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Chiropractor
of the
Year **Dr. Gilles
Lamarche**

2006
Buyers'
Guide

Canadian Chiropractor Magazine's Independent Chiropractor of the Year

Dr. Gilles Lamarche

Chosen by readers to receive Canadian Chiropractor magazine's annual award, Dr. Gilles Lamarche observes, "In the challenge always lies an opportunity."



At age 12, Gilles Lamarche, DC, knew that he wanted to be a chiropractor. For the past quarter-century, he has been bringing chiropractic to the people, seeking out every opportunity to share the health benefits offered by his profession.

With statistics showing that fewer than 12 per cent of North Americans have utilized chiropractic, he is on a sort of 24/7 lecture tour that may find him explaining to a curious airport limousine driver what it is that chiropractors do. "Why should chiropractic be a secret in health care?" he questions, and thus it has become his mission to better equip chiropractors to educate the public. From his perspective, it is in the public interest to make chiropractic accessible to all, an attitude he carries into his regulatory role as vice-president of the executive committee of the Council of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.

Wearing yet another hat as a certified personal development coach, he can be found assisting practitioners through a series of exercises that help to clarify their sense of purpose, in the process revealing thinking patterns that are positive, as well as those that sabotage. "It's about the purpose you have for rendering the service you are rendering. Are you serving the person who is in front of you?" he asks. "Money is simply a byproduct of the service rendered."

Ironically, he points out that taking charge of one's life relates to governing one's own emotions while actually relinquishing control, letting the ego get out of the way, so that wonders can sometimes be revealed. "I don't believe that double-blind clinical trials will prove chiropractic," he says. "What we see and



Dr. Gilles Lamarche (right) was photographed in Las Vegas with Dr. Stephen Covey (left), author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

experience with patients, whatever it is that gets them well – whether it's the adjustment, the intention of the chiropractor, or the power of just touching someone, and watching bodies heal because of it – all I know is that there are some astounding results that occur in chiropractic offices all over the globe. In my opinion, those results prove that chiropractic works." His paradigm of care encompasses the whole person and not just the symptom.

"I always work at seeing the best in everyone I meet," says Lamarche, that way staying open to a world full of tremendous possibilities.

The story traces back a number of years to Timmins, Ontario, where his 78-pound mother endured a difficult forceps delivery in order to give life to her nine-pound baby boy. Somewhat unwell as a child, Lamarche has a very early memory of lying cold and naked on an X-ray table while a medical team tried to determine the cause of a digestive dysfunction. This image is juxtaposed against later recollections of how kindly he was taken care of by his first chiropractor, Dr. Ronald Ingard, subsequent to being injured at school. "When I'm big, I'll be a chiropractor, too," he told that man, who he would encounter again in 1975 at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, during his first year of studies.

A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

As a student attendee at Parker Seminars, Lamarche found in Dr. Jim

Parker a source of inspiration. The Parker Principles focus on chiropractic's wellness aspects, which Lamarche successfully applied to private practice in northern Ontario, where to this day he still maintains his primary residence. Starting out in Hearst, a town with a population of about 5,000, he eventually moved south to Timmins, where he built a large practice in which many of his patients stayed with him for 20 years. He also established two rehabilitation and fitness centres there, and was active in community affairs.

At Lamarche's clinic, the emphasis was on exceptional customer service and patient care, from the inviting and spotless surroundings, to the crispness of office procedures. A patient-centred approach, he says, requires more than just having competent diagnostic and clinical skills, but requires that you treat people the way you would like to be treated yourself. It also requires being in what he calls "present-time consciousness" (PTC), intellectually connecting with the individual by reviewing their file before entering the treatment room, and then immediately reaching out physically through touch and eye contact. "When patients feel that you have listened to them, and you truly have, and you've taken the notes, and you've conducted your exam accordingly, they, in turn, are more likely to listen to what you have to say when you are ready to provide them with your report of findings," he says. "It's being conscious of what you're doing while

you are doing it, and that allows you to have a very deep connection with patients, and you don't have to tell them any of that," says Lamarche. "They feel it; they know that there is something different about you, that finally they found somebody who understands."

Last spring, Lamarche made a decision to concentrate on his speaking, writing, and coaching, which has resulted in establishing a second residence in Montreal, and spending half of his time on the road. Never known to turn down a speaking invitation, he travels widely, for instance to grace the Parker Seminars podium in various locations. "I truly see no borders in chiropractic," he adds. Blessed with the gift of gab as a child, his introduction to the unpaid speaking engagement was his first communion at church. Since then, Lamarche has put in the sweat equity to develop himself as an articulate and enlivened presenter, as well as a prolific author. His new book, *Chiropractic: The Wellness Paradigm*, is designed for doctors to give to their patients. It will be translated into French, which is Lamarche's mother tongue.

Though the journey thus far has not been without some struggle, such as the fracturing of four ribs in a fall from a ladder earlier this year, Lamarche takes the philosophical stance: "In the challenge always lies an opportunity. There are no mistakes; there are only lessons to be learned."

There is a marked lightheartedness in Lamarche's approach, both to living and to chiropractic. "If you can't have fun doing it, you're doing it wrong," he says. "There is a better way."•

WHAT IF ...

"What if ... we treat each new patient and each new day as a cause for celebration?"

and

"What if ... we start splashing through life's mud puddles instead of tiptoeing around them?"

*From the poem, What if ... ,
by Dr. Gilles Lamarche,
found in full on his website,
www.gilleslamarche.com.*