

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

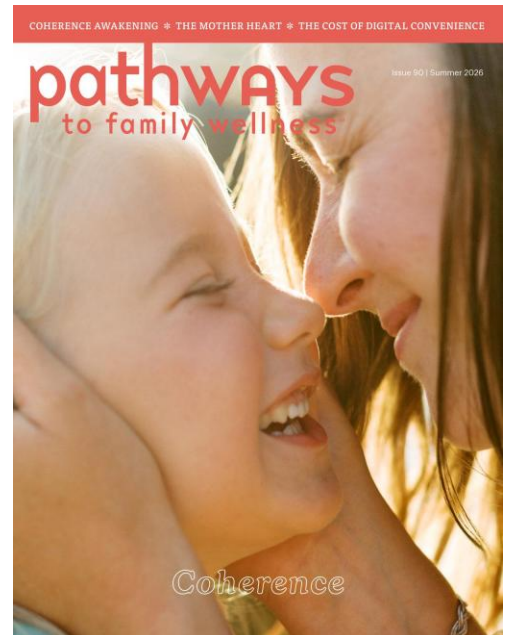
Share with the group your topic and why you chose it, why it interests you, and the importance you see in it. Summarize the article (some article summaries are provided below). You can read the entire article or article summary out loud to your group and share your thoughts at this time.

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 #90 Introduction
Coherence

This issue of Pathways is called *Coherence*. Within it, we ask the question sitting underneath so much of modern life: what is a human being, if not a sophisticated biological machine? How we answer that question shapes how we give birth, how we raise our children, and how we care for our health.

Most of modern healthcare has settled on the machine answer. The body gets treated like a car in the shop — find the broken part, call it ‘broken,’ attempt to fix it or replace it, send it back out on the road. Chiropractic never went along with this. From the beginning, its philosophy has rested on something different: the understanding that life flows from above-down and from the inside-out, and that an innate intelligence — wiser than any educated mind — animates every cell of the body. A person is not a machine to be repaired. She is a living being who heals from within, and she cannot be replicated by any mechanism known to man.

That's the real gift of chiropractic, and it matters now more than ever. We are entering the age of AI, surrounded by artificial systems that imitate thinking, imitate conversation, and increasingly imitate care. None of it is inherently bad — these mechanical tools can be used for good or ill. But the more machine-like our world becomes, the more we need practices that remember what a human being actually is. Chiropractic is one of the ways we keep that balance. It is a form of healthcare built around the organic light of real humanity — one that trusts the body, honors the person, and works with Nature rather than trying to override Her.

And something happens when people are cared for this way. When a human being is honored for who and what she is — not managed, not configured, but truly cared for — she doesn't just get well. She flourishes. Families who live from this understanding begin to grow into something more: a consciousness rooted in true reality, in Nature and her biological laws, and in the power that lives within each of us that can become manifested owing to a Naturally endowed power that we have yet to fully reveal in our species. That is what coherence means in these pages. Not a technique or a quick fix, but the natural, elevated state of a human being whose body and spirit are free to express the wisdom they were born with.

The articles in this issue explore coherence from many angles — the science of the nervous system and fascia, the quiet strength of a mother's heart, an honest look at what our screens are costing our children, and stories of families transformed across generations by the power of the adjustment. As you read and gather to talk about them, keep the central thread in mind: the human being is not a machine. The human being is all of life enfolded and ensouled — luminous and true. Every choice we make to honor that truth, in our homes and in our communities, helps carry humanity forward.

PW #90 Talking Points, Group Questions, and the Chiropractic Connection

TAKING THE STEP

The Cost of Digital Convenience

By Sharon Maxwell, Ph.D.

Sharon Maxwell, a clinical psychologist and educator specializing in adolescence and family life, opens with a principle shared by human development and chiropractic care: the body grows stronger through use, resistance, and adaptation. She illustrates it with a child learning to walk — pulling up, losing balance, falling, and trying again until strength, balance, and coordination emerge in response to gravity. The same principle, she suggests, unfolds throughout childhood. Her central invitation is to think less about managing devices and more about protecting development, asking what the digital environment is quietly asking of — or sparing — our children.

Children, Maxwell writes, are designed to grow through lived experience: patience by waiting, emotional regulation by tolerating frustration, focus by staying with a task, imagination by generating independent play, and social intelligence by navigating awkwardness and repair. For most of history, childhood met small, everyday forms of resistance, but many technologies are now designed to do the opposite — they 'reduce friction, provide immediate gratification, and keep children engaged for as long as possible.' She traces this through a toddler's AI 'pet,' addictive gaming that trains the brain to expect rapid reward, and a heartbreakingly lonely college freshman who found being with people in person 'just too hard' and would rather text.

Maxwell closes by reframing the familiar question. Rather than 'How much time is OK?' she asks, 'What opportunities is time spent online replacing?' She honors how understandable parents' reliance on convenience is under real pressure, then offers a developmental compass: protect unstructured play, boredom, conversation, chores, reading, outdoor time, real friendship, and reflection, and unfold technology a step at a time. Her encouragement is that the resistance and discomfort that grows healthy children also grows strong, resilient parents — and that many families are joining together to support one another in creating healthy environments for children.

Questions for Consideration

- Maxwell describes how a child learns to walk by falling and trying again — where in your own child's life do you notice growth emerging through struggle rather than ease, and how does it feel to let that struggle unfold?
- She reframes the common question from 'How much time is OK online?' to 'What is that time replacing?' — when you picture your family's ordinary days, what experiences would you most want to protect from being displaced?

- The article names conveniences many of us lean on — the screen that calms a tantrum or lets dinner get made in peace — and treats that reliance as understandable rather than shameful; where does convenience feel like genuine relief for you, and where might you gently want more room for real-world effort?
- Maxwell writes that what a child does repeatedly grows the neural pathways that become who they are — as you notice which capacities your child practices most often, what small, everyday experiences would you like to invite back into your home?

The Chiropractic Connection

Maxwell grounds her article in a principle chiropractors know intimately: the body grows stronger through use, resistance, and adaptation. That capacity to adapt is orchestrated by the nervous system, the master system through which innate intelligence expresses itself and organizes a child's response to every demand the environment makes. When subluxation interferes with that communication, adaptation is compromised. Chiropractic care removes that interference so the nervous system can perceive, integrate, and respond fully — supporting from above-down, inside-out the very developmental work Maxwell describes, in which strength, regulation, and resilience emerge through real engagement rather than being delivered ready-made.

Chiropractors can use this article to open a wider conversation with parents about what nervous system care is really for. Just as Maxwell invites families to think less about managing devices and more about protecting development, chiropractic care invites them to think less about symptom relief and more about the full expression of a child's innate potential. It offers a natural bridge to talk about the environments and experiences that shape a growing nervous system, and it positions the practice as a source of education and encouragement — a place where like-minded families gather to raise strong, resilient children with awareness and agency rather than fear.

TAKING THE STEP
Screens, Dopamine, and the Developing Brain
By Michael Longyear, D.C.

Michael Longyear opens with the question so many parents quietly carry: when a child struggles with focus, attention, emotional regulation, or learning, is this simply who they are — or is something happening to their brain? He is careful to say this is not an anti-technology article; screens are not evil. But they are, in his words, 'powerful neurological inputs,' and when those inputs meet a developing brain, especially one already struggling, they can quietly reshape how that brain functions. To understand why, he turns our attention to one specific region: the frontal lobe, the brain's executive center.

The frontal lobe governs focus, impulse control, emotional regulation, planning, working memory, and resilience under stress — and it is the last part of the brain to mature, developing into the mid-20s. That makes it powerful but vulnerable, and crucially it develops in response to input. Screen light travels past the retina to activate the midbrain, or mesencephalon, driving dopamine — best understood as a 'motivation and novelty signal.' Each notification and swipe delivers a small dopamine surge. Flooded repeatedly, the brain down-regulates its dopamine receptors and suppresses frontal lobe function, producing a child who is faster and more reactive but less capable of patience and regulation. Longyear notes recent longitudinal research linking the ADHD brain to higher later-life Parkinson's risk, a disease of dopamine depletion.

But the article turns firmly toward hope: the brain is not static, it is plastic, and the same neuroplasticity that lets screens shape it can be used to strengthen the frontal lobe and rebuild resilience. Longyear offers five practical, neuroscience-grounded inputs — movement that requires thought, rhythm and timing activities, eye-body integration, strategic reductions in blue light, and getting the brain adjusted. His closing word to parents is one of grace rather than guilt: if your child is struggling, it is not because you failed. 'You are raising children in the most neurologically stimulating environment in human history.' The brain is not broken; it is responding, and with the right inputs, it can change.

Questions for Consideration

- Longyear describes the frontal lobe as developing 'in response to input' well into the mid-20s — when you look at your child's daily rhythms, what inputs are they receiving most, and which ones feel nourishing versus depleting?
- The article names a familiar pattern: a child who 'can focus on screens for hours but not homework for five minutes,' or who melts down when a device is turned off — have you noticed something like this in your home, and how did it feel to witness it?

- Longyear reframes these struggles not as character flaws but as 'predictable neurological outcomes' — how does it change your heart toward your child, and toward yourself, to hear their behavior described as a brain adapting rather than a child misbehaving?
- Among the five inputs he offers — thoughtful movement, rhythm, eye-body play, strategic light boundaries, and chiropractic adjustment — which one feels most possible to begin this week, and what small, joyful form could it take in your family?

The Chiropractic Connection

Longyear places the nervous system at the very center of this conversation — the frontal lobe develops in response to the inputs it receives, and the chiropractic adjustment is, in his words, 'a precise sensory input to the nervous system' that activates frontal lobe networks, improves communication between brain regions, and enhances adaptability and regulation. This is chiropractic understood vitalistically: not the passive management of a symptom, but the removal of interference so that innate intelligence can express itself fully through an unobstructed nervous system. When we adjust a child whose system is overwhelmed, we are not overriding the brain — we are engaging its own learning centers and inviting it, from above-down and inside-out, to restore its own balance.

Chiropractors can use this article to open a wider conversation with parents — one that reframes care beyond focus scores and behavior charts toward the lifelong health of the developing brain. Longyear's five inputs give families concrete, hopeful agency, and the adjustment sits naturally among them as the one input that engages the nervous system's regulatory centers directly. Educating families this way turns the office visit into a partnership: parents leave understanding that their child's brain is not broken but plastic and responsive, and that chiropractic is one of the strongest inputs for building resilience. That message — grounded in neuroscience, free of guilt, full of possibility — is exactly the kind of conversation that grows both a child's health and a practice's community.

TAKING THE STEP
Multi-Generational Miracles
By Cameron Brownley, D.C.

Cameron Brownley opens with gratitude for what he calls a 'Sacred Trust' — the faith families place in him when they hand over their babies, toddlers, adolescents, pregnant mothers, and grandparents for care. Reflecting on nearly seven years of practice, he recalls how it began: within months of opening, Lora became his first pregnant mother, stopping by his apartment for a 5 a.m. candlelight adjustment before her hospital birth. From that beginning, whole families began developing, healing, and growing together, and he came to see the vulnerable courage it takes to admit a loved one needs help beyond what a family can provide.

The heart of the article is what Brownley calls the miracle of multigenerational care — a Sacred Trust that spreads 'like a living wildfire' across a community. Moms brought their babies, moms brought their moms, and a 12-year-old named Braden brought his momma in. Soon four-, five-, even eight-person families crowded his little adjusting suite. He describes babies who feed and sleep better, toddlers integrating reflexes, adolescents learning it's okay to receive help, and mothers crying as they release 'the weight of the world.' Something sacred, he notes, became simultaneously light-hearted and fun — people cry, then laugh together.

The article closes on tender surrender. This past winter Brownley did one of the hardest things he'd ever done — he said goodbye to his western North Carolina practice and moved to Puerto Rico for 'el proximo capitulo,' the next chapter. Now receiving the unconditional love he so easily preached, he reflects that he sometimes gets it backwards, imagining he was the one who enacted the miracles. His closing conviction reframes everything: 'These blessed families were the walking miracle all along...and I just came along for the ride.'

Questions for Consideration

- Brownley describes the vulnerable moment a parent admits 'I love my child, but something is not right' — can you recall a time you had to ask for help for someone you love, and what did it take in you to make that step?
- He recounts whole families crowding his adjusting suite, kids reading and playing while a parent breathes on the table — what would it feel like for your own family to share a space of healing together, rather than each seeking care alone?
- The article notes that something sacred became 'simultaneously very light-hearted and downright fun,' with tears and laughter side by side — where in your family life have you felt heaviness and playfulness held together at the same time?
- Brownley writes of leaning into those we love and letting ourselves receive help 'in the moments we want to shut down and run away' — where might you be invited to surrender and receive support, rather than carry everything alone?

The Chiropractic Connection

At the center of Brownley's story is the nervous system as the pathway through which healing moves across a whole family. He describes care that shifts 'from symptom talk and into greater comprehension of the nervous system' — the reframe that turns a single visit into multigenerational care. Chiropractic works here by removing subluxation and restoring neurological integrity, so the body can express what he calls the 'all-pervading, omnipotent essence that is the Innate Wisdom within our human nervous system.' The adjustment doesn't impose healing from outside; it clears interference so life can organize the body from above-down, inside-out, whether in a newborn settling into her body or an elder in her final stages of life.

Chiropractors can use this article to open a very different conversation with the families they serve — one that begins with a symptom but grows into an understanding of what nervous system care makes possible across generations. Brownley shows that when one family member experiences the value of specific care, that trust spreads like wildfire to parents, grandparents, and children. Educating families this way reframes chiropractic beyond symptom relief toward 'a steady stream of self-discovery, transformation, and empowerment,' and it builds the kind of practice, and community, where whole families walk toward greater health together, with empowerment always as the end goal.

TAKING THE STEP

The Coherence Awakening

By Satya Sardonicus, D.C., CACCP

Satya Sardonicus opens with a reminder that the same innate intelligence that grew you from a single fertilized egg into trillions of cells is still operating inside you right now — that you are 'like a cup of water from the ocean,' an inseparable piece of the universe's consciousness. Yet modern life, she observes, has us losing contact with this truth. She names our moment an 'inner climate crisis': nervous systems asked to process cognitive saturation, emotional compression, sleep fragmentation, and the relentless speed of the Age of AI. Overflowing with stress, the human system intelligently splints itself to survive, and we end up stuck in survival mode — pushing uphill through mud and calling it 'success.'

The heart of the article is coherence — not calm from a breathing hack, but a physiological and structural reality, the alignment of our physical form with the field of consciousness. Sardonicus locates its foundation in the fascia, our largest sensory organ, which carries six to 10 times the density of proprioceptors compared to muscle and generates electrical charge as it glides, a phenomenon called piezoelectricity. She traces one master pathway, the Dural-Fascial Kinetic Chain, from the sheath around the brain to the soles of the feet, and describes how a self-sustaining 'neurofascial-autonomic loop' can keep the brain in alarm around the clock. Modern culture, she argues, celebrates the rigid oak's 'armored resilience' when true health is the sapling's fluid resilience — the capacity to bend under adversity and return to center unharmed.

Rather than 'fixing' the body's armor by force, Sardonicus invites a shift from fixer to facilitator, creating the somatic safety in which a nervous system can reorganize itself — the approach behind her NeuroFascial Flow Method. She closes with an eight-year-old girl, hospitalized after a suicide attempt, who within two weeks of releasing the tension patterns holding her brain in alarm became, in her grandmother's words, 'a completely different child.' The invitation is not another technique but an awakening to how we are meant to inhabit the human form. Like a light buried under dirt and rocks, the intelligence was never diminished — 'always there, always whole' — and the work of coherence is simply clearing what accumulated on top of it.

Questions for Consideration

- Sardonicus describes 'armored resilience' — white-knuckling through exhaustion and masking dysregulation with high performance — as something our culture celebrates. Where in your own life have you called bracing 'strength,' and what might the sapling's fluid resilience look like for you instead?
- The article suggests that when your brain is locked in alarm, the pathways for connection and compassion are literally suppressed — that 'brain state is not identity.' Can you recall reacting to

a loved one's big emotion with your own frustration — and how might it change things to see that moment as biology rather than a character flaw?

- Sardonicus writes that healing happens in co-regulation, and that a dysregulated parent will always struggle to co-regulate a dysregulated child. When you feel most grounded and safe in your body, how does that change the way your family settles around you?
- The article names a 'Chaos of Reorganization' — the messy middle where old patterns dissolve, like the caterpillar liquefying before the butterfly. Where might you be judging regression, tears, or clumsiness as failure — and what would shift if you recognized it as the intelligent liquefaction that true change requires?

The Chiropractic Connection

Sardonicus places the nervous system — and the fascial web that sheathes it — at the very center of healing, describing how tension along the Dural-Fascial Kinetic Chain puts direct mechanical strain on the spinal cord and keeps the system locked in survival mode, sending alarm signals 24 hours a day even in sleep. This is precisely the terrain of chiropractic. Subluxation is that sustained neurostructural load; the adjustment is an invitation to restore glide and slack along the central line so that input to the brain clarifies, proprioception stabilizes, and the system can finally shift from alarm to safety, growth, and healing. Her framing honors the vitalistic truth chiropractic has always held — that the body heals from above-down, inside-out, and that structure which can move fluidly translates into a nervous system that can adapt effortlessly.

Chiropractors can use this article to widen the conversation with families well beyond symptom relief. Sardonicus notes that forcing change onto a system already in alarm often produces only a rebound — the massage that snaps back tight two hours later because 'the nervous system did not come along for the ride' — and she reframes lasting care as first establishing the safety in which an adjustment can integrate and hold. That reframe opens rich conversations with parents: why their child's clustered symptoms may be one interconnected system under load rather than separate mysteries, and why nervous-system care is an investment in their family's whole capacity for connection. Sardonicus even invokes Dr. Larry Webster, ICPA's founder, and his vision of a culture freed from 'subluxated politicians making subluxated laws' — a reminder that educating families this way is not only good practice-building but part of correcting those patterns from the inside-out, at the very start of life.

STAYING THE COURSE

The Dynamics of Chiropractic Support for Breastfeeding

By Lynn Gerner, D.C.

Lynn Gerner returns to her favorite subject — pediatric chiropractic, which in her office so often includes breastfeeding. Setting aside her usual less 'left brained' voice, she shares one especially inspiring case drawn from a year of histories she has been organizing for a research paper. A seven-week-old boy, born five weeks premature after six weeks in the NICU, was brought in for feeding dysfunction and digestive distress. He could not latch, tired within three to five minutes at the breast, and still took most of his nourishment through a nasogastric tube. His whole body appeared to curve to the left, and he strained and was excessively gassy.

Gerner walks through the findings with striking clarity: head and neck rotation to the right, a moderately high palate, a weak, uncoordinated tongue, and a cranium held in 'global extension.' She explains how that extended pattern lifts the sphenoid wings and the palatine bones into a predictable high palate that makes a normal seal difficult, while narrowing the cranium laterally and compressing the occiput and temporal bones. This crowds the jugular foramen and hypoglossal canal — home to the vagus, glossopharyngeal, and hypoglossal nerves that govern parasympathetic tone, swallowing, and the tongue. She notes normal birth exerts about 29 pounds of pressure on the newborn head, up to 69 with forceps or vacuum.

The transformation is the heart of the piece. After specific, light-contact SOT adjustments to the sacrum, upper cervical, temporal, occiput, and sphenobasilar, plus skin-to-skin holding, tongue exercises, and IBCLC support, the baby took nearly 100% of feedings from the bottle by the second visit and latched for about ten minutes. Six adjustments over three weeks resolved the digestive upset and let the NG tube be permanently removed. For Gerner, this is why she is 'beyond proud and joyful' to deliver this care — and an invitation to families and clinicians alike to trust how profoundly the adjustment can change a child's, and a whole family's, life.

Questions for Consideration

- Gerner describes a mother who remained hopeful to breastfeed even while her baby fed mostly through a tube — when have you held onto hope for your child through a slow or uncertain start, and what helped you keep faith in their unfolding?
- The article shows how a baby's whole-body curve, high palate, and tired latch traced back to subtle patterns from birth — how does it shift your view of a 'fussy' or 'gassy' baby to imagine the body is communicating something rather than simply malfunctioning?
- Gerner had the mother hold her baby skin to skin at every feeding to create a positive association with the breast — where in your own family life have you seen closeness and touch do quiet, patient work that no technique alone could?

- This baby's story turned not on one intervention but on a team — chiropractor, lactation consultant, and parents working together — and how do you tend the web of support around your own child, and where might you invite more collaboration?

The Chiropractic Connection

Gerner's case is a vivid map of why the nervous system sits at the center of feeding. The extended cranial pattern and upper cervical subluxation she describes crowd the very foramina through which the vagus, glossopharyngeal, and hypoglossal nerves pass — the nerves that orchestrate parasympathetic calm, swallowing, and the coordinated tongue a baby needs to nurse. By removing subluxation and restoring cranial and spinal balance, the specific, gentle adjustment lifts interference so innate intelligence can express itself: the body organizes, from above-down and inside-out, into the digestion, latch, and ease it was always designed for. Nothing is added; obstruction is removed so life can flow.

Chiropractors can use this article to open a far wider conversation with the families in their care. It reframes breastfeeding struggles, reflux, and colic not as isolated symptoms to suppress but as signals of a nervous system asking for room to function — and it gives parents language and hope in the same breath. When a practice can show, through a story like this one, that skilled care helped a premature infant come off a feeding tube, it invites families to understand chiropractic as support for a child's full expression of health, not merely relief of a complaint. Educating families this way deepens trust, strengthens community, and carries the vitalistic promise of chiropractic into the next generation.

STAYING THE COURSE
It's Not Always About the Vagus Nerve
By Chantal Traub

Chantal Traub, a birth educator and certified menopause and nervous system-informed coach, opens by noting that the vagus nerve has become something of a 'wellness celebrity' — on podcasts, in newspapers, and even from health practitioners, she keeps hearing misconceptions about its purpose, power, and limits. While the vagus nerve is genuinely important, she reminds us it is only one piece of a much larger system that shapes how we feel, heal, and respond to the world. Her central concern is that these misconceptions are snowballing, causing us to miss an essential understanding of how our bodies actually work.

Traub offers a clarifying reframe rooted in anatomy: the vagus nerve begins in the brainstem and travels only as far as the upper gut, stopping around the colon — it does not descend into the pelvis or innervate the pelvic floor or cervix, as some birth workers and even Mel Robbins on a recent Oprah podcast have claimed. Below that point, parasympathetic nerves to the pelvis arise from sacral nerves (S2-S4). She cautions against treating the vagus nerve 'like a light switch,' noting that 'vagal hacks' such as cold plunges, ear stimulation, and neck tapping can help but cannot replace the deeper factors — relationships, sleep, values, boundaries, and movement — that truly feed the whole nervous system.

The article closes with a warm invitation to 'befriend your nervous system,' a phrase Traub credits to therapist Deb Dana — to notice, understand, honor, and nurture the body's habitual responses. Drawing on Viktor Frankl's insight that between stimulus and response there is a space, she frames vagal techniques as a way to widen that pause rather than a cure-all. Whether in birth, menopause, or everyday stress, real change, she writes, 'doesn't come from trying to hack a single nerve, but from supporting the system that organizes the whole body' — tending consistently to sleep, relationships, nutrition, movement, and stress over time.

Questions for Consideration

- Traub invites us to 'befriend' our nervous system — to notice, honor, and nurture our body's habitual responses. Where do you sense you live most days: in high alert, in shutdown, or in a connected, settled state — and how does that show up in your body?
- The article describes how safe, supportive relationships strengthen safety cues more than any quick technique. Who or what — a person, an animal, a place — most reliably helps your nervous system feel safe, and how might you lean into that connection more often?
- Traub distinguishes between 'vagal hacks' that offer a brief boost and the deeper work of nourishing sleep, movement, and relationships over time. Which sustaining habit has quietly shaped how you feel and function — and which one is asking for more of your attention right now?

- Frankl wrote that between stimulus and response there is a space. Can you recall a recent moment when you widened that pause — even for a breath — before responding, and what did that space make possible for you and your family?

The Chiropractic Connection

Traub places the entire nervous system — not any single nerve — at the center of how we feel, heal, and respond to the world, describing it as 'the body's master organizer' that shapes how we breathe, move, digest, and feel emotions long before the conscious mind weighs in. This is precisely the terrain of chiropractic care. By locating and removing subluxation, the adjustment restores clearer communication along the spine and nervous system, supporting the very state of safety, rhythm, and regulation Traub says matters more than any isolated hack. When the nervous system is unobstructed, the body's innate intelligence can organize healing from above-down, inside-out — reorganizing reflexive patterns, easing protective tension, and opening space for rest and repair.

Chiropractors can use this article to move the conversation with families beyond symptom relief and toward whole-system wellbeing. Just as Traub urges parents not to chase a last-minute fix but to cultivate a nervous system that feels safe and connected over time, chiropractic care invites patients to see the adjustment as ongoing support for their body's capacity to self-regulate — through pregnancy, menopause, stress, and every life transition. Framing care this way helps parents understand that the goal is not merely the absence of discomfort but the full expression of innate intelligence, and it deepens the trust and education that build a thriving, informed practice community.

LIVING THE JOURNEY

The Mother Heart

By Ashley Elmer, D.C.

Ashley Elmer, a chiropractor, postpartum doula, and meditation guide, opens by naming the tender passage of matrescence — the transition to motherhood — and how easily we lose touch with our center within it. Her central invitation is simple and profound: to ease this transition, it helps to return to the heart. She recalls the early days of motherhood, when everything felt raw and new and things didn't go as planned, and how placing a hand on her heart returned her to breath, to trust, to presence. The outer world hadn't changed, but her perception of it had.

Drawing on Nischala Joy Devi's 'The Secret Power of Yoga' and its heart-centered reading of the Yoga Sutras, Elmer frames the heart as not only physical but the seat of love, wisdom, and divine connection. She weaves this ancient wisdom together with recent science: the heart generates the body's most powerful electromagnetic field, even stronger than the brain's, and research from the HeartMath Institute suggests that in more coherent states these rhythms grow ordered and stable. Feelings like gratitude, love, and appreciation create smooth, harmonious rhythms she calls coherence — a state where heart and nervous system sync, energy flows, and children and animals often feel our state before we say a word.

Elmer closes with a gentle, embodied practice: ground into the breath, bring awareness to the space of the heart — hridaya, the spiritual heart — and invite a feeling of love, gratitude, or appreciation to arise and grow. She frames the work as 'awareness and return,' noticing coherence without judgment when it fades and coming home again. Each time we return, she writes, we replenish rather than deplete, strengthening what nourishes us and those we love, and trusting the inner knowing that guides us through motherhood. Her final word is an encouragement to every parent: the heart is home.

Questions for Consideration

- Elmer describes placing a hand on her heart in the raw early days of motherhood and feeling herself return to breath and trust — can you recall a moment when the outer situation hadn't changed, but your perception of it softened once you paused?
- The article names coherence as the harmonious rhythm that arises with gratitude, love, and appreciation — what memory, image, or simple intention reliably invites that feeling in you, and how might you return to it more often?
- Elmer writes that our children and babies often attune to our inner state, feeling it before we say a word — how does noticing this shift the way you tend to your own nervous system in their presence?

- She calls the practice simply 'awareness and return' — where in your day could you gently come back to the heart, perhaps with a baby on your chest or a toddler at your feet, without judging yourself when coherence fades?

The Chiropractic Connection

Elmer places the heart and nervous system at the center of how we experience motherhood — describing coherence as a state in which the heart, brain, and body move together in harmony, and naming chiropractic care among the practices that make that coherence more available. This aligns precisely with the vitalistic understanding of chiropractic: the body is designed to self-regulate and heal from above-down, inside-out, when the nervous system is free of interference. By removing subluxation and restoring full neurological integrity, adjustments support the very capacity Elmer describes — a body that can settle into balance, replenish rather than deplete, and express its innate intelligence more fully.

Chiropractors can use this article to open a wider conversation with mothers and families about what nervous system care truly makes possible. The goal of the adjustment is not merely the absence of pain but the full expression of innate intelligence through an unobstructed nervous system — the physiological ground on which presence, intuition, and resilience are built. Sharing Elmer's heart-centered practice invites parents to see their care as part of a whole-person path, one that steadies their inner state and, in turn, nurtures the children who attune to it. Educating families this way deepens trust, honors the mother's journey through matrescence, and strengthens the practice and its community.

LIVING THE JOURNEY

The Power of the Adjustment for Mom and Baby

By Brenda Trudell, D.C.

Brenda Trudell, a Perinatal and Webster Certified chiropractor with 20 years of practice near Madison, Wisconsin, opens by honoring the trust woven into the birthing community she serves — the midwives, OBs, doulas, and lactation consultants who refer their expecting mamas to her. She does not take a referral lightly. From that place of trust she tells the story of Connie, a longtime patient whom she had adjusted through previous pregnancies, who called her clinic frantically in April 2020, in the thick of COVID lockdowns, when a routine appointment revealed something that threatened the birth she had planned.

At 33 weeks and planning a second homebirth, Connie learned her baby was transverse — lying sideways across her abdomen rather than head down — which meant a likely C-section and the loss of her homebirth. Trudell traces the cause back to January, when Connie slipped on the ice, did 'the splits,' and fell on her right hip; the resulting imbalances in her pelvis, sacrum, and hips left 'less space' for the growing baby to turn. Using the Webster Technique, Trudell adjusted the pelvis, sacrum, hips, lumbar spine, and pubic symphysis and released the round and sacral ligaments. By the third visit, just six days after the first, the baby was head down.

Connie continued regular care to hold the alignment, and delivered naturally at home at 40 weeks, with less low back and hip pain along the way. Trudell closes by insisting that prenatal chiropractic is 'so much bigger' than pain relief — it empowers trust in women's bodies, supports the birth they desire, and can spare a mother a major surgery and a frightening hospital stay away from her family. Even after 20 years she still gets excited when a new pregnant patient calls, and her hope is that every mama-to-be has access to a Webster Certified chiropractor and chooses the power of prenatal chiropractic.

Questions for Consideration

- Trudell describes the deep trust that flows through a birth team — from midwife to chiropractor to mother. Who are the people you would want on your birth team, and what does it feel like in your body to know you are held by them?
- Connie's transverse baby traced back to a fall months earlier that seemed minor at the time. Can you think of a moment when your body carried something you had brushed aside — and what might it look like to listen to it more closely now?
- The article shows a baby turning head down once space and alignment were restored, rather than being forced. Where in your own life might things move more easily if you created space and balance instead of pushing?

- Trudell says the gifts of prenatal chiropractic are often 'not always in obvious ways that can be measured.' How do you notice the quieter, unmeasurable shifts in your own wellbeing — and how do you learn to trust them?

The Chiropractic Connection

Connie's story is a vivid picture of what chiropractic actually restores: not a symptom relieved, but a body freed to do its own intelligent work. When the imbalances in her pelvis, sacrum, and hips locked her into a distorted position, there was simply 'less space' for the baby to find his way head down. Through the Webster Technique, Trudell removed the interference — adjusting the misaligned segments and releasing the tightened ligaments — and the innate intelligence of both mother and baby did the rest. This is the vitalistic heart of chiropractic: the nervous system, spine, and pelvis in balance allow life to organize itself from above-down, inside-out, and the baby turned not because he was forced but because he was finally free to move.

Chiropractors can use this article to open a much wider conversation with expecting parents than 'we help with back pain in pregnancy.' It invites mothers to see prenatal care as support for the birth they long for — for space, alignment, and trust in their own bodies — and reframes an adjustment as a gift to both mom and baby that ripples into an easier delivery and postpartum recovery. Sharing stories like Connie's builds the kind of educated, empowered community Trudell describes, where families understand that the goal is the full expression of health, and where a Webster Certified chiropractor is welcomed as an honored part of the birth team.