

Talking Points & Resources

Hello Pathways Connect Group Participants,

Preliminary note: There is no wrong way

To run your Pathways Connect Gathering, the steps below are to help guide you. However, we encourage you to embrace the flow of your gathering and allow for your meeting to take on its own momentum in whatever direction it might go.

Step 1: Select topics

Prior to your group gathering, find and select one or more of the magazine articles that you found interesting and want to share. Pick topics that make you passionate, as these are the easiest to talk about and spark discussion.

Step 2: The Gathering

Welcome everyone present in the group and ask each person to introduce themselves and share a little about themselves. Be sure to share about yourself as well.

Step 3: Introduce the topic

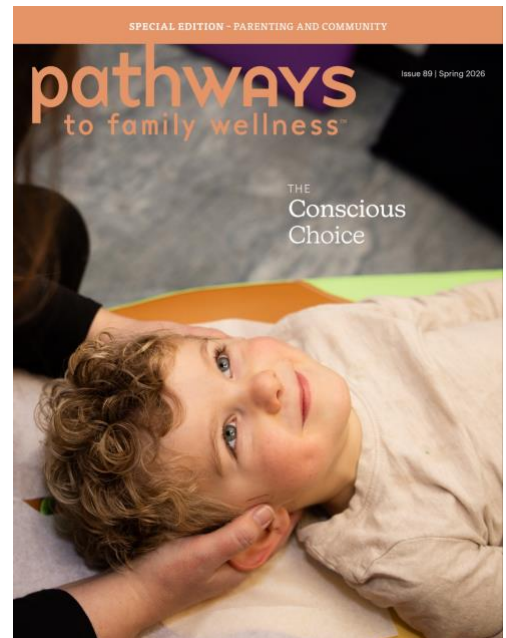
Share with the group your topic and why you chose it, why it interests you, and the importance you see in it. Summarize the article (some article summaries are provided below). You can read the entire article or article summary out loud to your group and share your thoughts at this time.

Step 4: Encourage conversation

We provide questions after each summary section that will help people to engage. Make use of these questions or devise your own.

Step 5: Make the chiropractic connection

At the end of each article summary are notes about how this topic relates to chiropractic. If you utilize these meetings to educate parents on the importance of chiropractic care, you will be benefiting your office growth and the health of your community!



PW Issue #89 Introduction: Conscious Choices*A Special Edition on Parenting*

When preparing for birth, the emphasis has been all about our future choices: Should I birth in a hospital, or at home? Should I take pain medication or birth naturally? Should I elect for a C-section if something happens, or find an OB that supports my body?

Questions tend to arise: What if my baby is breech? What if I have placenta previa? What if the birth is too painful? What if my doctor says he won't honor my choices? Each of our numerous questions hinge on a concern for a future outcome: What will happen if I choose this or that? How will I be treated? What are the risks or benefits of this choice? How will it affect me or my baby?

Thankfully, a fundamental shift is happening in our approach to birth that rises above the chaos. Parents are choosing not to depend on this stressful orientation to the future. They are realizing that no one's "educated" guesses can actually predict how our birth will unfold. Instead, they are awakening to another approach.

There are a plethora of choices that exist *in the here and now*, oriented to the *present moment*, designed to empower us:

"Right now, I can breathe into my body, and learn to soften my pelvis." "Right now, I can connect with my baby and feel her mood, her thoughts, her love, and attune to what she needs." "In this moment, I can explore and find the ideal positions and movements that help my body open to the flow and activity of my baby's birth."

Parents can practice together, and take up this new form of consciousness into their birth setting, where in each moment, they can align with one another.

"Together, we can bring our breathing into sync, and move through the wave of this contraction with greater ease, stability and resolve." "In the space between contractions, I can lean on my partner. I can let go of the previous intensity, and consciously soften into the present moment to rest and rejuvenate."

Instead of a perpetual concern for the situation, choices, or circumstances that may or may not affect our future outcomes, we decide instead to take up the *conscious choice* – to bring our awareness to what we can do *for ourselves*. As soon as the conscious choice is felt for the first time, and as soon as we discover its power, we become indomitable parents for our children. We become light bearers for the future of our family's possibilities. In each moment of the conscious choice, we raise the consciousness of our species.

PW #89 Talking Points, Group Questions, and the Chiropractic Connection

TAKING THE STEP

The Magic of Intuition is Not Magic

By Joe Dispenza, D.C.

Joe Dispenza explores what intuition actually is from a scientific perspective — not a mystical gift, but a form of direct knowing that arrives when the analytical mind quiets. He describes how the brain's 'pause in the chatter' opens a channel through which other forms of information can enter the nervous system. This is why mothers sense their child's distress from across town, and why thinking of a friend seconds before they call is more common than we might expect.

Dispenza offers three interconnected explanations for intuitive experience: the brain's quieting allowing non-ordinary information in; emotional resonance creating non-local connections between people who share strong bonds (like tuning a radio to a shared frequency); and heart-centered energy, where elevated states like love and gratitude radiate outward and register in the nervous systems of others. He cites a remarkable study in which 700 meditators radiating elevated emotions caused more than 50% of a separate, unaware group to spontaneously shift into heart coherence — their physiology changed simply by proximity to intentional love.

The article closes with an empowering conclusion: intuition is not magic, but it is learnable. The more we stop over-analyzing and learn to trust what our nervous system receives, the more skilled we become at this kind of receptivity. It is not a rare ability reserved for the spiritually gifted — it is our biological inheritance, available to anyone willing to get quiet enough to listen.

Questions for Consideration

- Can you recall a moment when you 'just knew' something about a loved one without being told — what did that feel like in your body, and did you trust it?
 - Dispenza describes the nervous system as a receiver, tuned by our emotional state. What helps you get quiet enough to receive — and what tends to get in the way?
 - The study showed that 700 people radiating gratitude and love changed the physiology of 50 others nearby. How does that shift the way you think about showing up in your own family?
 - What practices in your daily life — or in raising your children — might help cultivate a more open, receptive nervous system over time?
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The Chiropractic Connection

Dispenza places the nervous system at the center of intuition — describing it as the biological receiver through which we access information beyond the ordinary senses. Chiropractic care is uniquely positioned here: by removing subluxation and restoring full neurological integrity, adjustments support the very capacity Dispenza describes. An open, unimpeded nervous system is a more sensitive and responsive one — better able to receive, process, and trust the signals that constitute what we call intuition.

Chiropractors can use this article to invite patients into a broader understanding of what nervous system care makes possible. The goal of chiropractic is not simply the absence of pain but the full expression of innate intelligence through an unobstructed nervous system. When families understand the nervous system as a receiver of inner and outer intelligence, chiropractic becomes not just healthcare but a pathway to presence, connection, and the kind of knowing that Dispenza calls — accurately — not magic at all.

TAKING THE STEP

Be Still, Mumma

By Carla Wood, D.C.

Carla Wood, a chiropractor and mother, writes with disarming honesty about the epidemic of busyness in modern motherhood — and her own hard-won journey through it. She describes how the compulsive need to organize, plan, and control pulled her away from the very thing she most wanted: genuine presence with her child. The more she organized, the more stressed she became, and the more the cycle deepened — because the answer she was looking for wasn't outside, it was inside.

Wood describes stillness not as passivity, but as a skill — one she had to learn deliberately, and one that transformed her family's entire ecosystem when she did. She reflects on how children speak this language constantly: their reactions, their tantrums, their reaching — these are not behavior problems but invitations. 'Be still, Mumma. Be present for me.' The more she developed inner stillness, the more clearly she could see and hear her daughter, and the more effective her external actions became.

The article closes with a gentle invitation: that the stillness a mother is being called to is not the absence of doing, but a deepening of awareness — of herself, of her child, of the present moment. It is precisely in that stillness that the answers she's been seeking in planners and strategies quietly reveal themselves.

Questions for Consideration

- Where in your daily life do you find yourself rushing past a moment with your child — and what would it feel like to pause there, even for a breath?
 - Wood says children react when they're ignored or overlooked, and that underneath that reaction is a call for presence rather than action. How do you recognize that call in your own child?
 - What does stillness feel like in your body — is it something familiar and accessible, or does it feel uncomfortable or even unsafe?
 - How might cultivating inner stillness change not just how you parent, but how you make decisions, handle conflict, or experience your own life?
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The Chiropractic Connection

The nervous system governs our capacity for stillness. When the body is locked in chronic sympathetic activation — the stress response — stillness feels physiologically impossible. Racing thoughts, tight muscles, shallow breath, and a constant sense of urgency are all expressions of a nervous system that cannot downregulate. Chiropractic adjustments help shift the nervous system toward parasympathetic tone, creating the biological conditions in which the kind of presence Wood describes becomes genuinely possible — not just aspirationally, but in the body.

Chiropractors can share this article with mothers who are overwhelmed, depleted, or caught in the cycle Wood describes so vividly. Framing chiropractic care as nervous system regulation — as support for a mother's capacity to be present, to listen, to feel — opens conversations that go far beyond back pain. Parents who receive regular chiropractic care often report exactly what Wood is reaching for: a greater sense of calm, groundedness, and the ability to be in the moment with their children.

STAYING THE COURSE
Rejecting a Pre-Packaged Life
By Sandra Dodd

Sandra Dodd opens with a question that lands quietly but cuts deep: How many things do you do because you're supposed to? Because your relatives and neighbors expect it? Because it's easy and you don't have to think about it? She invites families to examine the inherited scripts that quietly govern their choices — and to ask honestly whether those choices are actually taking them somewhere they want to go.

Dodd introduces a paradigm shift that sounds small but is anything but: replace the pursuit of happiness — always deferred, always contingent on some future achievement — with the practice of joy, which is immediate, present, and available in any ordinary moment. Cooking a meal can be enjoyed. Doing laundry can be enjoyed. Looking at your child without an agenda can be pure, tingly joy. She argues that enjoyment is not a luxury but a way of being, and that practicing it moment by moment changes everything.

The article is ultimately an invitation to agency — the recognition that the pre-packaged life was never the only option. When families stop asking 'what should I do?' and start asking 'what can I do, right now, for joy?' they discover that freedom has been available all along. The shift doesn't require a revolution. It requires only a willingness to notice, and then choose.

Questions for Consideration

- What's one thing your family does regularly simply because 'that's how it's done' — and what would it feel like to consciously examine or release it?
 - Dodd distinguishes between happiness (deferred, contingent on outcomes) and joy (present, ongoing). Where do you find moments of joy in your ordinary daily life with your children?
 - What beliefs or expectations from your own upbringing are shaping how you parent right now — and which ones are worth keeping, and which ones might be worth questioning?
 - What would it look like to spend one day with your family orienting toward enjoyment rather than productivity or achievement — and what would get in the way?
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The Chiropractic Connection

Dodd's article is about reclaiming the power to choose — and chiropractic is rooted in the same principle. The chiropractic worldview holds that health is not something dispensed by authorities but expressed from within, through an intact nervous system. Families who begin to examine their inherited scripts often find that this extends naturally to their health choices: they start asking not 'what does my doctor tell me to do?' but 'what does my body need, and how can I support it from the inside out?'

Chiropractors can use this article as a starting point for conversations about lifestyle and nervous system health. The 'pre-packaged life' that Dodd describes — overscheduled, reactive, organized around others' expectations — creates the chronic stress load that subluxation thrives in. Helping families see the connection between their choices, their nervous system function, and their vitality is the essence of chiropractic education. The conscious choice to care for one's spine is itself an act of self-directed wellness.

TAKING THE STEP
Parenting the Whole Child

By Caron Goode, Ph.D.

Caron Goode, Ph.D., opens with a clear-eyed observation: western culture has fragmented our understanding of the self. Medicine treats the body, psychology the emotions, education the intellect, religion the soul. But children don't experience themselves in fragments — they are whole beings whose physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energies are continuously woven together into one living system. Parenting the whole child means learning to see and respond to all of it.

Goode introduces a reframe that changes everything: rather than thinking about managing children, think about managing their energy. The body's energy needs food, touch, air, and water. The emotional energy needs optimism and support. The energy of thought needs inspiration and imagination. The spirit needs connection, faith, compassion, and quiet. When parents understand their child through this lens, they stop asking 'what's wrong with their behavior?' and start asking 'which dimension of their energy is calling for something right now?'

The article closes with genuine encouragement: most parents already parent holistically — intuitively, without labeling it. The joy of whole-child parenting is discovering how much you already know and do. And when one approach doesn't work, there is always another way. The whole child is resilient, multidimensional, and endlessly responsive to a parent who is willing to meet them where they are.

Questions for Consideration

- When you think about your child's wellbeing, do you tend to focus on their body, their behavior, or their inner life — and what opens up when you try to hold all three at once?
 - Goode says 'the energy of the spirit needs connection, faith, compassion, and quiet.' How do you make room for your child's spiritual or inner life in the rhythm of ordinary days?
 - Can you recall a time when you addressed what looked like a behavior problem and later realized it was an unmet physical or emotional need? What did that teach you?
 - What would shift in your home if you thought of yourself as a steward of your child's energy rather than a manager of their actions or outcomes?
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The Chiropractic Connection

Goode's whole-child model maps directly onto chiropractic's systems view of the body. The nervous system is the integrating network that coordinates physical, emotional, cognitive, and even spiritual function. When neurological integrity is compromised by subluxation, the whole child is affected — attention, mood, immunity, sleep, sensory processing, and developmental unfolding are all downstream of a nervous system that is or isn't free to do its work. Addressing the nervous system is addressing the whole child.

Chiropractors can use this article to help parents see that bringing a child for regular care is an act of whole-child stewardship, not just symptom management. A well-functioning nervous system gives a child's body, emotions, mind, and spirit the best possible environment to thrive. Parents who understand their child as an integrated energy system — rather than a collection of separate problems — are more likely to choose proactive, wellness-based care throughout childhood.

STAYING THE COURSE
The Premise of Chiropractic
By Bobby Doscher, D.C.

Bobby Doscher opens with the foundational truth of chiropractic philosophy: 'The power that makes the body heals the body.' He describes innate intelligence as the vitalistic organizing force present in every living cell — constantly adapting the body to its environment, sustaining order, and driving the organism toward optimal function. This is not a metaphor but a working biological reality, observable in every healing process that has ever occurred in a living body.

The article explains healing as a dynamic, time-dependent process. The body is self-healing, self-organizing, and self-regulating — and it does this not because of what we add to it, but because of what it already is. Children, with their strong recuperative powers, heal especially quickly when neurological interference is removed. Doscher traces the arc of chiropractic care for a child: energy returns, chronic symptoms recede, toxins are eliminated, and developmental retracing begins — the body returning to interrupted stages of growth to complete them correctly.

Doscher calls on parents to seek care providers who recognize and support healing from within, and names chiropractors specifically as practitioners who honor the innate intelligence of the body. The closing image is one of light returning — to the eyes, to the nervous system, to the whole child — as the body's own organizing power is freed to do what it has always known how to do.

Questions for Consideration

- Have you ever watched your child heal from something — a fever breaking, a wound closing — and felt a sense of awe at how the body just knew what to do? What did that moment feel like?
 - Doscher describes 'retracing' — the body returning to earlier developmental stages as it heals. Have you or your child experienced something that felt like this? How did you interpret it at the time?
 - What does it mean to you to trust the body's own healing intelligence — and where does that feel natural, and where does it feel difficult or unfamiliar?
 - How might the understanding that 'the power that makes the body heals the body' change the way you approach health decisions for your family?
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The Chiropractic Connection

This article is the chiropractic worldview at its most essential. Innate intelligence — the organizing principle that keeps a living body alive, adapting, and moving toward wholeness — is precisely what chiropractic seeks to honor and restore. Vertebral subluxation creates neurological interference that dims the expression of innate intelligence throughout the body. The chiropractic adjustment removes that interference, allowing the body's own power to flow freely and do the work it was designed to do.

Chiropractors can use this article as a foundational education piece — one that begins with something undeniable and deeply resonant: the body heals itself. From there, the role of the spine and nervous system in expressing that healing becomes a natural conversation. Parents who truly understand this principle don't just become chiropractic patients — they become advocates, sharing the philosophy with their community, bringing their children for regular care, and making choices that support innate intelligence rather than suppress it.

LIVING THE JOURNEY

The Roseto Effect

By Rock Positano, D.P.M.

In the early 1960s, researchers descended on Roseto, Pennsylvania — a small, modest Italian-American village — after noticing something extraordinary: its residents were dying of heart attacks at roughly half the rate of every surrounding community. Same water, same neighborhood, same income levels, same occupational hazards. The difference had nothing to do with diet (Rosetans fried their food in lard and smoked unfiltered cigars), exercise, or genetics. Something else entirely was protecting their hearts.

What investigators found was both simple and stunning: Rosetans were nourished by people. Three-generational households, multigenerational social ties, zero crime, zero ostentation among the wealthy, and a community culture where no one was left alone — these were the variables that explained the health advantage. When Roseto began to modernize and Americanize in the 1970s — fenced yards, country clubs, weakened social ties — the heart disease rate rose in nearly perfect correlation with the erosion of community cohesion. By 1992, Rosetans were dying of heart disease at the same rate as everyone else.

The Roseto Effect is now one of the most cited examples in social medicine: community itself is a form of medicine. Belonging, love, and connection operate on the cardiovascular system in ways that no pill can replicate. The town of Roseto, now largely absorbed by suburbanization, passes through history as a quiet, haunting reminder of what we lose when we trade genuine community for individualism.

Questions for Consideration

- The Rosetans lived longer not because of what they ate or how they exercised, but because of how they related to each other. What does that say to you about where health actually comes from?
 - What does your family's sense of community look like right now — and if you could strengthen one aspect of it, what would it be?
 - The elderly in Roseto were 'installed' as informal judges and arbitrators — honored and integrated into daily life, not sidelined. How does your family include its elders, and what role do they play?
 - What's one way you could intentionally deepen your family's sense of belonging to something larger than yourselves — a neighborhood, a practice community, a shared purpose?
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The Chiropractic Connection

The Roseto Effect confirms what chiropractic has always understood: the nervous system does not operate in isolation. Social isolation, chronic stress, and the internalization of pressure are neurological stressors — they activate the sympathetic nervous system, suppress immune function, elevate cortisol, and over time accelerate disease. Community, belonging, and love, by contrast, support parasympathetic tone and the kind of nervous system coherence that sustains long-term health. Roseto didn't just have healthy hearts; they had healthy nervous systems.

Chiropractors serve as community anchors. The chiropractic practice itself — a place where families are known by name, welcomed over years, and supported through life's transitions — can embody the Roseto principle. Practitioners can share this article as an invitation to reflect on the social dimensions of health, and to recognize the chiropractic community as part of the ecosystem that nourishes family wellness. Care that happens in relationship, over time, with trust and continuity, is more than adjustment — it is connection, and connection heals.

LIVING THE JOURNEY

The Social Heart

By Rollin McCraty, Ph.D.

Rollin McCraty, director of research at the HeartMath Institute, presents compelling evidence that the heart is far more than a circulatory pump — it is a sophisticated sensory organ with its own intrinsic nervous system, capable of learning, remembering, and making functional decisions independent of the brain. The heart generates an electromagnetic field measurable several feet from the body, and that field carries encoded information about our emotional state. The magnetic component alone is approximately 100 times stronger than the brain's magnetic field.

McCraty introduces heart coherence — a physiological state generated by sustained positive emotions like love, appreciation, and gratitude — in which the heart's rhythms become smooth, ordered, and sine-wave-like. This state enhances mental clarity, reduces stress perception, and synchronizes multiple body systems simultaneously. Critically, coherence is contagious: experiments show that when people are in proximity, one person's heartbeat can register in another person's brain waves — and a coherent heart rhythm in one person makes coherence more likely in those nearby. Even across a distance, focused love for a pet produced synchronous coherence in both animal and owner.

The article extends these findings to mother-infant bonding, adult relationships, and social collectives — showing that the quality of emotional connection between people is literally encoded in energetic fields that organize social groups over time. Early mother-infant interactions organized by love and positive emotion lay down patterns that shape a child's capacity for self-regulation, social connection, and emotional health throughout life.

Questions for Consideration

- Have you ever noticed your mood or physical state shift simply by being near someone who was calm, grounded, or full of joy — without a word being exchanged? What did you make of that?
- McCraty's research shows that the quality of early mother-infant interaction shapes lifelong emotional regulation. How does knowing that land for you as a parent — as a responsibility, a gift, or both?
- If your heart's electromagnetic field is literally affecting the nervous systems of people around you, what does that say about the importance of attending to your own inner state?
- What would it mean to intentionally cultivate heart coherence — through gratitude, appreciation, or love — as a daily family practice rather than something that happens accidentally?

The Chiropractic Connection

McCraty's research points to the heart-brain connection and the nervous system as the foundation of healing, consciousness, and social coherence. Chiropractic care serves this system directly. When subluxation is removed and the nervous system operates with full integrity, the communication between heart and brain is restored, autonomic balance shifts toward parasympathetic dominance, and the body's capacity to generate coherent, healing fields increases. Caring for the spine is caring for the heart — in every sense of the word.

Chiropractors can share this article as a bridge between the science of the heart and the philosophy of chiropractic. The HeartMath research validates what chiropractic has always held: that the nervous system is the master system, that inner coherence radiates outward and affects others, and that attending to neurological integrity is attending to the whole person and their relationships. This is a powerful tool for helping families understand why regular wellness care matters — not just for the individual, but for everyone they love and live with.