

The Case of the Disappearing Scoliosis

 Katy's appointment for CranioSacral Therapy was a desperate last stop before undergoing surgery for severe juvenile-onset scoliosis.

At age fourteen, her life had changed dramatically. Once a very active and athletic young lady, she'd given up both gymnastics and soccer over the past year. Her painful back muscles would no longer allow for agile movement. More recently, severe headaches were affecting her schoolwork. Once a top student, she could no longer visually focus or concentrate for any length of time because her head always hurt.

Katy's pediatric orthopedist had given up on the noninvasive options. He'd had her in a back brace and physical therapy, but nothing seemed to slow down her increasing scoliotic curve. He told Katy and her parents that surgery was the only answer.

The plan was to fuse vertebrae. According to the doctor, the result would be less pain, though it was unlikely that the young girl would be able to return to her former sports—certainly not gymnastics.

Arriving at my office, Katy's mom seemed rushed and distracted. She and Katy's father were going through a divorce. Her plan was to have her soon-to-be ex-husband pick up their daughter after the appointment so that he'd be forced to pay for the treatment. Mom dashed out the door, and Katy was left with me, a total stranger, hoping to help her.

Amazingly, this girl, who seemed so small and fragile, lay down on my table and appeared incredibly serene. I was impressed. Her faith in this process, of which she knew next to nothing, was palpable.

Looking back, all I recall doing was supporting her spine in a dural tube hold, one hand under her sacrum, the other under her head. I may have moved my hands slightly during the session, per-

haps a bit more toward her mid-back. Mostly I just sat still and held her. Time passed, and Katy's entire back began to feel like melting wax. It warmed and liquefied, and suddenly I felt like my hands were floating in water. Katy opened her eyes and said quietly, "Wow, something weird is happening."

One week later, Katy arrived at my office with news. "I feel completely different," she told me. Her headaches were gone and her energy had returned. Out of curiosity, I asked her if she would mind bending forward slightly so that I could assess the curvature of her spine. It was completely straight! I was amazed. I checked again. Still straight.

We did the second session as planned, but nothing dramatic happened, and that was fine. We both agreed it felt like a confirmation of the changes her body had achieved the week before. After the session, Katy and I went eagerly out to the waiting room to report to her dad that her spine looked and felt straight. Her father looked doubtful. He paid me and said he'd let her mother know.

The following day I spoke to Katy's mother by phone; she sounded tired and almost disinterested. She told me that Katy would be going back to the orthopedist soon; he would decide what to do. Weeks went by and I heard nothing.

Finally, the call came from Katy's mom. She was ecstatic! The doctor had taken X-rays of Katy's spine and was dumbfounded. He told them that if he didn't know absolutely that the X-rays were from the same girl, he never would have believed it. Her spine was normal.

Needless to say, the surgery was canceled. I saw Katy about once a year after that, until she went away to college. When we last spoke, she told me that a chiropractic adjustment every so often was all she needed to stay healthy and pain-free.

I never heard from her orthopedist.

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