

In this episode of The Well Connected Podcast, Dr. Elizabeth Hoefer takes us back to where it all started. Before the packed schedule, the awards, and the 20-person team, there was a 19-year-old single mom in Davenport, Iowa who wanted to be on Broadway and ended up working the front desk at Palmer College for $6.19 an hour. What happened between that job and becoming one of the most recognized upper cervical chiropractors in the world is a story worth hearing. Dr. Hoefer shares the personal health experience that changed everything, why she believes she was always addicted to nervous system regulation, and what she wants anyone who's ever had a bad experience with chiropractic to know. Pull up a chair.

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I Had A Kid At 19 And Became A Doctor Anyway

On Broadway Dreams, Blair Chiropractic, And Why 18 Years In, I Still Can't Imagine Doing Anything Else

Hi everybody, long time no see. In fact, this is my first show where you get to see me. I started a show many moons ago and I took a pretty big hiatus. I'm excited to be back with the show, with your host, Elizabeth Hoefer. I'm excited to be back with the show. I'm excited to do some cool stuff, share my story and reinvigorate the passion behind why we do what we do.

We're going to talk about why you became a chiropractor. Do you want to talk about that?

I became a chiropractor because I got a job working at Palmer College of Chiropractic part-time in the year 2001, making an incredible $16.19 an hour. I worked at night. My friend's mom, who I continuously give love and adoration to, her name is Kim Hutchison. She was the staff director of the main clinic. She slipped my application into the pile and said, "You should apply for this job." I worked part-time at the clinic and started to learn and love what chiropractic is.

$6.19 An Hour And A Front Row Seat To Miracles

Having grown up in Davenport, Iowa, getting chiropractic care in my life, whether it be for the sports that I played in high school or the little fender benders that I got into as a young adult. Being in the clinic as a staff member and having access to watching the miracles occur from the student doctors and the staff clinicians at Palmer College main clinic. It was a curious thing to observe. I was interested in learning more. I wanted to know why, how, and how to come. I enrolled into the associate's program because when I was 21 years old, I didn't have a lot of champions in my life excited to encourage me to do anything higher education.

I had a kid already. I had my first child when I was nineteen years old. I looked at life like I'm getting by. When I started getting regular chiropractic care, I started seeing the miracles that were happening from student doctors at the main clinic in Davenport, Iowa. I was like, "There's got to be something more to this." I was like, "Maybe I could just be the assistant." I enrolled in the Chiropractic technology degree. They offered that at the time and it was a two-year program.

I was instantly fascinated with all things Anatomy and Physiology. Halfway through that program, I realized, "I want to know more and I don't want to just be the assistant." I know it's hard to believe but me taking instruction from someone is a little hard to do. When I started to recognize how passionate I was about learning and why things work the way they do and connecting it to all the different aspects of life. I was living and the lives of my friends were living. I was like, "There's more."

There have been some amazing students at the college. They encouraged me to consider becoming a chiropractor. They said, "Liz, you have the gift of Gab," and I couldn't disagree. They also said, "You just have the passion for this and you believe in this." I was like, "Okay." I was notably scared of the student loan debt and the boards and all of the things that I saw those students struggling with and that stage of their career as a student.

At the same time, I had a little girl that I needed to support. I knew making $16.19 an hour wasn't going to cut it for the rest of my life. I did the CT program. Halfway through that, I started recognizing I needed to continue my education, so I started taking all of the undergrad classes that you needed to take to qualify to enroll in the Doctor of Chiropractic program. It was a beautiful thing because as I

progressed through my education, I began to become more confident and become the doctor that I knew that I could be.

Tweet: As I progressed through my education, I began to become more confident and become the doctor that I knew I could be.

In November of 2004, I enrolled in the Doctor of Chiropractic program. I remember looking at the calendar. I know it's weird to think about, but we used to have these things called calendar books. We would open them up and you would write with a pen on them. Now, everything is digital and you just type something into this little computer in our hand. I circled the date October 24th, 2008, on that calendar, looking ahead for years, and I was like, "This is the day I become a doctor."

I had no idea what was going to come between that day, November 2004 to 2008, but I knew that I had to do something for me and Lauren. The next few years were an incredible ride. I had so many ups and downs, but I was so determined to get to that day and walk across that stage as a doctor. It was an incredible experience.

You mentioned before that you had a personal health experience that cemented everything for you. Can you talk about all of it?

There's several shows out there. In fact, I'm going to shout out my buddy, Dr. Kevin Pecca. He was my first intern. He has an incredible show called Expect Miracles. I think I've been on his show 3 or 4 times. I will tell my story here, but I will give an abbreviated version here. Essentially, I suffered for many years with depression, anxiety, and even to the depths of suicidal ideology. When I was in my last year of chiropractic school, I was spiraling again. The mounting pressure of trying to have it figured out and learning how I was going to open a business and practice chiropractic started to add up for me.

The Blair Correction That Changed Everything

It was in theory, always an amazing dream and something that was so achievable. When the rubber hit the road and I had to start doing things to make that a reality, I had no skill set and I was freaking out. A year before I graduated, I was spiraling back into dark places. I had a dear friend, Jackie Newhouse, who at the time was my best support and my best friend in chiropractic school. She basically gave me an ultimatum and said, "If you don't try Blair Upper Cervical Chiropractic, I don't want to hear from you again." She was kind of serious. I don't think she would have truly caught me off. but she didn't want to hear about my depression, my sadness, my anxiety and my fear because she just knew that I hadn't tried it all.

I've grown up in the Quad Cities. I knew what Chiropractic was, supposedly. I was even skeptical and I made fun of the upper cervical doctors because they walked around campus with this air of, "I know what I'm talking about. I know everything." The funny thing is, they do. Now that I am an upper cervical doctor, I have confidence, too. It's like, when you know, you know. If you don't know, you should know. I got under the Blair upper cervical care at the clinic and it instantly changed my life. My Blair correction was on October 27th, 2007. Literally, one year before I graduated from Chiropractic College.

The correction was so impactful. Instantly, the sounds and the room were clear. The colors in the room were brighter. I had this sense of hope that I had literally never experienced in my life. I knew at that

moment that I had to spend the rest of my life talking about Blair Chiropractic and telling the world that there is hope in this thing called upper cervical cancer. I immediately enrolled into the elective as a student. Typically, by the time you're in 8th trimester, you're pretty set on your technique. You know the direction you're heading. Likely, you're a legacy.

Tweet: The Blair correction was so impactful. Instantly, the sounds and the room were clear. The colors in the room were brighter.

You've had a grandparent or an uncle or an aunt that has been in practice for twenty years and you're getting ready to walk into an amazing clinic yourself. I didn't have any of that. I had this amazing experience and had no idea what was going to happen. I took the elective and it was a pretty remarkable thing. I feel like God downloaded me how to take care of people innately and how to understand these advanced concepts clearly.

What's interesting is having practiced for many years. I probably know less now than I thought I knew then, but that's the beauty of maturing and having wisdom. The more you know, the less you know. Confidence and my passion is what fueled me for the first few years. I'm sure there'll be another time where I can get into all that stuff. Having that correction was a moment of peripety and I went from one way to another way.

I am so grateful for that because it has led me to the most magical experience in my life. I always go back to that correction and that's why I'm so confident when I lay people on the table here in my office. I know without a shadow of a doubt that the correction that we're going to do for them is going to be life-changing. It's so neat to be able to watch them experience what I experienced, too.

The Diplomate And The Practice Growing At The Same Time

What made you decide to go back and get your diplomate?

The reason why this show has been on hiatus for a few years is because I opened Well Connected in May of 2019, and the exact same time I started this post-graduate diplomate program called the Diplomat of Craniocervical Junction Procedures. It was an endeavor to study more in-depth this specific area in our body right here where the head and neck come together. Anything having to do with neurology, physiology, structure, blood flow, cerebral spinal fluid flow. All of that is housed inside this incredible program.

We got a bonus year because of COVID and it was an immense journey of traveling at least one time a month for three years. Since we had to take a little pause during COVID, we got to have extended times where we would get together and do discourses online that didn't necessarily count towards our education, but fed our curiosity and our interest in these subjects. It was a huge undertaking financially, emotionally and physically. Thankfully, I had the support of my amazing husband and my kids because I was gone a lot.

Tweet: The beauty of maturing and having wisdom is the more you know, the less you know.

On top of that, I was growing this clinic, Well Connected. I had already been in practice for seven years when I started Well Connected. It was an incredible journey to have these two. I call them my twins. My practice and my education are happening at the same time. As I learned more, my clinical experience got better and my results skyrocketed. I was all of a sudden busy in the clinic and busy

studying this all the time. It was the most rewarding professional thing I've ever done, getting a diplomate.

I now have some of the richest relationships. My best friends are people in doctors that I met in this diplomate program that don't live anywhere near me but we stay connected. We have a little group we call the battery killers. It's because we were always on the phone and our batteries were always dead. It's a neat thing. I had the occasion to go study with the leading research scientists on cerebral spinal fluid flow. I was with all my diplomate friends and it is a program that continues to bless me professionally and personally.

How do you explain why the spine matters so much?

With the upper cervical work and why it matters so much is because this area of our body is where it's the most neurologically significant. It's where the brain stem exits our head in this little hole called the foramen magnum at the base of our skull. It's where the atlas and the axis have the least amount of, I don't even know if protection is the right word, but the most movement and the least protection. It's where everything comes together.

It's what drives everything else. Above, down, and inside out, there's this philosophy in chiropractic that talks about from above, down, and then inside out. That's how it goes. Our brain sends signals down our spinal cord out to every cell, organ, and system. From those things, it gets sent back up to the spinal cord through this neck area and into the brain. This is the place where it connects. If this is intact, everything's going to work right in theory. I say this all the time. Your structure dictates your function. If this is intact structurally, then you're going to have a lot better chance to have neurological optimization.

What I Got Wrong About Chiropractic, And What Most People Still Do

What are the most common things people get wrong about chiropractic in general?

Chiropractic is an amazing profession. A lot of times, people who are patients of mine, they're like, "You're not even a chiropractor. You're like something different." I'm proud to be a chiropractor. I'm proud to live by the philosophy that the power that makes the body heals the body, this innate intelligence that drives us and allows our body to heal. I tell people all the time, like if you get a paper cut, you don't have to go see a surgeon to have your finger heal. There's this innate wisdom inside of us that sends cells to that little cut. From the inside out, you get better.

Tweet: There's this innate wisdom inside of us that sends cells to that little cut. From the inside out, you get better.

Eventually, the scar is gone and you don't even remember you ever had a paper cut. Chiropractic bases itself on that philosophy that our bodies were designed to heal and be whole. We get to harness that power and that understanding and that neurology by making sure that the structure is intact. Whether it's your spine or your wrist, if you have carpal tunnel. Whatever it is. People get it wrong. I feel like I was being discriminated against because I'm not a real doctor.

I have these student loans to prove that I am a real doctor. We have licensures and we pass all these tests. People just don't understand the rigorous amount of education that we go through to procure our degree and the insane amount of testing. Also, the amount of continuing education that we have

to get every single year to obviously keep our clinical skills up and make sure that we're safe. It's a lot. People get wrong that we're not as educated as we are.

People get wrong that chiropractic is a luxury. Not an essential part of somebody's health. I have a bias because I did grow up where chiropractic was founded. A lot of people where I grew up saw chiropractor from birth because it was just a thing that you did. I can imagine that if I grew up in a dentist house, I probably would have flawless gums. I do take a little for granted the area in which I grew up in and the manner in which I grew up in that way, but it's not a luxury. It's essential. Your nervous system is what dictates everything about your health. If we can harness the health of your nervous system by making sure that your spine is in alignment, that's important.

The Broadway Singer Who Found A Different Stage

You talk about your profession now with such passion, but you also grew up given that people knew about chiropractor. Was there any part of you that resented that and wanted to do something else and something else was your passion before chiropractic care?

We talked a little bit about the fact that I didn't know that chiropractic was a viable career until I started working at the college. The truth is, I wanted to be a Broadway singer. I was in musical theater. I danced, sang and acted. I know you can't imagine how dramatic I was but I had this incredible gift of singing and I wanted to share it with the world. I had an amazing opportunity when I got pregnant when I was eighteen years old.

Everything about that dream changed because I knew I couldn't go to New York as a single mother. I knew that working in that industry wasn't going to be viable and raise a baby, so I let that dream go. When I look back at it as a big fat nerd and I understand why I loved singing so much. It was because my vagus nerve needed to be regulated. One of the ways that your vagus nerve is regulated is by singing, by humming and by making noises. I've always been addicted to nervous system regulation. I just didn't know it.

For someone reading who may have experience with chiropractic before who's on the fence with starting. What do you want to say to them directly?

I want to say that I have a fun story to tell you about that. People who have a bad taste in chiropractic, it's because they just haven't had the right chiropractor take care of them. Everybody has a vibe. Everybody connects with certain people. Maybe getting your neck manipulated isn't your jam. I've got a table for that. Maybe getting manipulated on a table isn't your jam, I got an instrument for that. There's always an option and a tool or a way to help your nervous system regulate through chiropractic care.

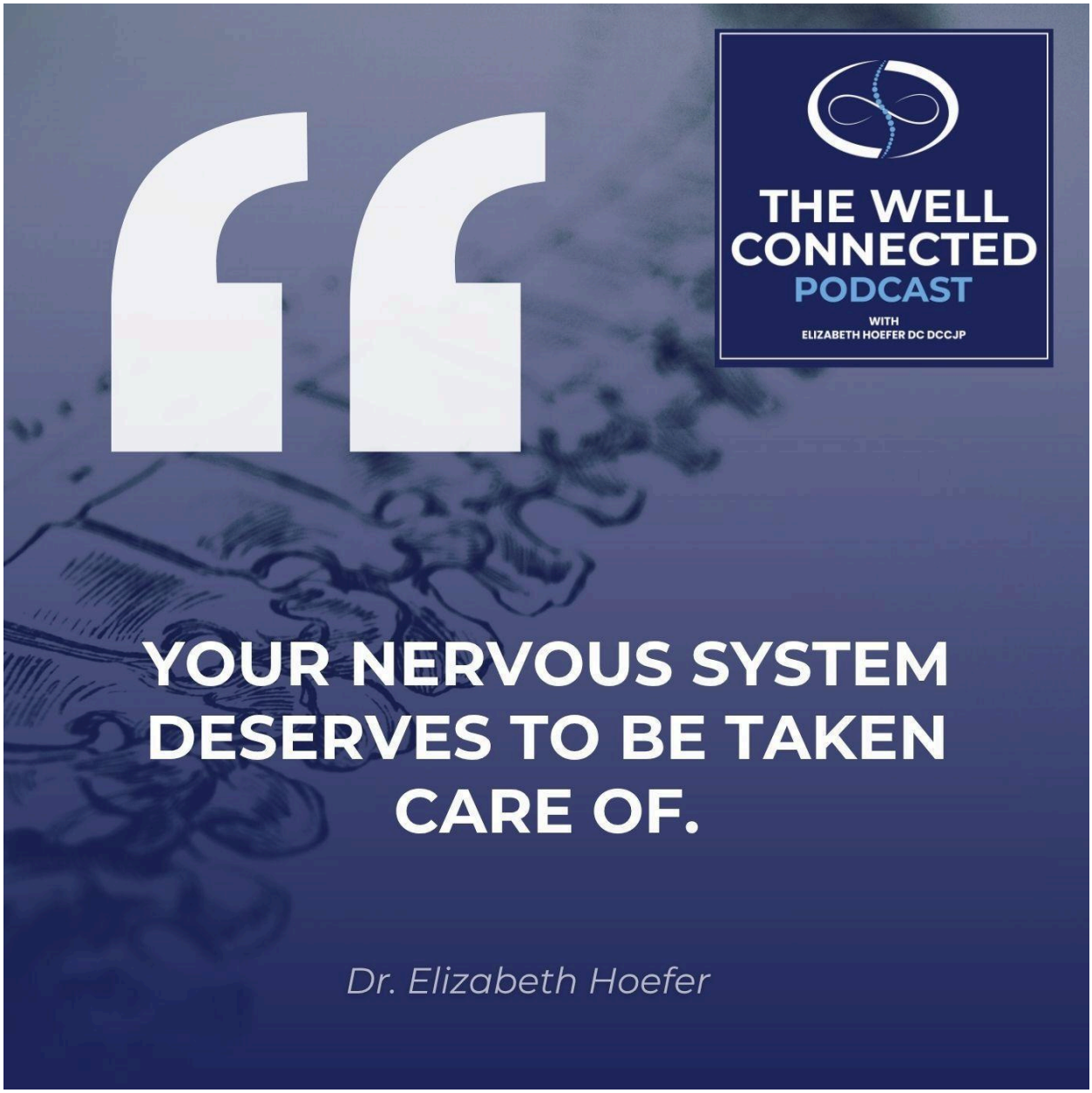
It's such an incredible field. There's so many applications in it. Maybe you just want to do nutrition. Maybe you just want to do breath work. It's a vast thing because the human experience is vast. I was at a networking event when I was early in my career. In fact I was pregnant with my middle daughter. There was a very famous professional baseball player that walked into this event. We were at this poker event where a very famous poker player was having this tournament to raise money.

I had no idea who the baseball player was. I very barely recognized who the poker player was and the boxer. I was there because I wanted people to know about Blair Chiropractic because to me, that was more famous and more important. Again, the innocence in the arrogance of my passion has led me

and protected me in many ways. I had the occasion to watch this man walk in and he was literally standing so crooked. His shoulders were diabolical opposed angles.

I walked up to him and I was like, “I think you should come over and let me measure your posture because I do this thing in chiropractic where I can get your head on straight. You could stand straight and I bet you it would improve your game.” He started yelling at me and telling me how ignorant I was and how a chiropractor bleep him up. I was like, “No offense, but if you ever gotten a bad haircut, you probably found a different barber. That's what this is.” He was like, “I don't want to hear about it.” I go, “It's your loss. Here's my brochure. You should look me up sometime.”

My husband was mortified because he was with me. He was like, “Do you even know who you were talking to?’ I was like, “I don't even care because he was rude to me. He's ignorant of the fact that this thing that we have is such an amazing gift to the world. He just didn't find the right fit.” What I have to say about finding or having a bad experience, is that try it again. Find your vibe. Find your fit, and you will be so grateful because your nervous system deserves to be taken care of.



Are You Sick And Tired Of Being Sick And Tired?

Give us your 30-second commercial that you do at a networking event? How do you get people to come and see you?

I haven't done networking events in a while. The 30 second elevator pitch is, are you experiencing anything that you don't like in your body? Do you have a headache? Does your back hurt? Are you exhausted at the end of the day? Are you grouchy with your spouse? All of that is determined by how healthy your nervous system is. What if I could show you a way that we could get your nervous system

regulated without having to spend a ton of money, waste a lot of your time and cost you more than you think it should?

People are like, "What are you talking about?" I show them the picture of a cone beam CT, which is what we take in our office. They've never seen anything like it. They've never seen their necks in three dimensions. For less than $300, you can have this same image taken. I can engineer a specific correction that doesn't twist, pop or crack your neck. They're like, "Tell me more." It's through inviting them into understanding their own physiology and getting rid of their symptoms that makes all the difference.

Would you invite people to see you?

Are you suffering? Are you sick and tired of being sick and tired? Do you want to have lasting hope for your health? It's possible. All you have to do is reach out to me at Well Connected and we can show you how we can get your head on straight with no twisting, popping or cracking and help you live your life in alignment.

Do you want to just give them a send off and say, "I'll see you in the next episode?"

Welcome back to the show. Thanks for joining me on this episode. We have so much more to say. I look forward to meeting you at my next episode where we can continue the story about why chiropractic and why this incredible journey. Pass it on to your friends if you're interested in learning more.

Important Links

- Dr. Elizabeth Hoefer on Instagram
- Well Connected Chiropractic
- Well Connected Chiropractic on YouTube
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- Dr. Kevin Pecca
- Expect Miracles Podcast