

Ana's Story Brightside

By Dr. Derek Conte

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Ana is an attractive and fun-loving 72-year-old woman who likes to paint portraits. She came into the office with a "sense of pressure behind the eyes." But beyond this she had intermittently been losing her upper right visual field every day, from 1-3 times a day, especially when her head was rotated and extended. She had undergone a series of tests with some significant findings that might have caused the problem. In addition, Ana had been diagnosed with Rheumatoid arthritis, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), Fibromyalgia, gastric reflux, and had both an appendectomy and a hysterectomy. She also had significant balance problems and bumped into things, especially when turning or moving fast and reported ringing, itching and clogging in the ears. She added that her memory was suffering too and she now needed to make lists. I observed in her a keen intelligence but also a restless, edgy, unfocused and distracted mood.

Our exam showed Ana to have significant postural distortion and weight imbalance when standing on bi-lateral scales, with +10 lbs on the left. Cervical range of motion was greatly reduced. Maigne's test was positive for possible occlusion of one or both of the vertebral arteries (this supported one of the findings in her ultrasound that could have produced her symptoms: "antegrade (backwards) flow in the vertebral arteries" feeding the brainstem and occiput, which control balance and vision.) I decided to proceed with light-force chiropractic care and later employ CranioSacral Therapy to address the cranium directly. Due to the subtlety and number of Ana's different symptoms I asked her to keep a journal to keep track of her experience. Ana had no other kind of treatment during the time described below.

On the first visit 2 light-force chiropractic adjustments and a few CranioSacral procedures were done and she settled down nicely, having only two milder episodes of visual loss over the next four days. After two weeks Ana continued to improve, was no longer bumping into her furniture and was experiencing less light-headedness. On the 5th visit we performed CranioSacral Therapy only (a technique intended to restore normal motion to the cranial plates). That night in her journal, Ana wrote, "While I was sleeping I heard and felt a 'pop' in the back of my head. It was like a 'pow' and it startled me for a moment." Thereafter, she reported being much more calm (I could see this during her next office visit) and experienced no more ringing or itching in her ears, no more balance problems and a great reduction of the generalized muscle aches she battled. After 3 weeks (6 visits) the visual losses were reduced by 75%, felt "Not nearly as rushed or as anxious". After 2 ½ months (11 visits) the visual losses stopped entirely and haven't returned for three months. Last week Ana brought her artwork in for me to enjoy.

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