

DR. VERONICA SLAUGHTER

The gift of possibilities

What would you do?

It's the early '70s. You are twenty-something; a time when your life is just starting to get going, the promise of a future brimming with possibilities lies ahead of you. One fateful day, you're headed home on the Pasadena Freeway, when there's a major fire on the side of the freeway and the Highway Patrol has seen fit to temporarily stop traffic. You're at the end of the long line of stalled traffic, at a dead stop, when suddenly a 16-year-old driver, busy watching the fire instead of the cars ahead, plows into you going 65 mph. You wake up in UCLA Medical Center, one of the best medical centers in Southern California, and you're told by the doctors on staff that you're never going to be able to use your left arm again, the nerve damage sustained in the wreck was too severe and that they have done everything they could to restore use to the damaged limb. You're now faced with a life altering injury. How would you take the news? Would you accept your fate without a fight?

Not if you're Dr. Veronica Slaughter.

Sure, she cried upon hearing the news. Who wouldn't? Sure, she took the massive amounts of prescribed drugs given to her in order to manage her disability. But she couldn't accept the doctors' prognosis without a fight ... there had to be something she could do to regain use of her left arm and she was willing to try anything. So when a friend suggested she try 'chiropractor' she thought, "Why not?"

And so her lifelong journey in the chiropractic field began in the cramped, dusty office of 76-year-old Dr. Thornton Irving Shaw, who became Dr. Slaughter's mentor after restoring full use to her left arm following a three-month course of treatment; she was adjusted three to four times a week, quit taking the myriad of prescribed medicines and changed her diet. Dr. Shaw gave back to Veronica Slaughter the gift of possibilities (as well as a lifetime calling) ... something she aspires to give to her patients as well.

Dr. Slaughter specializes in the gentle, non-



invasive, non-force technique that utilizes an activator—a small tool that applies 35 pounds of pressure to a specific body area in 1/100th of a second—for a total head-to-toe adjustment, stressing complete skeletal-muscular balance. She relocated to the Coachella Valley six months ago, after growing tired of living in the hustle

and bustle of Los Angeles most of her life. "I love it here. Every time I see those windmills when I return from the Brentwood office, I think, 'Oh, I'm home.'" She's recently opened an office here in Rancho Mirage, after building a successful practice in Brentwood. Her original plan was to just have her new practice here in the valley,

but, as she readily admits, she's finding it hard to let go of her original office and patients, so for now she commutes back and forth, working there three days a week.

As inspiring as her own story is, what struck me most (besides her easy smile and warm, kind, chestnut brown eyes) after sitting down to talk with her recently, is the fact that Dr. Slaughter loves what she does, even after doing it for the last 28 years. In a day and age when health care has become a faceless corporation overrun by insurance carriers and HMO's, the enthusiasm this woman has for what she does is contagious.

She brings a genuine empathy to her practice that, unfortunately, is seen less often in the era of cattle call, quantity-over-quality types of operating procedures found in most doctors' offices of late. Most importantly, she listens. As she explained to me, "I take an extremely thorough history, because your history is going to tell me how I'm going to proceed with you. What one of my new patients can expect [in me] is really someone who is going to sit down and

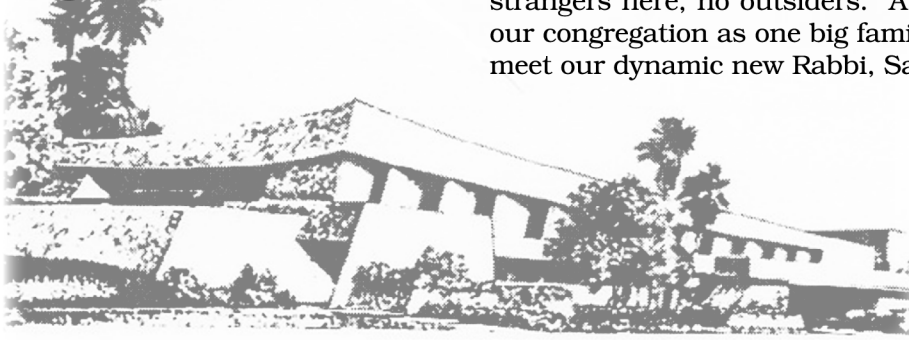
really listen to them. When I was in school, my very first instructor said, 'The most important thing you can do is listen to your patients because they will give you the diagnosis if you listen long and hard enough, they will tell you exactly what's wrong.'" Dr. Slaughter continues, "When a new patient comes in here, I tell them, 'This is what's happening, this is what I'm going to try to do. You have to participate, you have to stick with it for three visits otherwise let's not even get started,' because I'm not God. If I could fix what was wrong instantly, I'd have them lined out the door. All I'm saying is if after x-rays and blood tests and whatever we do on a patient, if it's definitely muscular-skeletal, let's see what I can do and that's the best I can do ... that's the best any doctor can do. ... I'm a realist, I know I can't fix everything but I also know that chiropractics extremely powerful ... If it's muscular-skeletal, I'm going to help you—if it's visceral, I'll make sure you'll get to the right place."

The sincerity, conviction and dedication behind her words are impressive. She has that air of confidence and integrity that can't

be taught in any classroom, you're either born with it, or not, and Dr. Slaughter definitely was born with it. It's a personality trait that can calm even the most anxious patients, to be sure. You can't build a successful chiropractic practice without it, and Dr. Veronica Slaughter has certainly developed a loyal and grateful clientele because she puts the patient first. "I have the most rewarding job in the world. I have made a great living in chiropractic, but it's totally secondary, I'm so grateful it's been such a rewarding career, personally and financially, and that's why I still do it ... I can't quit—I will never quit." Her words trail off as she breaks into a wistful smile and I can tell her last words were sincere; she loves helping people and she'll be doing it for as long as she's able to—I don't think Dr. Slaughter even has the word "retire" in her vocabulary.

Dr. Veronica Slaughter's office is located at 42-7000 Bob Hope Drive, Ste. 315 (behind the Vons market) in Rancho Mirage. For appointments and more information call 760.340.4157 or visit: www.deserthealing.com.

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Sunday, October 1 - Erev Yom Kippur 6:30 PM – Kol Nidre Service

Monday, October 2 - Yom Kippur

9:30 AM – 1:00 PM – Morning Service; 6:15 PM – Neilah & Havdallah

7:00 PM – Sounding of the Shofar

Friday, October 6 - 8:00 pm- Erev Sukkot/Shabbat Services and inaugural service of Cantor Richard Schwartz

Saturday, October 14 - 10:00 AM - Shemini Atzeret/Shabbat services. Yizkor.

Saturday, October 14 - 7:00 PM- Simchat Torah. Join us as we sing and dance with the torah. Added special: the freilach music of the KLEZMERkatz.

Monday, October 23 - 5:00 PM - 92nd Street Y Live Broadcast: Globe trotting Gourmet Chef Anthony Bourdain. \$15 members/\$20 non-members.