrates that subluxation based chiropractic care improves quality of life and human performance."

This vision cannot be realized without your contribution. Firstly by directly supporting chiropractic research through becoming an Spinal Research member, or donating at least one patient visit per week as some members have done for many years; and secondly, disseminating the knowledge gained to help chiropractic reach the masses.

It's a bit like BJ's 'Big Idea' which, in the third paragraph says, *"Now comes a man. Any one man is a small thing. This man gives an adjustment. The adjustment is a small thing. The adjusted subluxation releases pressure upon the nerves. That is a small thing. The released pressure restores health to that man. That is a big thing to that man. Multiply that well man by a thousand and you step up the physical and mental welfare of a city."*

You pulling out the cheque book or credit card, scribbling a figure and handing it to the CA to commit to Spinal Research after reading this may not seem like a big thing at the time, however multiply your effort by many chiropractors and we have the potential to generate the funds required to manifest the vision. This is not only for our benefit - validating the Faith, Confidence, and Belief we already own - but for the benefit of our patients, the relevant authorities who can contribute positively to our cause, and most importantly, those who are yet to be patients.

According to Wikipedia, Critical Mass is a socio-dynamic term to describe the existence of sufficient momentum in a social system such that the momentum becomes self-sustaining and fuels further growth.

As a simple example, consider a big city. When one person stops and looks at the sky, nothing will happen. The other people will go after their own business. When three people stop and look up the sky, perhaps some people will turn around, then go along. But there's only a small number (which depends on the culture, the daytime, the width of the street and other factors) of people needed... say, 5 or 7... that make other ones stop and look at the sky, too. This number is called 'Critical Mass' or 'Tipping Point'.

Research that furthers understanding, development, and effectiveness of chiropractic care is an essential component to chiropractic stepping up to the plate and reaching that tipping point called critical mass. With your support now the Australian Spinal Research Foundation will help you "*multiply that well man!*"

By Dr Lisa Shelton, Governor, Australian Spinal Research Foundation