



EPISODE 024 — SPARE THE “SPARE PARTS”

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SHOW NOTES



Title: Spare the “Spare Parts”

Episode Number: 024

Host: Dr. Thomas Lamar

Show Date: 09/10/2010

Run Time: 18:07

Description: Tonsils, Appendix, and Gallbladder. What do these three body parts have in common? Join Dr. Lamar as he asks this seemingly basic question. But, as it turns out, it's a question that invites others questions and unveils fundamental beliefs we harbor, knowingly or not, in health and the human body.

**Spinal Column Radio host,
Dr. Thomas Lamar**

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- [Dr. Roberto Chalukian](#) from Buenos Aires, Argentina, South America



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Does your podcast listening schedule need a little backbone? If so, it's time to schedule an appointment with your podcast chiropractor, Dr. Thomas Lamar.

Transcript:

Spinal Column Radio, episode number twenty-four.
Coming up next on Spinal Column Radio — Spare the “Spare Parts.”

[intro theme music]



And welcome back to another exciting and information packed episode of Spinal Column Radio. My name is Dr. Thomas Lamar, chiropractor and Dad of 6. And this is the podcast that gets you to think. To think about your health in a whole new way. We're the podcast for your backbone... the podcast *with* backbone. Who knew that spinal education could be this much fun?

We'd like to invite you to visit our podcast website at SpinalColumnRadio.com where you can learn more about us, check out our world-renowned “What's a Podcast?” page, and can access the show notes for this episode. Also, we encourage you to leave comments and ask questions through our website, or, if you prefer, you can email me using DrLamar AT SpinalColumnRadio DOT com.

[transitional sound effect]

Tonsils, Appendix, and Gallbladder. These were the three words that were scribbled on the white boards I have in each of my adjusting rooms of my chiropractic office. Three words designed to perk the interest of my patients, and now, via the podcast, the world.

And so, when they inquired what the words were for, I followed with this question: “*Tonsils, Appendix, and Gallbladder. What do these three body parts have in common?*”

Rarely did their answers match mine. In fact their answers were very much in line with the medical mindset — a mindset that whether right or wrong — our society has steeped in for over a 100 years and often goes unquestioned.

Today, I'm going to give you my answer. And I'm going to give you fair warning, that it's an answer that you may not agree with... And, of course, that why we have a place you can [comment in the show notes at SpinalColumnRadio.com](#), and I encourage you to do that. It's an answer that is sure to challenge some of you. And , it's an answer that — as I rattle off in in intro-

duction each for each of my shows – should cause you to “think about your health in a whole new way....”

But, before I give you my answer...

[bed music]

I thought I'd fire up my portable Edirol Digital Recorder and ask some of patients.

Dr. Lamar: All right. So Erin, what do these three body parts have in common?

Person #1: They are all glands? I don't know.

Dr. L: Okay. Tonsils, Appendix, and Gallbladder. What do these three body parts have in common?

Person #2: They are not very useful, and you can live without them.

Dr. L: What do these three body parts have in common?

Person #3: We can all do without them.

Person #4: They're all things that the body doesn't necessarily need to have.

Dr. L: Okay. Tonsils, Appendix, and Gallbladder. What do they have in common?

Person #5: They're all redundant organs that doctors seem willing to remove.

Person #6: They're all part of your innards, and they're all expendable.

Dr. L: So what do Tonsils, Appendix, and Gallbladder have in common?

Person #7: Well, we have them, but we really don't need them.

[alarm signal sfx]

Wow... did you sense a theme there? These organs are spare... they're extra parts... they're not needed. I even had one of patients tell me that they were all vestigial.

You see, I don't believe for a minute that these organs are spare... and they certainly are not leftover evolutionary baggage.

No, I believe that each of these organs has a specific purpose... and just because we may not — with our current level of knowledge — be able to fully articulate what these organs do, does not give us license to take them.

But the medical line of thinking is that these organs are spare, and they are often taken out as an extreme form of symptom treating.

In the past, tonsils were removed routinely... almost as a rite of passage. You'd reach a certain age... and out they came... and the ice cream factories made out like bandits.

I had one of my older patients share with me... and this is absolutely gross... that she remembers having her tonsils removed while in school... as sort of an out patient procedure. I guess the kids just lined up. And if that weren't shocking enough, they would take the tonsils and toss them out the window and seagulls would eat them.

[seagulls sfx]

Now, sure, there are times when the removal of these organs is necessary.... I'm not about to argue that Mr. Smith shouldn't of had his septic appendix removed as it was sitting on the brink of bursting... No... it's too late for him.... take it out.

But what I do want to suggest is that we are not asking the right questions.

Why is it that Mr. Smith had to have his appendix taken out? What was it about his diet, or life-style, or some other variable that may not even be on our current radar that we need to take in to account, that caused his appendix condition to escalate out of control... to a point in which removing it became a medically necessary procedure.... a procedure that if not performed could mean the difference between life and death.

Because, you see folks, until we start asking these questions — these deeper level questions — our propensity of removing these screaming organs... might I suggest, may simply be killing the town crier... or throwing the baby out with the bath water — whatever you want to call it... all while an unidentified health robbing assailant quietly works behind the scenes, unnoticed, getting away with murder.

I have a hard time reconciling the assertion that these organs are pieces of anatomy that are evolutionary remnants. I mean... Take the appendix, for example, Did you know that it won the number one spot on one of those Count Down Websites?... It was the [Top Ten Useless Limbs and Other Vestigial Organs.](#)

And on that site they state that "Biologists believe [the human appendix] is a vestigial organ left behind from a plant-eating ancestor. Interestingly, it has been noted by paleontologist Alfred Sherwood Romer in his text *The Vertebrate Body* (1949) that the major importance of the appendix 'would appear to be financial support of the surgical profession,' ..." [That's kind of funny. It continues:] "...referring to, of course, the large number of appendectomies performed annually. In 2000, in fact, there were nearly 300,000 appendectomies performed in the United States, and 371 deaths from appendicitis. Any secondary function that the appendix might perform certainly is not missed in those who had it removed before it might have ruptured."

Interesting. You know, just the name "Appendix," itself, suggests that it's an extra. So, right from the get go this poor little organ has had to contend with a name that suggests that's it's less than worthy. I did a little research to see which name came first.... the organ or the extra information that you'd find in a book.... and and it turns out that the appendix you'd find in a book was named about 70 years earlier than the organ.

Yeah, the idea that we evolved from plant eating ancestors, in which the appendix was once a very necessary component of the digestive process, just doesn't sit right with me.... But then my starting point might not jive with common thinking. Sure, I've got a degree in Biology, but you see, I don't believe that I evolved from a monkey... and because of that I believe that the Creator of the Universe, God Himself, knew what he was doing when he created man. And that each and every organ has a specific and wonderful purpose. I'd even submit that we have a lot left to learn about many of the organs that we think we already understand and have "mastered." So, just because we have shown that we can survive without the Tonsils, Appendix, and Gallbladder.... doesn't make it okay to remove them as a matter of procedure. You can survive without your pinky too.... but, and I think we'd all agree, the hand works better when you have all five.

And then, we can't ignore the fact of unintended consequences. Yes, our bodies are amazing and capable of adapting in even the most challenging of cases, but you can't deny the fact that removing an organ in the body — as minor as it might seem — will cause other parts of the body to work harder, or differently, to stand in the gap and make up difference.

So, what do these organs do? Well.... we are learning more and more about them everyday. I remember in my histology course in Chiropractic college being impressed by the amount of immune tissue that occupied the tonsils and appendix. So, right off the bat, that tells us that they have something to do with the immune system. And when you think about where they are located, it starts to make even more sense.

Think about the tonsils... they are located right at the entrance to the main orifice of our system... they're gate keepers... they're guards.... and when they swell, that's a sign that they are working, and they're full of white blood cells ready to attack the invaders.

And then there's the appendix. Well, its location is also very telling. It's located right next to where the small intestine dumps into the large intestine. So it too is acting as an immune gate keeper of sorts. And then, just recently — and this just really underscores how much we have to learn — researchers out of Duke University — publishing in the [December, 2007, Journal of Theoretical Biology](#)... They are finding that the appendix... might have a purpose! It seems to be a manufacturing plant and "safe house" for good bacteria. In other words, what they're saying is, let's say you have a bad case of food poisoning, and you get "cleaned out" — so to speak. Well, waiting in the wings is an entire brigade of good bacteria that can be deployed to restore order and balance to the gut. Pretty cool.

And what about the gallbladder? Well of all the organs in our list, this one is probably the most well understood... or is it? We know that it stores bile that is manufactured by the liver. Bile is necessary for the break down of fats in the digestive process. So, kind of think of it as a bottle of Dawn Liquid Dish Detergent. So, when you eat a bunch of greasy, fatty foods... out comes the bile to help break it all up.

[squirting sfx]

But — and oh, this is new to me — the gallbladder, working together with the pancreas, affords the body a layer of nonspecific immunity. That's so cool! So, they too are part of the immune system. Very amazing!

I'm not implying that these organs should never be removed, I am saying though, that we need to be asking more questions. We need to be asking better questions. Mainly, what is causing this organ to malfunction to the point that its removal is now highly advisable — if not immediately necessary? Because removing them without asking these hard, perhaps less lucrative questions... in the long run only serves to help the doctor... not the patient. Because when we can start to finally answer these questions... it is then — and only then — that we can begin to truly minister to the health of our patients.

Understand that I'm not pitching that we chiropractors are the key factor in preventing these "organ-ectomies." However, our focus on improving the integrity of the nervous system through proper spinal function, puts us in a unique position.

And so while medicine will often resort to removing organs, remember that your doctor of chiropractic focuses on reviving them.

[transitional sound effect]

Well how's that for an edgy topic? And while I don't have immediate solutions for this dilemma.... I like the topic, because it does get you to think and start to ask questions. Speaking of which, [I invite your questions or comments on this topic by visiting our website at](#)

SpinalColumnRadio.com... and you can have your say in the comments section for the show notes notes of this episode.

Well, before we wrap up our show, I'd like to say hi to a few people.

Firstly... I want to say hello to my new friend — I'm going to call him "Steelhead Dave" — who lives out the in middle of nowhere on Columbia River here in Washington. He runs a pretty impressive Steelhead Trout fish farm. And chances are he's feeding the fish right now as he listens to the highly entertaining episode of SpinalColumnRadio. My family and I had the wonderful opportunity to visit him and his family and hang out at their Christian Camp out there... and it was a really fun time. And the cool thing is that he and I had a conversation about this very topic that we're talking about on the podcast because I had just completed my article that I wrote in the Kingston Community News on this, and that now resides on my blog — SpinalColumnBlog.com. I'll put a link in the show notes. Dave, I hope you found this podcast useful, and your fish are well fed.

Also... the BJ Palmer Broadcasting Series we did... entitled: "["Shhhh... Dr. BJ Palmer is On the Air!"](#)" parts one through five... Wow! That got a lot of listens and continues to get a lot of downloads... a lot of air play for BJ Palmer — especially from the Chiropractors out there.

And I want to say hello to another chiropractor podcaster...

...a connection that Mr. Cliff Ravenscraft over at [GSPN.tv](#) was instrumental in making happen — who, by the way, if you don't know who this Cliff-guy is, he has made quite a splash in the podcast community. He has like 23 different podcasts that he produces, and he has quite a following. And he helped me with some of the equipment and technical know-how to get our little production off and running.... But — if you've heard of the.... what is it... [The Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon](#). Well in the podcast world, we could have the "Two Degrees of Cliff Ravenscraft" because the guy knows a lot of people. So, chances are if you are in the podcasting world, you either know or know someone who knows Cliff Ravenscraft. So, anyway, Cliff told this chiropractor about me...

And his name is Dr. Paul Hambrick, and he can be found over at [UpperCervicalDocs.com](#). I'll put a link in the show notes for that. Paul lives out in the Ozarks with his family, and he produces a chiropractic podcast as well. Anyway, for those of you that enjoyed my [BJ Palmer History Broadcast Podcast](#), you might also enjoy [the interview that Dr. Paul Hambrick put together](#). He conducted it with one of his clients whose father worked alongside BJ Palmer in the 1940's. It's pretty cool. Its complete with like one hundred different old-time photos as well as some original recordings of BJ Palmer doing a health talk... and listen... if you want to listen to that... listen to that health talk, because at the end I believe BJ Palmer says something about "Goat Feathers." [which is something that we talked about on our podcast](#)... so that was kind of fun.

And finally, of the many chiropractors that contacted me regarding the BJ Palmer Broadcasts, I'd like to say "hola" to the one who is the furthest south. [Dr. Roberto Chalukian in Beunos Aires, Argentina](#).... he's about 7,000 miles away, and he speaks pretty good English... It's been fun chatting with Roberto via email.

Well.... you know, podcasting, folks, is pretty amazing... that's for sure.

[outro theme music]

Well, podcasting is pretty amazing because not only am I meeting a bunch of people because of it, but that BJ Palmer Broadcast Series opened up a pretty amazing opportunity for Logan and I. I'll tell you more after the disclaimer.

Spinal Column Radio would like to remind you that true health comes from the inside out — not outside in. As such, the content of this podcast, along with the show notes and related links, is not intended to cure, diagnose, treat, or prevent any disease. But, instead, is meant to inform and inspire you in asking better questions regarding your health. Since the circumstances surrounding your particular situation are unique, you are encouraged to consult with a Doctor of Chiropractic — or other health care practitioner of your choosing.

Next time on Spinal Column Radio, Logan and I are packing up our gear and trekking across the nation to the Garden State of New Jersey. Why you might be wondering? Simple... The Power of Podcasting! Tune-in in two weeks to get all the details. So, until then, for my son Logan, tweaking the knobs on the mixer board, this is Dr. Thomas Lamar, your podcast chiropractor.

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