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## CranioSacrally Speaking: The Will to Persevere

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*By John E. Upledger, DO, OMM*

This past year I met a remarkable young man named Will Wright who was helped with CranioSacral Therapy (CST) and Lymph Drainage Therapy (LDT). His philosophy is simple: "Everything that has happened has made me a better person." Impressive, considering he is only 28 years-old, and his transition into adulthood has been anything but smooth.

At 19, an altercation left Will in a coma with swelling in the brain and fractures to his face. About a year later he started having seizures and left-sided paralysis that left him with a learning disability; yet all this was minor compared to what happened next.

Five years later in June 2001, Will was run over by a road grader - a machine about 30 feet long and 38,000 pounds. Will remembers the day well. He had been part of a paving crew working in a parking lot. As usual, he was partnered with a guy whose basic function was to watch him and the grader.

"In a split instant, I heard faint hollering over the grader's loud motor," Will said. "I knew exactly what was happening. "I was trying to straighten up and run from its path when it caught my right foot. It basically turned me over and came up my side. When it got to my stomach area, the driver rotated in the opposite direction and it threw me out."

When the paramedics arrived, they found blood coming from Will's nose, ears and eyes. Amazingly, his vitals were normal. He spent the next 12 days in the hospital, more than a month at home on bed rest, and weeks in rehab.

By February 2002, Will was ready for light duty at the paving company. All went well until the heat of summer set in. "That's when I started to see some recourse from the accident in 2001," he said. "I had a lot of problems with my eyes."

A trip to the doctor left him with a diagnosis of depression. Normally calm, Will's voice rose as he told the doctor, "I am not in a state of depression. I understand that I've been through a lot. I

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know I can never be what I was before. I'm not worried about that. I just want answers. I just want to know what I need to do to get better."

Still, he ended up on a succession of antidepressants, pain medication for his right heel, and other drugs to calm his stomach from all the medications he was taking.

Finally, in a visit to his optometrist, Will was encouraged to see Phyllis Thomas, LMT, who practices CST and LDT. "My eye doctor's into alternative ways of healing the body," Will said. "She told me, 'I don't know what it'll do, but it might help you.' At that point I was willing to do anything to get my life back together. All the medicine they had me on wasn't correcting the problem. It was just making me get by day to day."

Phyllis focused extensively on Will's lymphatic system. "She worked on me probably every week once a week and sometimes twice a week for a year," Will said. "It took about three or four months for me to see what she was doing. Once I saw that, it was astonishing all the way around. I had so much fluid built up inside my body that I could literally feel it coming out of me."

Yet as good as Will was beginning to feel, he was still having problems with his eyes. Ultimately, a neuro-ophthalmologist discovered extensive nerve damage and a midline shift in Will's vision. "Since my accident I see everything to the right," he said. "He put me in glasses that move everything about six inches back to center."

That's when Phyllis urged Will to come to The Upledger Institute (UI) HealthPlex clinic in South Florida. "We've got your lymphatic system where it's working," she told Will, "but it's not where it needs to be. Once they do CranioSacral Therapy on you, all of your systems will start to work together instead of working against one another."

In February 2004, Will came to UI for two weeks of intensive therapy. "My experience was unreal," he said. "I could really tell that I was releasing something. They explained how the body has a memory and how energy is released when something has been damaged. I could definitely feel the energy coming out of me. They also pointed out how off-kilter I was. As they worked on me it felt like all my systems, bones and organs went back to as close to their original spots as they're supposed to be."



According to Kevin Rose, LMT, CST-D, a UI staff clinician, "The main emphasis in Will's treatment was to increase fluid flow in the lymphatic

and craniosacral systems. Being crushed by a 38,000 pound machine can certainly lessen the body's ability to exchange fluids efficiently and effectively." To Kevin, an equally important factor in Will's progress was his outlook. "He came in with a strong intention to solve the challenges that no one else could help him with. This attitude of perseverance is, in my opinion, the core of strengthening the self-healing process. Will's incredible focus was the foundation that supported his steps closer to a full recovery."

Will was so excited by what he experienced at UI that he signed up for a CST class. He said he has no aspirations of becoming a therapist, but took the class "because I know CranioSacral works, and I wanted to understand more about it."

He added, "Here you've got a young man who's been almost killed in an altercation, then a year later is pretty well paralyzed on the left side of his body, can't talk, can't do anything. My level of concentration was out the door. At that time I was a sophomore in college and was put at an eighth-grade education level. Then five years later I had a worse accident than the first two. Nobody before this really considered that I had multiple problems that were already there, and that they were still coexisting inside my body. The lymphatic and CranioSacral work released everything."

Will also said he hopes his ordeal will serve others, both as encouragement and as a wake-up call. "People need to learn their own bodies," he said. "They need to understand that if they'll just give their bodies what they need, their bodies will heal themselves."

"I'm aware of my body now and what it needs to make it work, or help make it work. At 28-years-old, I feel better than I have ever felt. I see clearer; I'm more responsive. Have I conquered the world? No. But have I conquered something that nobody thought I could? Yes, I have."

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