



MY STORY

ABOUT ME

Firstly, let me tell you a bit about myself. Up until September 2000, I was employed by Microsoft as its Technical Director for the Asia Pacific region. I resigned my position due to the effects of an illness I acquired (as described herein). I have been involved in the computer or technical related industries for over 30 years now. Apart from Microsoft, I worked with companies like Informix, Apple Computer, Texas Instruments and Pirelli-Ericsson. I am a bachelor degree-qualified Electrical Engineer, with a further post graduate degree in Finance and a Masters in Business Administration. I have worked for some innovative companies. These companies taught me a great deal and influenced my approach to doing business, challenging the status quo, asking questions, searching for answers and resolving complex problems. As a result of my technical background I have a keen understanding of computers, control systems and electronics. Much of what I have learnt in the past 30 years working with computers and control systems has an uncanny resemblance to my more recent learning of the workings of the human body, especially the nervous system.

I have always been actively involved in sport from an early age, playing it at representative levels and have never been overweight or had any medical problems to speak of. I have ridden surfboards for the majority of my life, played Rugby Union, Rugby League, Australian Rules, Touch Football, done Karate and participated in many other sports. Thus it was quite disturbing and almost unbelievable that when I needed help from doctors in relation to a condition I seemed to have acquired, that they would dismiss my condition as simply a 'normal' part of the aging process. It was this response from doctors and a lot of other 'rubbish' that would test my perseverance, resilience and patience and cause me to commence a journey of discovery. This journey would see me not only arriving at the end of my own suffering, but also allow me to help other people rid themselves of their pain and suffering.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME

It was 31st August 1997, the same day as Lady Diana was killed in Paris, and I was playing rugby union football in a Golden Oldies competition in the northern suburbs of Sydney. I was then 43 years of age. I have played rugby since I was 5 years old and never really been hurt. This day it was going to be different. I was tackled heavily, my head hit the ground and I was knocked out for between 3 and 5 minutes. After regaining consciousness and having been walked to the sideline, I was taken to hospital for a check-up. The conclusion, by the young intern, was that everything was OK. No X-rays, CT scans or MRI's were taken, no nothing! I was asked some general questions like: who is the leader of our country, what is the date today etc, followed by some very basic reflex checking. These tests are of course inadequate and totally primitive for the human body. The head injury procedure carried out by some hospitals is in my opinion seriously lacking. Nothing I have discovered since my incident has changed my opinion on this subject whatsoever.

The next few days I recovered at home, with only a blackened right cheekbone and bloodshot right eye to show for my troubles, or so I thought. The problems that I

was to experience were not apparent immediately after the accident. It wasn't until a few months post the injury, which is frequently the case with this type of incident that my life started to change. Imagine the problem some people have trying to connect a head injury 5 or 10 years earlier to an illness they have now. This is an all too common occurrence.

THE NIGHTMARE BEGINS

For three months following this head injury I felt quite fine. I had remarked to my GP that my neck did not feel quite right, although I had no pain and no restriction. I did however have some crunching noises when moving my head from side to side. The noises appeared to be coming from behind my nose. It was about three months to the day after the football game incident that I started experiencing symptoms. At first they were minor and annoying but then they progressed quite rapidly and became quite frightening.

The following lists the symptoms and other signs that I began to experience. They are listed roughly in order of occurrence although some were concurrent and some would come and go regularly.

1. A strange pulling sensation to my right shoulder. This was almost like someone was holding me back by the right shoulder. I was being pulled backwards to the right and had trouble maintaining balance. Walking up hills or slopes became a real chore, with gravity having a significant affect on me.
2. One week later, tinnitus (ear noises) started in my left ear. The sounds appeared to get worse depending on my neck position. Soon after this, tinnitus started in my right ear. At first the sounds were not too loud, however they soon became much louder. I say sound(s) because I seemed to have multiple types of sounds.
3. A strange buzzing sensation in my head began to affect me when I tried to sleep. If I placed my head to the left on my pillow my whole head would buzz and wake me immediately. This was so weird, that explaining it is somewhat difficult.
4. My tongue and the left corner of my mouth started to burn.
5. I started to experience left facial numbness. It progressed and I experienced numbness to my whole left side. On occasions I would wake and be completely numb down my left side, arm, leg, foot and torso. Needless to say this was frightening.
6. I would experience intermittently, what I can only describe as pressure to the roof of my mouth. You would get the same feeling if you took both your thumbs and put them inside your mouth and pressed firmly up against the roof of your mouth.
7. On other occasions it would feel like my whole skull was freezing.
8. I began to experience vision distortions, like sensitivity to light and difficulty seeing especially at dusk. My vision became filled with what are known as floaters.

9. Breathing difficulties began and intermittently affected me. It would seem that my breathing would just stop randomly, but momentarily. This is nothing like doctors describe as anxiety, which I was accused of having.
10. My speech was becoming slurred, and I found it difficult to get my tongue around certain phrases. This wasn't a major problem but the fact was I had never experienced this before.
11. I also experienced what I would call memory lapses. I couldn't remember even the simplest names of things e.g. wheelbarrow, shovel. How come I couldn't remember the name of these things?
12. Soon I had difficulty swallowing. Even water was a problem, although easier than food.
13. My arms and legs felt very heavy, like I had concrete dangling from each limb.
14. I had difficulty coordinating fingers when typing and writing. The computer keyboard was becoming more difficult to handle.
15. An eye twitch started in my right eye. This would on some days be there all day, and on others only for part of the day. One doctor had delight in telling me he had one and I was to watch his eye, so I could see it happen. As if to make it normal!
16. I started to get leg twitches and tremors down my left leg. It appeared to be somewhat similar to what I had read about Parkinson's disease. I would stand up and my leg would shake of its own accord. My electronics background makes me think this is overshoot of the electrical impulse to the muscles.
17. My fingers and toes tingled and periodically I would get pins and needles throughout my hands and feet.
18. I had clicking sounds from the left area under my skull when moving my head.
19. I had a sensation of something stuck to the bottom of my left foot. It was like a piece of cardboard was stuck there.
20. On many occasions, especially after eating, I would experience tingling all over, like I had ants crawling over my body.
21. I could hear squelching sounds in my right ear when eating. When I put my fingers in my ear canal, I would hear a sound, like you would hear when using a wet sponge or flannel to clean your ears.
22. I had a feeling of fullness or blockage in the left ear, and experience sounds like crumpling a newspaper near my ear if I moved my jaw.
23. I experienced ground-moving sensations several times a day. The ground would seem to escape me. Sometimes opening a car door, the whole car seemed to move. I would usually experience some nausea at this time.

24. Upon visiting an ENT specialist I was told I had left ear hearing loss, although the frequency at which I had trouble hearing was more likely the same frequency as my tinnitus. My left ear was also very sensitive to any loud noises.
25. I could hear crunching sounds behind my nasal cavity when I moved my neck in a 'NO' action.
26. My right trapezius muscle, the shoulder part, was now lower (wasted) than my left and the sternocleidomastoid muscle or SCM (main neck muscle) seemed wasted also, as well as the deeper scalene muscles appeared much smaller on the right side of my neck.
27. This right trapezius muscle was excruciatingly painful during and after eating. The very act of eating now made me quite ill.
28. I felt light-headed and dizzy on many occasions, especially during and after eating.
29. My left foot would often feel extremely cold.
30. My left little toe would go bright red whenever I put my neck in a certain position.
31. I noticed that I had right head tilt and my chin was rotated to left. I have since found that doctors call this the 'cock robin' position.
32. I had pain in every thoracic vertebra. My whole back was now painful but mainly around the shoulder blades and at my sacrum.
33. I began to get knee pain and they would click quite loudly.
34. I frequently sprained my right ankle.
35. I had this horrible sensation that my whole body was twisted and that I was walking sideways like a crab.
36. It was often painful to have any clothing touching my skin.
37. I had jaw joint noises, squelching and clicking sounds.
38. My blood pressure dropped to 70/50 lying down but would come back to normal when sitting up. I also experienced horrible sensations whilst lying down. This could be replicated monotonously. No doctors would believe me; one even indicated that low blood pressure was nothing to worry about!
39. My feet hurt badly and buzzed regularly. They didn't buzz with my heartbeat, but had their own regular pattern. Testing by a doctor by scraping an implement along the bottom of my foot resulted in no discernable response. She thought I was somehow faking the non-response.

I had none of the above symptoms or conditions prior to my head injury. Nobody can make me believe that this is to be expected as part of the normal aging process. Yet that is exactly what I was being told!

In my quest for relief, and to find out what was wrong with me, I saw numerous doctors, dentists, orthopaedic surgeons, neurosurgeons, otologists, neurologists, osteopaths, physiotherapists and otolaryngologists. They ordered brain (many on my insistence!) scans (MRIs,CTs), cervical spine scans (x-rays, CTs, MRIs),TMJ MRIs, blood tests, ECGs, EMGs, ultrasounds (liver, spleen, pancreas, kidneys), doppler carotids - ALL came back clear (apart from some minor disc bulges at C3-4, C4-5 and C5-6) and I was told that there was nothing wrong with me. The responses ranged from "learn to live with it", "you're getting old", "it's in your mind" to "take these" - [being a referral to anti-depressant and anti-inflammatory drugs]. When I now look at those images, subluxations between my skull and atlas and my atlas and axis are very, very evident.

Believe it or not, many of the above symptoms became worse in severity as time went on until I was bedridden. My weight dropped to 60kg (132lbs) from 86kg (190lbs) and my skin turned gray. I started to bleed from the bowel. I now know this was due to the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) the doctors had prescribed. One of these NSAID was Indomethacin. I found out that this drug has been known to cause fatal GI bleeding! As you can see, doctors were absolutely no help whatsoever. Some doctors tried to shorten consultations, telling me I was a nightmare patient and shouldn't be reading x-rays or looking up things on the Internet. This was when I decided to take matters into my own hands. I thought to myself, this is just plain rubbish (stronger words used!) If it were my child who was this ill what would I do?

FINDING SOME ANSWERS

I started to research more vigorously using various Internet search engines and uncovered a wealth of information. Once I found a theme I tracked it relentlessly, and applied the conclusions to my own situation. Much I could simply dismiss, but there soon became this common thread, which I followed. I followed a TMJ - temporomandibular joint (jaw joint) thread, but eventually (and after many bite splints and TMJ surgery) I learnt that I was off track. My actual problem was my cervical spine (neck), in particular C1. The jaw was a secondary problem, caused by the problem at C1. Actually it was a dentist who suggested I should get C1 checked. Thus I found myself visiting a chiropractor. I'm sitting there thinking, "Why do I need to see a chiropractor?" "I've never been to one, and why do I need one for my jaw?" My doctors warned me about chiropractors. It turns out that warnings about chiropractors are an all too common practice, and in the majority of cases totally without basis.

My first visit to a chiropractor turned out to be a very profound experience. I told him nothing other than what I had been experiencing and in less than 5 minutes of consultation he diagnosed C1 subluxation (which means 'minor misalignment'). He just observed me as I was leaning over his desk, and he carried out a couple of really quick checks. He mentioned C2 as well. He sat me in a chair and proceeded to correct this subluxation with his thumb under my left jaw/left ear area whilst seated.

I now know that he was contacting the left transverse process (wing) of my atlas or C1 vertebra. This is the vertebra, which the skull sits on top of and it is no bigger than say a credit card. The skull and its contents weigh in at around 4 to 5kg (about 10lbs). Needless to say that this is a tough job for this little bone and the ligaments attached to it. [You will note that a doctor Kaute discusses a similar 'atlas therapy' performed by Arlen for treating tinnitus, in a paper "The Influence of Atlas Therapy on Tinnitus", International Tinnitus Journal 1998;4(2):165-167.]

Remarkably within 2 minutes of the C1 adjustment, I started to feel better. During the following week the majority of the previous symptoms disappeared! Some of the symptoms, such as my back pain, disappeared over a slightly longer period. The remaining symptoms were - left ear tinnitus, strange pulling sensation right shoulder, light paresthesias left side, left tongue/mouth burning however there had been a vast improvement as these were now only of minor intensity. Following a check up 6 months later the chiropractor made another adjustment. OUCH! This turned out to be a disaster as I got back my symptoms and then some. After this he was not much help. I was on my own again. I supposed I could have written off the whole of the chiropractic profession because of this second event. Do you write off the entire medical profession because of the mistake of one doctor? I'm glad I persevered.

My further research revealed that there is a small group of the chiropractic profession practicing a specialist form of chiropractic technique, known as specific or precision upper cervical (UpC) chiropractic. There are numerous upper cervical chiropractic techniques and approaches to making atlas and axis adjustments. There are some, which are very gentle and very specific. That is, the amount of misalignment is measured with pre and post specific and accurate x-rays. I am familiar with many of these techniques now and I provide information about them on my site. When delivered correctly they seem to have no adverse side effects and are extremely gentle. Certainly, more gentle than the first adjustment that was moderately forceful for me, although initially providing the desired results. There would seem to be no trauma involved in the Atlas Orthogonal (AO) approach. Most upper cervical techniques seem to be effective and many are very, very low force. The point is there are a few techniques for upper cervical and they do seem to work very effectively.

It was the AO approach that I became very interested in because of the fact that there is NO manual (hands on) manipulation involved in this technique, besides there was at the time only one upper cervical practitioner in the whole of Australia!

The 'adjustment' to the atlas is administered via a percussion (sound wave) instrument. Dr. Roy Sweat, an upper cervical chiropractor, developed this technique [see www.atlasorthogonality.com]. This is a wonderful approach yielding almost miraculous results in many cases. This technique is so gentle that you will most probably ask the chiropractor, "Did you do anything?" because you will not feel the adjustment. In the majority of cases patients feel a 'warm feeling' immediately after the adjustment. I think this is arterial release at the level of the atlas. The healing process has begun! Specific post x-ray analysis will confirm the realignment of the atlas w.r.t. the skull and the leveling of the atlas w.r.t. the ground. On this website under 'Upper Cervical Techniques' and 'Atlas Orthogonal' you will find a brief movie of Dr. Sweat's AO adjustment under video fluoroscopy. Make no mistake - this technique works!

My first adjustment by the only Atlas Orthogonist in Australia, Joe Ierano in Camden NSW [see www.chiropracticierano.com.au] was just as amazing as my very first adjustment. The only remaining symptoms I now experience, I am certain are due to having had the TMJ surgery, which I now regret. My jaw joint noises are persisting including clicking, cracking, crunching and grinding and my feet hurt during and after eating. If I do not eat for a couple of days and rest my jaw, I have few symptoms. The doctor who performed the TMJ surgical reconstruction unbeknown to me ground 4mm off my right jaw condyle. Now my jaw is permanently misaligned. There is a

significant link between the atlas vertebra and the TMJs, one, which is often, overlooked by many practitioners.

My own experiences certainly helped me to uncover the amazing work being done by 'specific' upper cervical chiropractors around the World. It's not hard to find these wonderful people. As a direct result of my research and my contact with these chiropractors I have now personally helped over 100 people experience either 100% recovery or at the very least have significant health improvements.

This atlas problem is very common. I used to think that about 30%-40% of people have it. Now I think it's more like 70%. Just because you don't have much wrong with you doesn't mean you don't have an atlas subluxation. It's very easy to detect and the signs and symptoms are usually consistent. The mechanism of injury is usually a head knock although it doesn't have to be as severe as mine. As mentioned previously, it can be from falling out of bed, walking into a door or something even less traumatic. It can even be from the birthing process. Usually it's from an incident such as falling off a bike, a horse or, the more insidious injuries, as a result of car accidents. Anyone who has ever been in a car accident, especially if they experienced whiplash, regardless of the presence of any pain, should visit a specific, gentle upper cervical chiropractor. If the skull is shifted on the atlas, it may stay in that position until it is 'helped' back to where it should be. In theory it's that simple!

The consequences for those people, who do not seek treatment, are numerous. Over time there is a loss of your their natural neck curve (cervical lordosis) and you might acquire disc bulges. This is due to the altered weight bearing on the UpC spine. Eventually the discs may disintegrate and the vertebra may even fuse. This takes many years. Once this happens you are in a real mess. Doctors regularly pass off minor loss of neck curve, as OK, but in truth I think that they are wrong. Any loss of neck curve (lordosis) however minor could be associated with the possible loss of relationship between the skull and the atlas and thus this should be investigated. There are about 17 or so signs and symptoms, which I have come to know, indicate a possible atlas problem. I have listed these on my website.

The symptoms, conditions & diseases, which this atlas adjustment appears to help to fix or improve, are numerous and will surprise you. I say 'help to fix', because whilst the adjustment is the key factor involved in the healing process, it's your own body which in the end does the healing. Cranial nerves and spinal nerves, which were once working at say 70% due to muscular compression and traction, now, work to full capacity. Arterial flow under compression now returns to normal. This is not difficult to understand. Why doctors don't see it I don't know. There are enough anecdotal stories, case studies and scientific evidence to justify thorough investigation.

This is not a hard jump to make for anyone. I believe that if funds were put towards researching this, the results would be immediately evident and would enable us to eliminate many illnesses. This is where I intend to place my focus. My objective is to establish credible research into the atlas phenomenon and the effects of upper cervical chiropractic on a wide range of illnesses.

My last word to people who are ill, but have been unsuccessful in getting results, despite seeking help from countless physicians: If you haven't been to see a specific upper cervical (UpC) chiropractor, then you may just be bypassing exactly the one thing that will get you better. If you are sick and just cannot seem to get well, ask yourself this question: "Is my head on straight?" Because more than likely, it is not!