This is a phrase that can be heard or read on a poster in nearly every chiropractic office on any given day. We have used this example in nature to describe to parents what can (and probably will) happen to their children’s posture if a spinal distortion in childhood is not corrected as they grow. Many children have benefited from the care they have received as a result of chiropractors telling their practice members these words. Indeed, many lives have probably been saved. At the very least, the quality of these kids’ lives has been improved.

Having recognized the important physical benefits many have realized from hearing this phrase and following up with a program of regular chiropractic check-ups, I would now like to take a deeper look at the meaning behind the author’s words. When Emerson first wrote these words, he was actually referring to how a child sees the world. He was attempting to convey the fact that the thoughts, beliefs and attitudes we develop in childhood determine, in large part, how we see the world and how we respond to it as adults.

In relation to our health, we see that children who believe that a drug, remedy, surgery or any other kind of treatment from the outside is necessary to heal will continually look outside themselves for help, and they will live in a world where they are constantly trying to eliminate or prevent something they don’t want in their lives. At first, this doesn’t seem like a bad thing. But, if all our time is spent working on getting rid of what we don’t want, we have very little time or energy left to give to creating what we do want!

This attitude toward health is just the tip of the iceberg as far as the kind of thinking that develops in individuals who are brought up in the current medical mindset. Not only do they think this way as far as their health is concerned, they also learn to see themselves as imperfect and incapable of being everything they were meant to be! Since we all learn at a very early age to identify ourselves with our bodies, being told how imperfect our bodies are on a regular basis (i.e., you need these shots, this medicine, this operation, etc.) causes many of us to develop and carry over these attitudes into every aspect of our lives.

In contrast, kids raised in the chiropractic wellness lifestyle grow up understanding that we all have within us a magnificent force called “innate intelligence” that runs, regulates, heals and grows our bodies. They are taught that we have God-given perfection within us just waiting to be fully expressed. Once again, because we identify who we are with our bodies, these kids grow up believing that we all have a vital purpose. And, more importantly, we have everything we need already inside of us to actualize that potential!
There is yet another aspect of chiropractic that is of supreme importance in understanding what Emerson was saying. We perceive everything as a result of impulses we receive through our nerve systems. And, our responses come as a result of our interpretations of the information received. If we have any nerve interference, we may not interpret the information we receive from our senses in a way that is most useful to us. In other words, our view of the world and how we fit into it will be distorted! And, as a result, we will not respond in the way that will best support our own growth or the growth of those around us.

You see, it's not the amount of interference that is a problem. ANY interference has the effect of distorting our view of the world! Understanding this is critical! This means that even if someone is brought up with empowering belief systems, he or she may not be able to gain the desired lessons and therefore will not benefit the way someone with a fully functioning nerve system will. The result will be the same as if that child were brought up in the opposite belief system!

It is also vital to recognize that we are all growing and unfolding, even as adults! Most adults don't recognize this because the overwhelming majority of growth after age 20 is mental and spiritual. The main thing to be aware of is that the same nerve interference that causes a child to grow up with a distorted view of the world will cause an adult to begin to misinterpret the world too! Will this affect your performance at work? Can you be the parent you want to be and teach the lessons you want your children to learn if you aren't at 100% yourself?

So I ask you, how important is it for everyone to be checked for the presence of nerve interference on a regular basis? Well, the way I see it, without chiropractic care and a fully functioning nerve system, the world will end up with an awful lot of crooked trees!