

April 18, 2002

Mr. Jerome Groopman
C/o The New Yorker - Editorial Department
4 Times Square
New York, NY 10036-6592

Dear Mr. Groopman:

Your article in the April 8, 2002 issue of *The New Yorker*, "A Knife in the Back" was of significant interest to me. Due to a skiing injury in which I fractured a vertebra in my neck, I required a spinal fusion to protect against the possibility of paralysis since the fracture did not heal on its own. Some months later, I experienced severe back pain in the lumbar region resulting from disc herniation that also seems to have been related to my accident. The muscle spasms throughout my lower back, buttock, and leg were so debilitating that in a matter of months I was unable to walk a block.

I investigated many alternative treatments, including physical therapy, acupuncture, steroidal epidural injections, and the Sarno Method. After several months without relief I began to prepare for surgery. Prior to scheduling the operation, a friend who had experienced the same symptoms made me aware of an alternative procedure, known as Percutaneous Laser Disc Decompression. You can obtain information about this procedure and the physician who pioneered the procedure, Daniel Choy, on the website www.PLDD.com.

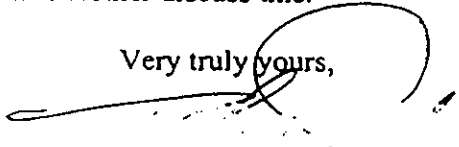
The procedure is done in the doctor's office. While under a fluoroscope, a hollow needle is inserted into the ruptured disc. A fiber optic laser is then inserted through the needle into the disc. The laser vaporizes a portion of the disc thereby creating a vacuum which causes the disc to recede from the nerve on which it is pressing. I walked in on crutches, I walked out without crutches. I had no pain.

The week following the procedure was extremely difficult. As my body readjusted from its spasmodic state, I experienced severe pain. This subsided within a week, and for the past two years I have been pain free. I work out daily. I lift weights and do a thirty-minute cardiovascular workout. I don't run or jog, as I am not willing to risk the wear and tear that it produces on the spine.

The reason that I am writing to you is that you may wish to provide greater visibility for this alternative treatment which has a 20-year history but is never discussed by surgeons. I have no doubt that this procedure could help a lot of people.

Please feel free to call me if you wish to further discuss this.

Very truly yours,



RMS:vg

Bcc: Dr. Daniel Choy ✓