

# There Was A Crooked Man

## Part I

**“There was a crooked man and he walked a crooked mile.  
He found a crooked sixpence upon a crooked stile.  
He bought a crooked cat, which caught a crooked mouse,  
and they all lived together in a little crooked house.”**

—anonymous—

### Structure and function—its relationship to health and well being

Imagine an old dilapidated house. A house that over the years has settled into a sagging, twisted wreck of its former self. There are leaks in the plumbing and water that doesn't flow. The toilets are stopped up and foul. Electrical issues are multiple and dangerous. There are short circuits and blown fuses, lights that don't work and a stove that just can't get hot. This house has ventilation issues. The windows don't open and the doors don't shut. The harsh wind and cold blows through cracks, the ceiling leaks, rats run rampant through the attic and tiles are falling off the roof. Life has been hard on this old house.



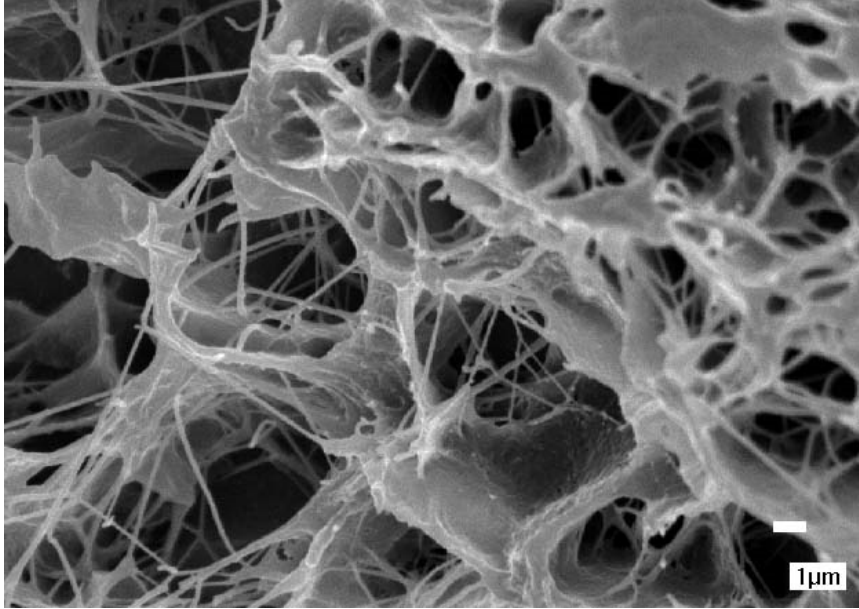
Now picture an old dilapidated human being.

#### ***Structure defines function.***

This twisted wreck of a human being suffers from the same maladies as our poor old house. Blood moves poorly through tortuous, twisted vessels, decreasing the flow of oxygen, nutrition, and waste removal throughout the body. The chest, all caved in and tight, makes every breath a chore, and climbing stairs a journey. Joints are compressed and twisted. They can no longer move appropriately and are disintegrating under the abnormal stresses of a contorted structure. Arthritis has set in, the least exercise is painful—all of life hurts. This poor body's back, knees and neck go awry with the slightest stress. The digestive tract, hanging on for dear life in the distended belly of this unfit and unaligned habitus, either reacts with explosive diarrhea or the inability to evacuate without much cajoling and the use of daily laxatives. This body can no longer take in what is needed or get rid of that which it does not need. The nervous system is in shambles, impulses move more slowly, reflexes are impeded and diminished, the senses

numbed, and thinking jumbled as the mind is bombarded with alarms from a body that knows things are JUST NOT RIGHT.

Let me be perfectly clear. Human structure, and its relationship to gravity, is critically important to all aspects of health. It is the defining mechanism of how we age—either with grace, joy, movement and energy, or with an everworsening spiral of discomfort, disease, and morbidity in all systems of the body.



### **Connective Tissue**

Structure, and how it responds to the stressors of life, is the function of **connective tissue**, a class of materials found throughout the body and IS the organ of structure. Every imbalance, every distortion, every compression in the body is defined by connective tissue. You change the connective tissue—you change the structure of the body.

Most of us recognize connective tissue as tendons and ligaments. We have seen it in our steak as gristle, the white fibrous tissue that wraps around chicken meat and skin, and even that tough, chewy skin around our sausage.

However, connective tissue has many other forms and functions.

- **Muscle and Tendon:** There are connective tissue fibers and layers within and around each muscle cell and fiber. These fibers entwine to form tendons which then weave into the very fabric of the surface of the bone itself.
- **Bones and ligaments:** Although seemingly solid in nature, bones are actually comprised of a soft connective tissue matrix within which minerals are deposited. This provides for both strength and flexibility.
- **Protection for Organs and Organ Systems:** Each organ and organ system of the body is surrounded and protected by connective tissue. We have names for this connective tissue. Meninges around the brain, pericardium of the heart, periosteum wrapping around the bone. In addition, every organ cell has within it, and is surrounded and embraced by, connective tissue.
- **Nervous System:** Connective tissue surrounds, supports, and pervades each nerve cell—and thus our entire nervous system.
- **Every Cell:** The connective tissue molecules within each and every cell of the body provide the framework for all of the structures and functions of the cell. These molecules extend beyond the cell membrane allowing each cell to communicate with its surroundings. This cellular connective tissue also extends into the nucleus, allowing the external world to communicate to the

core of our nature, and in a sense, directly upon the DNA itself.

- **Everywhere:** Connective tissue is ubiquitous in the body. It connects the molecular to the macroscopic, forming a single continuum—a living matrix within which we live—in suffering or joy.

Connective tissue is plastic—able to be modeled and molded, formed and reformed. Its shape can be either temporarily or PERMANENTLY changed by heat, pressure, and compressive or tensile forces.

The contraction and expansion of our body as it responds to the internal and external stressors of our life alters the connective tissue matrix, and subsequently defines the shape of our entire structure. Pervading the body, connective tissue carries the history of our lives from the moment of our conception to this very moment. The actual mechanism of how our life experiences mold our physical body will be discussed in Part II of this series: [How does life CHANGE our structure?](#)