

References

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Retracing— Your Body's Memory



What Is Retracing?

The phenomenon of retracing is occasionally experienced by chiropractic patients as they heal. What is retracing? It is the re-experiencing or reawakening of old symptoms, including pain, memories and even emotions for more complete healing. Even though these experiences are part of the healing process and thus good for you they may cause you unnecessary concern. To better understand retracing, here are some common examples:

Retracing is a phenomenon of healing usually associated with **expressive** or **vitalistic** healing arts.



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1. A patient is responding to chiropractic care but suddenly the original symptoms return to disappear within a short time and they feel they are “back to square one.”

2. While resting after an adjustment a patient experiences intense feelings of lightness and happiness; as a result he/she may begin to laugh uncontrollably. Just as amazingly the reverse may occur and the patient may begin to cry.

3. After a chiropractic adjustment a patient briefly reexperiences an automobile accident or other trauma and may be suddenly filled with fear and confusion in addition to experiencing physical pain.

4. A person receives a chiropractic adjustment and breaks out in a rash, or develops diarrhea, vomits or develops a (usually short-lived) fever.

Retracing may not only surface as a conscious memory. Sometimes old “energy” is released in dreams. Chiropractic patients have at times noticed that for a time their dreams may be unusual, intense or revealing after a chiropractic adjustment.

Retracing Is Real

Don't think of retracing as being imaginary or unreal. Retracing experiences are very real and can be both physically and emotionally quite intense.

In such instances it's often difficult to see the experience as part of the healing process. Patients going



Retracing appears to be a part of the healing process.

through a particularly intense retracing may feel as if they've had a serious relapse or are perhaps even getting worse! If that happens to you it is especially important for you to inform us. That is because although retracing usually passes relatively quickly, patients have been known to terminate their care as a result of it. Such patients are likely cheating themselves of complete recovery.

Retracing in Other Healing Arts

The phenomenon of retracing has long been recognized by the chiropractic profession¹ and other healing arts.

For example, CranioSacral™ therapy, developed by John Upledger, a doctor of osteopathy, uses the terms “unwinding” and “somato-emotional release” to describe this phenomenon. As Dr. Upledger writes: “From our experience, it would seem that body tissues possess a memory. When an injuring force occurs, the tissue which receives the force is changed. Perhaps it retains the energy of impact. The human body then either dissipates that energy and returns to normal; or the body somehow localizes the impact energy and walls it off, much as it

walls off the tubercle bacillus during the inactive state of the disease. After the energy of the injury has been effectively isolated, the body adapts to this area. Energy (electrical, magnetic, prana, Qi or your own personal preference) is then forced to move around this area rather than through it.... When the original injury is discovered, the repressed emotional components of the somatic injury frequently and concurrently release.”²

Homeopathy

Homeopathy has codified the observations of Constantine Hering, a homeopathic researcher, as Hering's Law or “The Law of Cure.” Retracing occurs (a) from interior to exterior; (b) from the most vital to the least vital organs; and (c) in reverse order from that in which the symptoms appeared.³ According to homeopaths, without retracing, there is no true healing.

Practitioners of many different forms of bodywork, including Rolfing, shiatsu and massage therapy, have long noticed their clients experiencing “flashbacks” as they release energy long trapped in their bodies.

In retracing the body
rebalances energies
and posture and **releases**
old stresses.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapists have also noticed “retracing” calling it progressive abreactive regression or PAR.⁴ It is considered a phase one goes through as part of the movement toward healing and wholeness. As

the individual “moves out to new behaviors and accomplishments...[he/she] turns inward to experience fears and dysfunctional programs that need to be worked out.”⁵ PAR appears normally in human affairs as a part of growth at all levels. An example of a person experiencing PAR is one who gets a long-deserved promotion and begins to be troubled by feelings of incompetence. Or an artist who is suddenly recognized and instead of finding exhilaration, becomes depressed.

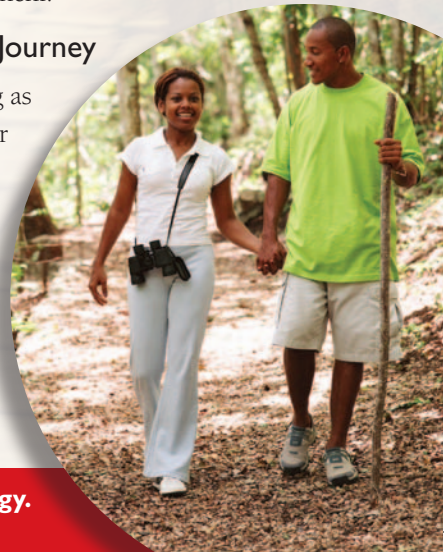
Retracing & Medicine?

Retracing seems to occur with healing systems that permit the body to express itself as it detoxifies, releases old energies and restores and rebalances posture. Retracing seems uncommon in standard medical practice. This may be because the tendency of medicine is to suppress disease and mask symptoms. This may be dangerous. For example, Chinese medicine says the skin, bronchi and lungs are related because they help the body to breathe.

If a skin condition is suppressed, according to the theory, it may go deeper and affect the lungs and bronchi. It has been observed that infants suffering from eczema who were treated with cortisone may develop asthma later in life. Cortisone apparently suppressed the skin symptoms, driving them into the lungs and bronchi.

Observe Your Journey

Look for retracing as you continue your life's journey and always keep your mind and heart open to life's mysteries.



Your body tissues can store energy associated with memories of trauma and pain. Chiropractic helps release that energy.