



Don't Quit

Don't quit! Look for the cause - because you're about the only profession that is doing that.

"It's always too soon to quit!" This was the title of a chapel talk Dr. V. Raymond Edman, President of Wheaton College, gave toward the end of the semester when we were beginning to get discouraged. He went on to explain that you can take another direction, but don't quit. I believe these words are good advice for us today as we face a crumbling economic crash, especially if we are just starting a practice.

For the first thirteen years of my practice I worked for another chiropractor. This kept food on the table and a roof over my head, but there was not enough money left over to start a practice of my own. However, I had just accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior, and knew I could not be a good witness and stay where I was. Every avenue that had previously been opened to me was no longer available, so there was no alternative but to go it on my own. Finally I found a chiropractor who was willing to sell her practice with no money down. This sounded great to me, but while I was packing my car to make the move, she called to tell me she had decided not to sell.

So now what? I remember praying, *"Lord, I'll go wherever you want me to go, but please don't do me like you did Abraham and ask me to start going, and you will tell me on the way where I am to go. I can't do that."* When this phone call came telling me that my plans were canceled, I just kept on packing. I was living in Brownsville, Texas, at the time. I knew I couldn't go south because I didn't have a license in Mexico, and I couldn't go east through the Gulf of Mexico. So it had to be north or west. When my mother heard about the canceling of my plans she wanted to know why I was still packing and where was I going. My reply was, *"I don't know where I am going, but I am going."* Before I had finished packing, the phone rang again, and this time it was an x-ray salesman telling me about a practice that was available because a chiropractor in the Houston area had just walked off and left. So I headed toward Houston.

When I got there, I discovered that the chiropractor had referred all her patients to another chiropractor. Yet I paid down a month's rent so I had an office building. I found a room to rent in a private home from a former patient of mine who had just recently moved to Houston. I signed a \$3000 note for a used spring lift hi-lo adjusting table, a used x-ray machine, and some furniture. I then went to visit a friend in another city who helped me to get material to make some drapes, and I was ready to go. Then I heard some bad news. A hurricane had just gone through Houston, and the subdivision my office was in was under water and much of it was completely wiped out.

Now I was about ready to quit. I prayed, *"Lord, I thought I was following*

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Don't Quit, continued,

your leadership, and now I am ready to start my new office and you wipe it completely off the map. What am I supposed to do now?" My friend (*it's great to have a friend at times like that*) said we should just go back and take a look. Maybe it wasn't as bad as the news said. We did. She was right, the office was untouched.

My first patient came in while I was still getting the office ready, so I had to move boxes off the adjusting table to take care of him. He was a good patient and well satisfied, so I was now in my own practice. I had started attending a church, and a lady there told me she would like to be my receptionist. I thanked her but told her I couldn't pay a receptionist because I didn't have much of a practice yet. She said that was ok; she would work for me for free until we got the practice going, and then I could start paying her. She happened to be from a large family. She and her relatives were all good chiropractic patients, and their chiropractor had recently died. So my practice was up and running.

I made fifteen dollars the first month, two hundred and fifty the second month and continued to go up. Many obstacles came along. Some months I couldn't pay all the bills, but I was always able to work out something with my debtors until things picked up again. I should say the Lord was able. If it hadn't been for the Lord's sustaining power and grace, I would have quit. At one time I asked the Lord if I were doing what He wanted me to do by staying in chiropractic. I had not been a Christian when I decided to be a chiropractor, so maybe that was a bad decision. I even made applications to get into the type of work I had done before; but this failed. So after much prayer and soul searching, I was convinced that the Lord wanted me where I was.

I wanted to be sure I wasn't putting chiropractic before God; because chiropractic was so dear to me, I had almost made it my God. I didn't go into this profession to make money. I went into it because it had saved me from a life of physical torment, and I saw how it saved the lives of others. I saw the advantage of removing the cause of disease instead of treating the symptoms. I worked in a hospital while I was in college, and I could see little children suffering and dying in the hospital with sicknesses that were often cleared without drugs and surgery under chiropractic care. During the polio epidemic, children responded dramatically to chiropractic care. Parents of a child with cerebral palsy were told to put their two year old in a mental institution and forget about him.

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He made a complete recovery under chiropractic care. These were the things that made me decide it was always too soon to quit.

I didn't get rich, but riches can't compare to being a part of such a great profession. I spent some time with other chiropractors who had gone to jail because they practiced chiropractic. Yet they didn't quit, and, because they hung in there, their states finally licensed chiropractors. I didn't enter the profession to acquire wealth because I didn't know any rich chiropractors. And I didn't go into it so I could be accepted by society or other healing professions with open arms. I once referred a patient to a medical doctor because I knew he did good work; but when she told him I had referred her, he refused to accept her as a patient. So after that, when I referred I instructed the patient not to tell them who referred them. Back then, even some churches were not happy to accept me - I was once referred to as a cultist by one of our deacons. One time, an evangelist, who was a chiropractic patient, came into our town. Wherever he went, he would always look up a chiropractor because chiropractic was the only thing that would restore his voice when he had problems with his throat. But when he asked the pastor of the church where he was preaching if he would take him to the chiropractor, the pastor told him he would have to let him off a block away because he didn't want anyone to see his car in front of a chiropractor's office. Thankfully, some things have changed for the better.

So if you have gone into the profession with ideas of fame, wealth or a life of ease, you may contemplate another vocation. But if you examine your motives prayerfully, you may find the resolve to stick with it. We as chiropractors are in a unique position. More and more, I notice that the rest of the health caregivers are looking mostly at treating the symptoms rather than seeking the cause. It's easier to cut it out, drug it or do anything to make the patient comfortable than it is to seek the cause. Then when the pain comes back, you can do all the drugging and cutting all over again. If you don't remove the cause, you've still got the problem.

Don't quit! Look for the cause because you're about the only profession that is doing that. I am a little concerned that we are losing that quality. Our advertising may be misleading as I see ads that stress that we can stop their headaches, backaches, etc. In reality, that may be a by-product, but we are not healing their pains. We are removing the cause, and the body does the healing. And if we are Christian chiropractors, we are more capable than ever. It's been over 60 years since I graduated from chiropractic college, and I am still thankful that God didn't let me quit. Hang in there!

Dr. Lois Baldwin Southern is a 1949 graduate of National and has been a member of the CCA since its early beginnings. Though retired, she continues to serve on our Board of Directors. She lives in San Angelo, TX.