

**Living with a Brain Injury  
Building Self-Esteem and  
Self-Acceptance**

**REAL**

**Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

## Preface

Self-esteem and self-acceptance can be an illusive. Hard to define and difficult to grasp. Never the less, with out self-esteem and self-acceptance the individual becomes vulnerable to being victimized, controlled and manipulated. For many years I had no idea who I was apart from what other people communicated to me, about me; and how they did or did not interact with me.

Consequently, as an individual living with a brain injury and an invisible disability; I found myself trading my judgment for what other people thought and believed. In the process, I found myself being blamed for matters that were out of my control. In the process, I was led to believe that I did not merely make mistakes, but that I was a mistake. This belief undermined my self-esteem and self-acceptance.

My self-deprecation continued to fester until I reached a point in time when I realized what I was doing to myself. It was at this point in time that I started a recovery process. My recovery process helped me to begin to build my self esteem and in the process, grow in self-acceptance. My recovery process gave me the tools to build my self-esteem, self-acceptance and become an active participant in my life.

The information presented in the articles in this e Book are ongoing reminders. Building self-esteem and self-acceptance is an ongoing process. The good news is that we don't have to go it alone.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Introduction

In my experience, I discovered that to be able to face, address and overcome adversity, I needed to examine how my mind, body and spirit were impacted through living with a brain injury and an invisible disability. As part of this process, I examined how various areas of my life had been impacted. One of the areas that I examined was my self-esteem and my self-acceptance.

In this e Book I will share some of what I learned about myself through examining my motives and interactions with various environments – family, education, religious, work, social and how I related to myself. What I share in the articles of this e Book are lessons that helped me to identify and address messages that undermined my ability and capacity to build self-esteem and self-acceptance.

What I share in this e Book gave me the ability to break free from a societal stigmatization. What I share in this e Book gave me the ability to live beyond the box of the status quo. What I share in this e Book helped me to learn how to trust, so that I could get on with my life. What I share in this e Book helped me embrace my reality, but not be subservient to my reality.

What I share in this e Book, helped me to trade lies for the truth. What I share in this e Book helped me to realize the gift that I present with my life. What I share in this e Book helped me to stop sabotaging myself. What I share in this e Book helped me to stop being victimized by people, groups and institutions. What I share in this e Book helped me to learn how to trust, what is trustworthy.

What I share in this e Book has helped me and continues to help me to build self-esteem and self-acceptance in my mind, body and spirit. What I share in this e Book has given me hope.

You have my permission to share the articles in this e Book with anyone you believe could benefit. My only request is that you cite me as being the author and provide a link back to [Second Chance to Live](#).

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

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Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Who Am I? Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 8, 2007

### **Boundaries**

For many years of my life, my concept of boundaries was limited to what separated One State from another. When it came to having, respecting or even understanding how boundaries factored into relationships, I was clue-less. The notion of my needing to set or maintain boundaries seemed ludicrous.

**Because I did not respect my own need to have boundaries, I developed a series of limiting behaviors.**

These limiting behaviors reinforced my distorted perceptions and led me to believe that boundaries were merely obstacles to be overcome. I also maintained the belief that control and manipulation preceded the need to have or respect anyone's boundaries. My distorted perceptions also kept me guessing at what was normal.

**For much of my life, I felt like a blind man, who kept bumping into different walls. As a result, any adjustment came with pain.**

As my emotional and spiritual pain increased so did my willingness to look for solutions. My recovery process, brought me to a place of awareness. My awareness revealed that I needed to both value and respect boundaries. My awareness revealed that boundaries, when not respected give way to a host of other limiting behaviors.

**Such behaviors undermine the individual's ability to experience their destiny.**

These limiting behaviors manifest when personal responsibility is discarded as trivial, while seeking to hold other people accountable for choice, happiness and discontentment. When personal responsibility and accountability is dismissed as trivial, trust is repeatedly thrashed upon the rocks of disillusionment and disappointment.

Hope is also squashed beneath disdain and denial. Resentments become the anesthetic that justifies and defends irrational behavior. Drama and crisis becomes the focus, while a virtual strangle hold is placed upon personal empowerment and creative expression. In the process the individual slowly drowns beneath the under tow of contempt and bitterness.

**Consequently, disregard becomes the standard operating procedure in the attempt to force solutions. Expectations dictate the quality of the relationship. Self-serving and self-absorption became the drivers. Power struggles ensue and become the vehicle to assert one's will.**

Through my recovery process. I have also come to understand that I am a separate and unique individual. Although this statement may seem naive, when I do not own and respect my need to have and maintain boundaries, I lose me. I slowly acquiesce to being controlled and manipulated by strong-willed individuals.

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## Who Am I? Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 8, 2007

Through owning and respecting my boundaries, I have come to value where I end and where other people begin. When I maintain healthy boundaries, I am able to keep the focus on what is my business and what is not my business. When I mind my own business the stress associated with trying to change others and/or be manipulated by them is reduced.

**Boundaries are meant to keep me in, not to shut other people out of my life. Through maintaining healthy boundaries, I am able to keep the focus on me, while respecting other people and their choices.**

Boundaries help me to define what is my responsibility when interacting with other people. Being accountable to others is essential to maintaining healthy relationships. Nevertheless, I need to accept that I am not responsible for other people or for their choices. I am responsible to other people, but not for their choices.

**Boundaries have helped me to know where I end and other people begin and where other people begin and where I end.**

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## Traumatic Brain Injury — Defining Self-Esteem and Self-Acceptance Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 15, 2015

In today's article, I would like to share a revised version of an article that I wrote in November 2009. In this revised version I share several awareness' that helped, and continue to help me to define self-esteem and self-acceptance for myself.

### Acquired Brain Injury — In Pursuit of Self-Esteem and Self-Acceptance (Revised version April 15, 2015)

Originally posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 5, 2009

During the past several days I have been thinking about the topic of self-esteem. Last night I attended a meeting and the topic of self-esteem was tabled for discussion. As I listened, reflected and thought about my own experience I realized that several key components had played a significant role in my pursuit of self-esteem and self-acceptance. Performance and relationships.

My drive to be accepted by people to define my worth and value as a person dominated my behavior for many years. In the process, I discarded parts of myself in an attempt to be OK with other people and myself. In actuality, I was driven by the notion that I needed to make "you" OK with me, so that I knew "you" and I were OK, before I could hope to be OK with myself. This behavior manifested itself in all my relationships and in the process undermined my ability to be at peace with myself. In the process I traded my opinion, for the opinion of other people. The effects of such behavior left me in a spiritual and emotional disarray. In the process, I traded serenity for the hope of creating peace between other people and myself, so that I could have peace with myself.

Through my process I began to realize that I had become dependent upon the moods of other people. In my dependence I strove through performance to "fix" other people in an attempt to garnish self-esteem and self acceptance. As a traumatic brain injury survivor, living with an invisible disability, I became a convenient "scapegoat" for other people's irritability, restlessness and discontent. Consequently, in my attempt to compensate for my invisible deficits and limitation, as well as my low or non existent-self-esteem; I strove all the more to achieve self-esteem and in the process, self-acceptance. What I discovered, through my process; was that I had unknowingly been using my external, instead of my internal environment to define my self-esteem self-acceptance.

**What I discovered, through my process; was that I had unknowingly been using my external (other people), instead of my internal (myself) environment to define my self-esteem self-acceptance.**

"It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us."

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Traumatic Brain Injury — Defining Self-Esteem and Self-Acceptance Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 15, 2015

What I discovered through my process was that in my attempt (s) to garnish self-esteem from other people, I undermined my ability to have a self, whom I could esteem and accept. What I discovered, through my process; was that I had willingly given my self-esteem and self-worth into the hands of people, who were unable to esteem or accept me for who I was as an individual. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I no longer needed to set myself up to have low-self esteem — by looking to other people to validate my worth and value. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could learn how to detach myself from what other people thought of me. I could slowly stop basing my self-esteem or self-worth on what other people thought of me.

With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I needed to begin to define who I was (am) as an individual and begin esteeming and accepting myself as an individual. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that my self-esteem and self-acceptance were never meant to come from outside of me. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I no longer had to give away my self-esteem and self-acceptance at the expense of gaining other people's approval. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could change my motivations. With my awareness, I slowly realized that I could stop looking to people for approval. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could stop looking to gauge my self-esteem and self-acceptance through other people.

**With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could stop seeking to gauge my self-esteem and self-acceptance through the eyes of other people.**

With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could learn how to express myself without first needing to seek the approval of other people. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could let other people believe what they wanted to believe, while practicing the principle of live and let live. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I no longer needed to answer, defend, explain or justify myself, to have self-esteem and self-acceptance. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that in order to build self-esteem and self-acceptance I needed to be aware of when I was giving myself away. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I needed to stop practicing self-defeating behaviors, such as; people pleasing and approval seeking.

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## Traumatic Brain Injury — Defining Self-Esteem and Self-Acceptance Part 3

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 15, 2015

With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I needed to be aware of the triggers that drove me in my attempts to do more, to do enough, to be enough, to gain the approval of other people. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I needed to be self-caring, which is not being selfish. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I no longer had to see my circumstances and experiences as a gauntlet to be endured, but rather as part of my learning process. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could incorporate the concept of learning curves into each of my learning experiences. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could allow myself to set my rate and pace for learning.

With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I no longer had to perceive my discomfort and pain as negatives, but rather as catalysts for positive change. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I no longer had to place judgments on my efforts or my learning process. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could substitute my black and white thinking with shades of gray. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could substitute my all or none thinking with the concept of opportunities and possibilities. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could esteem and accept myself with in my reality, although there continued to be people in my life who could not esteem or accept me as an individual living with a brain injury.

With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could live and think outside of the box that I had willingly allowed other people to define for me. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could be my own cheerleader. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could define what self-esteem and self-acceptance looked like for me. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could begin to “dance to my own drum”, within the definition of self-esteem and self-acceptance that I set for myself. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could begin to have a relationship with myself and value what I was /am accomplishing with my life. With my awareness, I slowly began to realize that I could trust the process, a loving God and myself.

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Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Following your bliss...regardless Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 30, 2007

In life, events, circumstances and disappointments may redirect our experience. In an instant — like a switch on a railroad — life events can set us in the opposite direction of our hopes and dreams

In the process our hopes, dreams, and aspirations may be dashed. We may have lost limbs or suffered permanent brain damage. Our damaged bodies may subsequently limit our abilities. Consequently, we may be sad, angry or even bitter with life. I want to share something with you that revolutionized my world.

Who I am on the inside matters more than who I am on the outside. My body may be broken and battered by an injury. I may not be as smart as I used to be before my disability. And I may be discouraged at times, but that does not change my passion.

### **I am not my disability, my limitations or my deficits.**

My passion resides within my being. My passion provides the mechanism that empowers my gifts, talents and abilities. Because my passions lie at the core of my being I can learn how to channel my creative energy even thou I may have a disability, deficits or limitations.

As I follow, develop and learn to channel my passions, the fruit of my purpose becomes apparent. My passions are channeled through my gifts, talents and abilities. My gifts, talents and abilities echo my passion. My passions subsequently point me in the direction of my destiny.

### **In the process I experience my purpose. In the process I fulfill God's will for my life — one day at a time.**

Although I have limitations because I am a traumatic brain injury survivor I am not limited. Although you may have limitations because of your disability, you are not limited. Regardless, of how you or I came to be disabled we do not have to give up on our passions.

We can learn how to channel those passions in ways that work for us. We can learn to experience life more abundantly. We no longer need to buy in to the notion that our circumstance are meant to keep us down. Instead we can learn to use our circumstances to empower our process.

### **We can learn to use those circumstances to enhance both our lives and the lives of those people in our world.**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Following your bliss...regardless Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 30, 2007

### **Today's Thought**

Be encouraged my friend. You are a gift to your world. Our traumatic brain injury / disability is not meant for our harm. In reality what we have been given is a gift. What we thought was meant for our harm will be used for our good.

**Our disabilities will direct our lives — like the switch on the railroad of life — in the direction of our destinies.**

Although I could not see how my traumatic brain injury was to be used for my good some 41 years ago, I now know that to be true. More over through my experience I now realize that I have been prepared to be a messenger of hope.

**Be encouraged my friend. More will be revealed to you.**

Follow your passions. Follow your bliss. Take the time to breathe because you will learn how to channel your passions in ways that work for you. Do not give up on yourself or on your journey. You are on the right path.

**Be encouraged my friend. You will find your way. Only believe. And if you have a hard time believing, believe because I believe. You can trust the process, a loving God and yourself. More will be revealed to us.**

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## Living with a brain injury and the Fable of the Tortoise and the Hare

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 11, 2010

Over the past several days I have been writing a series **Living with a brain injury and Having Options**. Last night I began thinking about the story of the Tortoise and the Hare. Although I have not finished the series, I feel led to speak to the [fable](#) of **The Tortoise and the Hare**.

In the fable, the tortoise challenges the hare to a race. The story goes on to share how the hare scoffs at the tortoise's challenge. The hare, because his "superior speed" thought he would surely beat the tortoise. In the hare's arrogance — by what he said and did — minimized, marginalized and discounted the possibility that the tortoise could run and even win the race.

As the fable comes to a close, we find that the tortoise is actually waiting for the hare at the finish line. The line written at the base of the fable denotes the meaning of the story. **Slow and steady wins the race**. Although the hare was much quicker than the tortoise, because the tortoise stayed committed to running his race, the tortoise went on to finish and even win his race.

### Today's Thought

In life, you may feel like the tortoise in the fable. Like the tortoise, you may have people in your life who behave like the hare. You — like the tortoise — may find hares that discount who you are and your ability to participate in any race. You — like the tortoise — may find that the find hare (s) in your life, who by what they say and do dismiss your ability to run in, much less win your race.

**Like the tortoise, you may have hares in your life — who by what they say and do — seek to discourage you from running in your race.**

To that I would say. No worries. Be like the tortoise and determine to run your race. Be like the tortoise and be who you are my friend. Be like the tortoise and go about your business. Stay committed to your mission and vision. And as the tortoise found, you will finish and win your race — because you did not pay attention to what the hare (s) said or did — as you ran your race. And as you run your race, remember — **Slow and steady wins the race**.

**“Insist on yourself, never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you only have a extemporaneous half-possession...Do that which is assigned to you and you can not hope too much or dare too much.”** Ralph Waldo Emerson

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Living with a brain injury and Feeling like a Broken Toy**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 13, 2010

Several weeks ago I wrote a series in which I shared with you that I had made a decision to take greater risks. In that series, I shared with you how I took the risk to use the principle of asking for help. I took the risk to ask for help to improve upon my skills when interacting in social settings.

During the past several weeks, I have had an opportunity to attend other meet up group events. On these occasions, I have been able to add to my skill set through continuing to take the risk to ask for help. Consequently – in the process of taking these risks – I have grown in awareness. In the process, I have gained a whole new perspective through interacting with other individuals in social settings.

**In the process, I have grown in self-awareness. In the process, I have grown in my ability to accept myself in social settings. In my process, I have begun to experience a new freedom.**

As a recovering perfectionist, I have a tendency – at times – to think in black and white / all or none extremes. One of these extremes has led me to believe that I am terminally unique. In the belief that I am terminally unique, I some times see myself as the only broken toy in the toy box. During the past several weeks I have had a spiritual awakening. I am not the only broken toy in the tool box.

My spiritual awakening has come, not by a judgment of other toys, but by realizing that I live among other broken toys. Other broken toys – like me – who are doing the best that they know how to do – just for today. With my awareness, I am discovering how to relax in social settings, while being myself. In the process, I am discovering how to work on skill sets with out buy into the notion that I am terminally unique.

**Through realizing that I am not the only broken toy in the toy box, I am able to relax and be myself. I am able to grow in self-awareness and self-acceptance while I practice new skills sets in social settings.**

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## Not Judging my Insides with Other People's Outsides

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 31, 2014

Last week I shared that I had been struggling and frustrated. I also found myself angry as a result. I knew that the problem existed with me and not because of some one else. I was the one who was restless, irritable and discontent. I knew that I needed to examine the root. I wrote in a journal and spoke with a mentor of mine. Nevertheless, I still had a difficult time putting my finger on what what was at the root of my funk.

Yesterday in my morning meditation I began to receive some clarity. I realized that I needed to get back to basics. You see I had fallen into the trap of comparing my lot in life with other peoples lot's in life. By doing so I had allowed the expectations surrounding other people's lots to be the expectations for my lot in life. In my awareness, I found that I had been judging my insides with other people's outsides. In my awareness, I found that I had been experiencing a sense of shame for not being enough on my lot. In my awareness, I found that I had judged my being.

What began to be clear to me was that I needed to stop judging what I was doing with my lot. What began to be clear to me was that I needed to focus on what I am doing with my lot. What became clear to me was that I needed to celebrate what I am building on my lot. What became clear to me was that I needed to stop judging my efforts by the expectations of what I perceived other people were building on their lot. What became clear to me was that I needed to see the value of what I am building on my lot, apart from what I perceived other people were building on their lots.

With this renewed awareness, I refocused my attention to my mission and vision. With this renewed awareness, I began to see the value of what I am creating on my lot. With this awareness, I saw the reality of my strengths. With this renewed awareness, I reminded myself of my being and my great value. With this renewed awareness, I was able to stop judging my insides, with the values that other people place on their lots. With this renewed awareness, I found the freedom to once again build on my lot. With this renewed awareness, I was able to root out of my funk.

**“Regardless of your lot in life, you can build something beautiful on it.” Zig Ziglar**

### Today's thought

What other people build on their lot in life is none of our business. What we are building on our lot in life is none of their business. If I find myself judging my lot to another person's lot, I need to re-focus. I need to re-focus my commitment to my mission and vision. I need to stay committed to building on my lot. By keeping the focus on my lot, I am able to keep from falling into the trap that occurs when I judge my insides with / to other people's outsides.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Critical Attitudes and Self-Inflicted Wounds Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 5, 2009

Happy New Year to you and your family. God bless you all. Yesterday I attended a New Year's day get together with a group of friends. We meet yearly at this couples home on New Year's Day — January 1. I was glad to see and spend time with my friends, however there were several people — that move with in our circle of friends — that I had not seen in quite a while.

**To make a long story short, I found myself reacting toward one of those individuals.**

As I interacted with that individual I interpreted their facial expressions and behaviors as being critical, belittling and judgmental of me. Consequently, I found myself reacting to them. I found myself becoming increasingly frustrated and angry toward them. Rather than confronting the situation and the individual, I decided to detach physically and move to a different area of the house, where I could examine our interaction.

**Through doing a quick moral inventory of myself I became aware of what I was experiencing. I discovered that I was experiencing a sense of shame because of their critical look and behavior, which I took personally. In response, I felt afraid, inadequate and alienated — alienated from them and from myself.**

As I continued to process our interactions and why I was experiencing a sense of shame I had an awareness. What dawned on me was how I initially interacted with the individual after they arrived at the party. I remembered watching them with a critical attitude. Upon further examination I then realized that my critical attitude — toward the individual — arose from the resentments that I held toward them from previous interactions.

**My next thoughts revolved around a spiritual principle — judge not lest you be judged for the measure that you give out will be returned to you. I then realized that I was receiving back — from them — what I was measuring out to them through my critical demeanor.**

Not only was I receiving a critical attitude — from them — but I discovered that I had opened myself up to the fruit of criticism and judgment: minimization, marginalization and alienation. Alienation from them and from myself. I found that through being critical — of them — my judgment boomeranged back to me. My critical attitude toward the individual in essence became a self-inflicted wound.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Critical Attitudes and Self-Inflicted Wounds Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 5, 2009

**When I judge other people or myself I inadvertently minimize, marginalize and invalidate who I am and what I bring to the table of life. When I judge other people or myself I practice abandonment.**

Over the past several days — as I have continued to look for the lessons brought about through my interaction with the individual at the New Year’s Day party — I have been able to grow from the experience. The incident reminds me that I need to keep the focus on myself when I am irritable, restless and discontent. In the process, I need to own and address my resentments when I find myself reacting to a person or a situation. I need to avoid being critical of other people and myself to avoid self-inflicted wounds.

**I need to give people the dignity of owning their perspective of me with out taking their perspectives personally. When I am restless, irritable and discontent I need to keep the focus on myself. I need to own and address my resentments and I need to practice live and let live.**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## How to Get Past and Keep from Being Pulled back into a Victim Mentality Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on May 14, 2014

Several weeks ago I received a question from a friend, “How do we get past a victim mentality( victim hood)? I keep getting pulled back in!” I have been thinking about that question and want to share some thoughts. First of all, I want to say thank you for asking the question.

**I think the biggest way that I get past and stay out of a victim mentality is to remember that I have choices, despite thinking that my circumstances don’t provide me with choices.**

Something that has helped me tremendously is to remember that my circumstances occur in my life to build me up, not to keep me down. They are not being done to me, but for me. Not to hold me back, but to set me up. What I discovered — through my process — was that my circumstances are in essence teachers. Teachers to provide me with lessons that prepare me to take advantage of opportunities that teach me lessons.

**When I forget to look for the lessons provided by my circumstances; I focus on the circumstances, instead of looking for the lessons provided by the circumstances.**

Though my process, I have learned several lessons that I would like to share with you. I learn a lot from visual metaphors, as they help to illustrate these lessons. I would like to share several of these visual metaphors with you. I like the illustration of a tapestry. On one side of the tapestry one sees many different colored threads. seemingly jumbled together. On the other side of a tapestry, there is a beautiful story being told.

**Circumstances can be likened to these threads. How I view these threads determines whether I see myself as a victim or as an empowered co creator of my destiny.**

I also like the illustration of the jigsaw puzzle. The jigsaw puzzle is made up of many pieces. Each puzzle piece by itself makes little sense; however collectively, as they fall into place create a beautiful picture. Circumstance; I believe, can be likened to the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. As I learn from my circumstances, each puzzle piece falls into place at the right time and in the right order. By seeing my circumstances as pieces of a puzzle, I am empowered.

**In my experience, I have found that as I take the time to learn from each circumstance, a puzzle piece of my destiny falls into place. As one puzzle piece falls into place, another circumstance appears.**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **How to Get Past and Keep from Being Pulled back into a Victim Mentality Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on May 15, 2014

In my experience, I have come to recognize that I do not have the big picture. I do not know what thread needs to be weaved into the tapestry or what puzzle piece that needs to fall into place. What I have found to be true is that I can trust the process – the threads and the puzzle pieces – to a loving God, Who alone has the big picture. The 2 metaphors help me to recognize that good things are happening in my life, even when I can not see them.

For many years of my life I did not understand or grasp the reality of the metaphors. Instead, I believed that life was filled with gauntlets and mine fields that I needed to survive each day. With my process and journey my eyes slowly opened to recognize the reality of the metaphor's message. What I saw as disappointments and disillusionment were in essence threads that needed to be weaved and puzzle pieces that needed to fall into place for me to pursue my destiny.

In October of 2013 I had the opportunity to give a keynote presentation at the **2013 Southwest Conference on Disability**. In preparation for my presentation of 25 minutes, I wanted to provide some back ground information to those attending the conference and my keynote presentation. I would invite you to read the article to see what I discovered about my threads and puzzle pieces. What I share in this article helped me to see that I am not a victim of my circumstances.

**Instead, I am empowered to be a co creator who is given the opportunity to learn from my circumstances and in the process weave a tapestry to complete a puzzle.**

Here is a link to the article in which I shared back ground information:

**[Back Ground Information for Keynote Presentation Craig Phillips Founder and Creator Second Chance to Live Southwest Conference on Disability 2013](#)**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## The Power of Detachment Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 18, 2008

In the process of living, social dynamics are inevitable. When two individuals interact, challenges can ensue. These challenges often arise when expectations become apparent as a friendship or relationship develops. These expectations may be connected to a fear of either losing something they have or not getting something they want out of the relationship. Fear can then motivate each person to try and control the other person through manipulation. Manipulation may occur because one or both parties believes that control will result in the fulfillment of their expectations.

**Although control and manipulation may temporarily force a solution, the long-term consequence of such a dynamic will undermine the relationship.**

In the event that these expectations are not satisfied, resentments may become an insidious factor in the relationship. If these resentments are not addressed, a power struggle may become an integral part of the relationship — as each person jockeys to have their expectations met. Passive-aggressive behaviors may then be used to side step being controlled or manipulated. The foundation of the relationship may begin to crack under the weight of such resentments and behavior. Consequently, apart from one or both parties using the principle of detachment, the relationship may crumble.

**I have found that the principle of detachment is not meant to keep people out, but to keep me in. This means that I accept responsibility for my own feelings, needs, and wants. Through this understanding, I am free to mind my own business. Although I am responsible to others, I am not responsible for them or their choices.**

My experience has taught me that I can give each person the dignity for making their own choices. Detachment allows me to accept that I too have choices. Subsequently, I no longer need to be held hostage to people and their choices. Detachment allows me to accept where I begin and other people end. Detachment allows me to accept that I am free to be responsible to and for my own happiness and contentment. Detachment sets me free from the trap of believing that I need to “fix” another person so that we can be OK — in our relationship — before that I can be OK with myself. Detachment allows me to be accountable to and for my feelings, needs and wants.

**Through being accountable to and for my feelings, needs, and wants I allow my relationships to breathe.**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## The Power of Detachment Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 18, 2008

Consequently, control and manipulation no longer need to drive my relationships. Through practicing personal responsibility — for my feelings, needs and wants — I create a win / win dynamic with in the relationship. Rather than being codependent in the relationship, I become independent — while at the same time I become interdependent with in the relationship. By practicing healthy detachment, the relationship becomes a place where each person is able to give freely of themselves apart from the pressure of unrealistic expectations. As each person with in the relationship remains accountable and responsible for themselves, personal empowerment becomes a way of life.

**Personal responsibility and accountability with in the relationship encourages personal empowerment. Personal empowerment, empowers the relationship because each person is able to give freely of themselves.**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Experiencing Adversity, Failures, Setbacks and Not Giving Up! Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 19, 2013

Several years ago I wrote an article under a different title. Today I feel led to share the content of that article under a different title.

In life we may encounter adversity, failures and setbacks that may leave us wanting to give up on our dreams. Below I would like to share one man's life time of adversity, failure and setbacks who did not give up on his dreams.

May we also be encouraged to not give up on our dream (s) although we may encounter adversity, failures and setbacks during our life time. May we also continue to forge ahead in the direction of our dream(s).

Posted by Second Chance to Live on August 17, 2010

Last night I stopped by the martial arts school to see my Sensei – instructor – and to see and say hello to some of the brown and black belts with whom I trained with for 8 years.

I then made the decision to stay for part of the brown and black belt class.

At the beginning of class, Sensei shared something with the students that I want to share with you my friend. May you be encouraged as you read through this article to not give up on your goals, your process, your dreams or your destiny. May the lesson – below – inspire you to keep getting back up no matter how many failures or setbacks that you may experience during your life time.

As Sensei began class he shared a list of set backs and failures that an individual in history experienced during his life time.

- **1832 Lost Job and defeated in the state legislature**
- **1833 Failed in business**
- **1835 Fiance / sweetheart died**
- **1836 Had a nervous breakdown**
- **1836 Defeated in run for Illinois House Speaker**
- **1843 Defeated in run for nomination for U.S. Congress**
- **1848 Lost re-nomination for Congress**
- **1849 Rejected for land officer position**
- **1854 Defeated for U.S. Senate**
- **1856 Defeated for nomination for Vice President**
- **1858 Again defeated in run for U.S. Senate**
- **1860 Elected President (Success)**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Experiencing Adversity, Failures, Setbacks and Not Giving Up! Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 19, 2013

The above list of set backs and seeming failures are attributed to one of our greatest Presidents in American history. His name is Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln profoundly impacted his generation and generations to come because he made the decision (s) to not allow failures or setbacks to keep him from pursuing his dreams or his destiny. Because of his decision (s) to keep moving forward, freedom has occurred in the lives of many individuals for many generations.

Sensei went on to encourage the students in the class to not give up on their goals – be it advancing to their next belt rank or in another area in their life– even though they may encounter failures or setbacks in the pursuit of those goals.

Abraham Lincoln’s example and Sensei’s lesson inspires both you and I to stay committed to our goals, vision, mission, dreams and destinies — regardless of any adversity, failure (s) or set back (s) that we may experience during our life times. And as Abraham Lincoln brought a freedom to the lives of many individuals, so too will we bring about a freedom — simply by staying committed to our dreams and our destinies regardless of any adversity, failure (s) or setback (s) — to the lives of many individuals in our generation and in generations to come.

**“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” Thomas Edison**

**“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.” Ambrose Redmoon**

**“We would accomplish many more things if we did not think of them as impossible.” Vince Lombardi**

**“Our circumstances are not meant to keep us down, but they are meant to build us up.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

**“I will prepare and some day my chance will come.” Abraham Lincoln**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Yes I am disabled, but Don't Count Me Out! Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on October 22, 2014

As a person living with a disability have you ever had the feeling that you were somehow less than or discounted because of your disability. As though you were less of a person. I have my friend. Several days ago, during a brief conversation with some one that I had not seen in about 6 or 7 years, she asked me if I was working.

**She asked because she knew that my disability had previously interfered with my ability to work.**

When she asked me if I was working, I told her that I was still disabled and receiving assistance. When I said that I was not working, I got the feeling from her that being disabled, receiving assistance and not being able to work in traditional settings made me less of a person. I got a feeling that as a result of being disabled and receiving assistance, I could not really have a place of significance in the world. A feeling of "Yes, but..." coming from her.

**A feeling of what I was accomplishing with my life was trite and insignificant. A feeling of minimization and marginalization. A feeling of "that's nice" after sharing with her what I have been doing and am doing through Second Chance to Live.**

Although I realized that I did not have to own or take any of those feelings personally, I realized that I needed to remind myself that, **"Yes I am disabled, but Don't Count me Out"**. Although I realized that I did not have to own or take those feelings personally, I realized that I needed to remind myself to run my own race, to stay committed to using my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for me and to not lose sight of my mission and vision.

### **Today's Thought**

In the event that you are living with a disability, that interferes with your ability to work; let me encourage you with this my friend – as I need to remember. **"Yes I am disabled, but Don't Count Me Out"**. Although you may have people in your life who leave you feeling minimized and marginalized stay committed to your course. Run your own race. Keep using your gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for you. Don't lose sight of your mission and vision.

"It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us."

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Yes I am disabled, but Don't Count Me Out! Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on October 22, 2014

### **Some Quotes to Inspire**

“I was told over and over again that I would never be successful, that I was not going to be competitive and the technique was simply not going to work. All I could do is shrug my shoulders and say, ‘we’ll just have to see.’” Dick Fosbury (Olympic Gold Medalist. Inventor of the “Fosbury Flop” High Jump Technique)

“A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.” Christopher Reeve

“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” Helen Keller

“Sometimes adversity is what you need to face in order to become successful.” Zig Ziglar

“Show me someone who has done some thing worthwhile, and I’ll show you some one who has overcome adversity.” Lou Holtz

“Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life’s cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half- possession. Do that which is assigned to you and you can not hope too much, or too much.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Here’s to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes... the ones who see things differently — they’re not fond of rules... You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them, but the only thing you can’t do is ignore them because they change things... they push the human race forward, and while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.” Steve Jobs

“He who joyfully marches in rank and file has already earned my contempt..He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would have been enough.” Albert Einstein

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Living with a Brain Injury — “it’s all up in your head” — Lest I be lulled back into Denial Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 9, 2014

The reason why I am writing this article is to share what I discovered through my own process and journey of being told, **“It’s just up in your head and if you just...then you would not be impacted by your brain injury”**. If you have heard this phrase or some thing similar, I believe you will benefit from reading this article.

Several days ago I wrote an article: [Living with an Invisible Disability — Accepting Ourselves when Other People Can’t](#). In this article I shared how became aware of the impact that denial was having upon my life and well-being. In my experience, I stayed in denial for many years because I internalized what was denied and defended surrounding the impact of the traumatic brain injury that I experienced when I was 10 years old. As I shared in yesterday’s article, once my external wounds healed, the impact of the traumatic brain injury that I experienced when I was 10 years old was no longer considered relevant.

Because I bought into the denial system, by my actions; I engaged in validating and defending the denial system that kept me striving in my attempt to overcompensate for what was not seen or understood. As a result, I found myself engaging in a cycle of justifying, answering, defending and explaining why I could not do more, to be more than what was being denied and what was expected of me. This ongoing cycle left me in loose /loose relationship with denial, myself and others. The loose / loose relationship with denial, myself and others that held me captive to a system that “promised” me freedom, but kept me deceived.

### **Let me explain:**

As time continued, I remember my Dad telling me, “It’s just up in your head and if you just.... then you would not be affected by any brain injury”. So for many years I strove to to get over what was, “up in my head” so that I would not be blamed and criticized for the difficulties that I encountered because of what needed to be denied so that changes did not have to take place in the family. For more insight click: [Traumatic Brain injury and the Identified Patient](#). Because, I bought into this message — that it was my fault for not getting “it” right– I strove all the more to over compensate for what was, “all up in my head”.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Living with a Brain Injury — “it’s all up in your head” — Lest I be lulled back into Denial Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 9, 2014

Because I had no idea how to “get over it” I continued in my attempts to not be impacted by “what was up in my head”. This continued until after being employed by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation as a rehab counselor, in Florida; I was made a client because of the difficulties that I encountered on the job. After becoming a client I underwent another EEG, which confirmed the impact of the open skull fracture that I experienced at 10 years of age. I also underwent a neuro psyche evaluation. The results revealed how the injury to my brain impacted the difficulties I encountered through out my life time.

Upon sharing the results of the EEG and the Neuro Psyche with my Dad, my Dad told me that the Neuropsychologist, who did the neuro psyche eval; did not know what he was talking about — that in essence, his findings were wrong. Other family members tended to side with my Dad, which led me to continue to believe that, the difficulties that I encountered were just “up in my head” and if I just...then I could get over “it”. Although I completed the voc rehab process in Florida there was no job placement. For the next 5 years I continued to buy into the notion that “it was up in my head” and if I “just...”then I would get over “it”.

The proverbial “last straw that broke the camel’s back” resulted from a series of events that occurred after being recruited to begin a job in North Carolina as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. These are the events that led to my no longer being able to deny my reality. I was fired from that job 4 months later, had an unsuccessful job search, applied to the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, went through that process, was told at the end of that of the evaluation process that I was unemployable, submitting my 3rd application for SSDI, being approved by the Social Security Administration and finding myself of a fixed income.

Although I had a long history of not being able to work, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation deeming me to be unemployable, the Social Security Administration determining that I was disabled and finding myself on a fixed income, I still found myself struggling with the notion that maybe, “it was all up in my head, and that if I just...then I would not be affected by a brain injury.” But then I remembered the emotional and spiritual pain that I experienced over the course of 38 years. For more detailed information, click on this link: [Detailed About Page](#).

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Living with a Brain Injury — “it’s all up in your head” — Lest I be lulled back into Denial Part 3**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 9, 2014

**With the emotional and spiritual pain, I finally admitted to myself that I was indeed powerless over, “what was in my head”.**

With my emotional and spiritual bottom, I realized that I could no longer validate and defend the denial system that held me hostage for many years. I realized that I needed to guard myself, lest I be lulled back into the denial system that kept me in a loose / loose relationship with myself and other people. I realized that I could no longer attempt to fit into the “mold” that denial set for me. I realized that I needed to break free from that “mold”. I realized that I could create my own “mold”. I realized that I could learn how to excel beyond the limitations set forth in “It’s just up in your head... and if you just.... then you would not be...”.

**“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” Helen Keller**

**“I realized the I needed to guard myself, lest I be lulled back into denial.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

**In August 2007 I wrote a 2 Part article to share what I discovered that keeps me, lest I be lulled back into denial.**

I would invite you to read this 2 part article series by clicking on the below links:

**[Having an Invisible Disability — The Consequence of Denying my Reality — Part 1](#)**

**[Having an Invisible Disability — The Consequence of Denying my Reality — Part 2](#)**

I have created a video series of the article and will include links to the presentation below:

**[Living with an Invisible Disability — The Consequence of Denying My Reality — Part 1 Revisited Video Presentation](#)**

**[Living with an Invisible Disability — The Consequence of Denying My Reality — Part 2 Revisited Video Presentation](#)**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Is the Medical Model of Treatment Defining and Keeping You in a “Box”? Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 18, 2014

In my experience, I have learned a hard lesson many times. The lesson is that people can not give me what they themselves do not possess. Does not mean that they are inadequate or bad people, just that I wind up frustrated when I seek to get what I need from them. I have heard this experience as likened to going to a hardware store looking to find bread. Hardware stores do not have bread, no matter how many times I may go looking and hoping to find bread in a hardware store.

In my experience, I liken the medical model of treating patients to a hardware store. The likening is related to beyond the diagnosis and treatment. The medical model many times focuses on the diagnosis and prognosis, instead of on hope. What the patient / individual / consumer may be told is that they may never be able to do..., because of the diagnosis or prognosis. In my experience, I have found that the medical model tends to put individuals in “boxes” by associating them with a diagnosis’ — a statement or a conclusion, and / or by a prognosis’ — what is or is not going to happen in the future. In July of 2013, I wrote a 2 Part series, [Traumatic Brain Injury, Labeling Theory and Societal Stigmatization](#) to explore the impact of such a “box”.

Once a diagnosis or prognosis is made, a label is given to the individual. Once the label is assigned to the individual, the individual may find themselves identifying with the diagnosis and prognosis. Many times the label is associated with societal biases and prejudices. These limiting biases, prejudices and stigmatization’s serve to reinforce to the individual that they are limited because of the diagnosis /prognosis. If the individual buys into the judgment and stigmatization associated with the diagnosis and prognosis, the individual may find themselves identifying with the label. Unconsciously, the individual may then find themselves internalizing and justifying the judgment and stigmatization brought on to them by the diagnosis, prognosis and subsequent label.

“Such labeling and stereotyping leads to a stigmatization of the individual. Through my studies and experience as a counselor I have seen the negative impact that such stigmatization has upon the individual. In my experience, as noted; once a determination, diagnosis or label is given or assigned to the individual, the determination, diagnosis or label many times – consciously or unconsciously — becomes the identity of the individual. I have also noted that as the individual adopts the identity of the label as their identity they unknowingly become vulnerable to being victimized by the identify of the label by believing in the stigmatization. The internalization of the label and stigmatization then makes the individual susceptible to being controlled.” From my article, [Traumatic Brain Injury, Labeling Theory and Societal Stigmatization](#).

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Is the Medical Model of Treatment Defining and Keeping You in a “Box”? Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 18, 2014

The impact of a diagnosis, prognosis, label and subsequent societal stigmatization can lead the individual to believe that they are intended to remain in the “box”. The “box” in turn creates a dependency upon the medical model to treat the diagnosis and prognosis. The medical model and societal stigmatization sets the individual up to believe that there is little hope outside of the “box”. As a bi-product of the medical model and societal stigmatization secondary gains and secondary dependencies evolve. Because of these secondary gains and dependencies, the individual may feel trapped with in the “box”. Societal judgment and stigmatization of the label then perpetuates a continued need and dependency upon the medical model. In collusion, little hope exists.

In my experience, I have seen the impact of secondary gains and secondary dependencies. Secondary gains and secondary dependencies perpetuate, limit and discourage the individual’s ambition to explore and live beyond the confines of the “box”, created by the medical model. In my experience, I have seen how the medical model — through the diagnosis, prognosis and subsequent labeling process — undermines the individuals drive to look for solutions beyond the “box”. Once labeled and stigmatized, the individual becomes conditioned to believe that they are limited because of the diagnosis, prognosis and stigmatization. With such conditioning, the individual may find themselves relating to themselves and to their “world”, through a “BOX” mentality.

### Today’s Thought

Although you and I may have been given a diagnosis and a prognosis, we are not the diagnosis or the prognosis. Although we may have been given a label, because of a diagnosis or a prognosis, we do not have to be limited by a societal stigmatization. Although a diagnosis, prognosis or a stigmatization may have been given or placed on us, they do not have to define our existence. Although a medical model and a societal stigmatization may have placed you and I in a “box”, we do not have to remain in any “box”. Secondary gains and secondary dependencies no longer have to be our lot in life. You and I were created to be so much more than a diagnosis, a prognosis or a label. We were created to live outside and beyond the confines of any “box”.

### We were created to live in hope.

I would invite you to read the article series **Traumatic Brain Injury, Labeling Theory and Societal Stigmatization** by clicking on this link: [Traumatic Brain Injury, Labeling Theory and Societal Stigmatization](#). In the event that you learn more effectively through listening and watching, please click on this link: [Traumatic Brain Injury, Labeling Theory and Societal Stigmatization Part 1 Video Presentation](#)

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Thriving in Our Place of Significance Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on May 14, 2012

Several years ago I wrote an article to share an awareness that I grew into through my process. I want to share that awareness with you my friend. As you read the article, may you also be encouraged, motivated and empowered to thrive in your place of significance.

### **A Personal Struggle – Waiting for the Call that Never Came**

Posted by Second Chance to Live on July 9, 2010

Hello and welcome back to Second Chance to Live my friend. Thank you for taking the time to stop by to visit with me. Today, I want to share with you a personal struggle – that I faced for many years of my life. For many years of my life I bought into the notion that I could not effectively use my gifts, talents and abilities with out first having the external validation of groups, organizations and associations.

**Consequently, I spent many years of my life waiting for the “call”. In the process of waiting for the CALL, I slowly painted myself into the corner of a box.**

In the process of my waiting to be recognized, affirmed, approved and validated I found that I had bought into several faulty notions and limiting scripts. These notions and scripts sought to convince me that only a group, organization or association could lead me from the corner of my box. Because I never “received the stamp of approval” I bought into the notion that no one wanted what I had to give.

In my experience – and as I bought into these notions and scripts – I found myself feeling like someone who was all dressed up with nowhere to go and that no one wanted what I had to bring to the table of life. In the process, I devalued both my vision and mission. In the process, I gave away my power and what I valued as an individual. In the process, I lost sight of my creative self.

**“Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.” Carl Bard**

Through a series of events I woke up to the reality that I was wasting my time. I began to realize that no group, organization or association could keep me in the confines of the box. I began to realize that I was the only one who could keep me in the confines of the box. I began to realize that I could move beyond the corner of the box. I began to realize that I could move outside of the box.

**“Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.” Mother Teresa**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Thriving in Our Place of Significance Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on May 14, 2012

With my awareness, I made several decisions. I made the decision to move beyond the confines of my box. I made the decision to value my mission and my vision. I made the decision to pursue my passion through my mission and vision. I made the decision to begin using my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for me. I made the decision to be fully me. I made the decision to be creatively free.

**“Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” Howard Thurman**

### **Today’s thought**

My encouragement to you my friend is to follow your passion, vision and mission. Do not wait for some group, organization or association to recognize, affirm, approve or validate your gifts, talents and abilities. Use your gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for you... And as you use your gifts, talents and abilities be encouraged to be fully you. And as you are fully you – be creatively free.

**“To live a creative life we must lose our fear of being wrong.” Joseph Chilton Pearce**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## A Word of Encouragement – Keep Swinging at the Fences

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 26, 2011

Several months ago I started using a phrase when I am asked how I am doing. I say, “I am swinging at the fences.” Although I may not hit the ball out of the park with every swing, I know that as I keep swinging my chances of hitting the ball out of the park increases.

As you may have heard, Babe Ruth held the home run record for many years. Although he held the home run record, he also held the record for strike outs. He hit 714 home runs, but also struck out a total of 1330 times in his career. Many people focus on the # of home runs he hit during his career, while not realizing how many times he struck out in the process. Babe Ruth had an empowering attitude.

**When confronted by the # of times that he struck out Babe Ruth said, “Every strike brings me closer to the next home run.”**

Thomas Edison – creator of the light bulb and many other inventions – was asked a question by a news reporter about his failures in his attempts with the light bulb. Mr. Edison’s reply to the reporter was, “**I have Not Failed I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work**” – **Thomas Edison** Because he did not focus on the 10,000 ways that didn’t work, he found a way to make the light bulb work.

On the web page “[But They Did Not Give Up](#)” there are many other examples of people who kept swinging at the fences, despite what other people may have thought about their efforts. Babe Ruth’s and Thomas Edison’s attitude and seeing what they accomplished during their lifetimes – in addition to the other individuals listed on “[But They Did Not Give Up](#)” — encourage me to keep swinging at the fences.

May you also be encouraged to keep swinging at the fences, despite what other people may be saying about your efforts. May you also be encouraged to keep searching for a way to make your “light bulb” work. May you also be encouraged to keep moving in the direction of your dreams, as you endeavor to live the life you have imagined. May you also be encouraged to keep trusting the process, a loving God — with your will and your life — and yourself.

**“If you advance confidently in the direction of your dreams, and endeavor to live the life that you have imagined...you will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.” Henry David Thoreau**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Dispelling the Notion of Dis-ability — I Just Do Things in Ways that Work For Me**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 26, 2015

Recently a friend wrote an article and I responded to him in the following comment. I thought I would share what I shared with my friend.

Here is the comment.

I can definitely identify with you on this front. I attempted to prove that I was “not” disabled for many years. I did so in an attempt to prove that I was not “defective”, that there was not something “wrong” with me and as a result, I was worth loving and given respect. In my experience, I had to reach a point when the pain of denying my reality had to supersede my need to deny my reality — in my attempt to prove that there was nothing “defective” or “wrong” with me. In my experience, I had to confront my denial — despite feeling defective and as though there was some thing wrong with me. In my experience, I had to confront my denial before I could begin to love and accept myself as an individual.

In my experience, I discovered that I needed to move through the 5 stages of grieving, as posited by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in her book; **On Death and Denying**. The five stages: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance.

**In my experience, I discovered that I needed to confront both my denial and the denial systems set about me before I could dispel the notion of dis-ability. In my experience, I discovered that I needed to work through these stages before I could begin to see the possibilities of my ability.**

In my experience, I had to work through the 1st 4 stages, to be able to get to a place of acceptance; before I could stop defending myself for having experienced a brain injury. In my experience, I needed to get to a place of acceptance before I could begin to see that I was not defective or that there was some thing wrong with me because I experienced a brain injury. In my experience, I needed to work on learning how to accept that I am powerless over the injury to my brain, while at the same time understanding that I am not not helpless. In my experience, as I began to realize that I was and am not helpless, I saw a “light” at the end of the proverbial “tunnel”. The light helped me to realize that I could get into action. The light helped me to realize that I could create a life for myself, within my reality; that would empower my life and in turn encourage people to see the light at the end of their “proverbial tunnels”.

The light at the end of the proverbial tunnel helped me to realize that although I may have a disability, I am not dis-abled.

**“I am not disabled. I just do things in ways that work for me.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

### **Today’s Thought**

In the event that you are living with a disability, my encouragement to you my friend is to not focus on the dis, but focus on the ability. Look for ways to use the ability that you possess — your passion, skills, talents and abilities — in ways that will work for you. Learn some thing new, try some thing different and see yourself flourish.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Living with a brain injury — Overwhelmed and Over Reacting — Taking Back my Power**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 29, 2014

Yesterday I published [Living with a brain Injury and Dealing with Stress during Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years](#). In this article, I explain how several factors can exacerbate stress during the holiday season. The increased stress, can overwhelm any one; but can leave individuals living with brain injuries feeling overwhelmed and finding themselves over reacting in response to the stress. In **Part 3** of yesterday's article, I included links to a **2 Part** article series **Traumatic Brain Injury and Identified Patient**. I included links to the article to share what I discovered that helped me to understand that I was not the cause of the stress. What I learned and shared in the article helped me to learn to love and accept myself. What I learned and shared in this article helped me to take back my power.

**The awareness' that I gained and shared in the article helped me to stop taking responsibility for the stress that I encountered during the holidays. The awareness' that I gained and shared in the article, helped me to stop taking responsibility for other people's business, particularly their irritability, restlessness and discontent. The awareness' that I gained and shared in this article helped me to begin to make peace with myself and in the process taught me how to take back my power as an individual.**

These awareness' that I gained helped me to begin to recognize why I felt overwhelmed at times and why I over reacted to people, places and things in my life, starting with family members. In the event that you find yourself overwhelmed and over reacting to the people, places and things in your life, starting with family members; the awareness' that I shared in this **2 part** article may help you to begin to love and accept yourself. The awareness' that I shared in this **2 Part** article may help you to understand why you may feel overwhelmed and why you over react to the people, places and things in your life, starting with family members. The awareness' that I shared in this **2 Part** article helped me to make peace with my past, so as to not spoil my present. The awareness' that I shared in this **2 Part** article may also help you to make peace with your past, so as to not spoil your present.

**The awareness' that I gained and shared in this article may help you to stop taking responsibility for other people's business, particularly their irritability, restlessness and discontentment. The awareness' that I shared in this article may help you to make peace with your past and teach you how to take back your power as an individual. The awareness' that I shared in this article may help you to make changes in your life, so that you are not overwhelmed and over reacting; to the people, places and things in your life.**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury and the Identified Patient — Part 1](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury and the Identified Patient — Part 2](#)**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Living with a Disability, Feeling Excluded and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 16, 2014

Living with a disability, invisible or otherwise can leave many of us feeling excluded, isolated and wondering if our lives really matter. In December 2009 I wrote an article and divided the article into parts. The article's title was [Traumatic Brain Injury — Facing Alienation and Isolation — Turning Confusion into Clarity](#). Each year, during the holiday season and Christmas; I re-post the article. In the event that you are living with a disability, feeling excluded and isolated because of your disability, may this article encourage you to celebrate who you are as an individual.

Below the article I will include a link to the video presentation of the article, under the title **Celebrate What Makes You Different and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Video Presentation**

### And now the article

During this time of the year we may hear and maybe singing various carols. These Christmas carols / songs have become synonymous with this time of the year. One of these carols /songs is Rudolph the Red nose Reindeer. As a youth I heard this carol / song sung with the thought that, “This is a happy song”. As I have grown older the words of this song have taken on a different meaning. As the song begins, we are drawn to the names of Santa's reindeer: Dasher, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph. As the song continues special attention is drawn to Rudolph.

### As I have grown older, the words of this song have taken on a different meaning.

As the song begins, we are drawn to the names of Santa's reindeer:Dasher, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph. As the song continues special attention is drawn to Rudolph. The song tells us that Rudolph had a bright red shiny nose that some say even glowed. We are given the impression that Rudolph's nose distinguished Rudolph from the other reindeer: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. With the next several lines of the carol / song we hear that Rudolph is laughed at, called names and not allowed to join in reindeer games.

Although the reason (s) why Rudolph is shunned, laughed at and called names is not made clear — what is made clear is that Rudolph's bright red shiny nose made him different from the other reindeer. Although Rudolph is merely a fictional character in a Christmas song, his plight can easily be identified with by individuals who have experienced similar rejection and ridicule — because they are different from other members of the “herd”. As I listened to the song – with my new understanding – I found that I could identify with Rudolph's experience with in the “herd”.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Living with a Disability, Feeling Excluded and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 16, 2014

**Although I attempted to go along to get along — for many years — to find my place and position in the herd I continued to experience feelings of alienation and isolation for being different.**

As we continue to listen to the lyrics of the song we hear, “then one foggy Christmas night Santa came to say...”. In this part of the song we hear that Santa recognized the value of what made Rudolph different and uniquely qualified to fulfill a unique need – to empower the herd and his mission. Upon reflection I can only imagine what Rudolph and the other reindeer thought when Santa asked Rudolph “Won’t you guide my sleigh tonight?” What the herd had laughed at and ridiculed and scorned, Santa saw as essential to accomplishing the mission before him – to guide his sleigh.

**Rudolph’s gift – what made him different – empowered him to fulfill what none of the other reindeer could hope to do. What made Rudolph different equipped him to be of maximum service to Santa, to his fellow reindeer and as the song infers, to many boys and girls.**

In my experience, because I bought into the notion that I deserved to be ostracized, ridiculed and rejected – because of what made me different – I criticized and berated myself for being different. Consequently, I had a difficult time celebrating the possibilities surrounding what made me different. Subsequently, instead of feeling connected – with a sense of belonging and inclusion – I experienced feelings of alienation and isolation. Instead of using my time and energy to explore how I could use what made me different, I sought to gain the approval and validation of the herd.

**I continued to feel alienated and isolated from the “herd” and from myself until I experienced a spiritual awakening. The spiritual awakening revealed to me that I could no longer afford to be distracted by what the herd could not understand or accept.**

My spiritual awakening revealed to me that I no longer had to wait for the herd to recognize, accept or approve the value of what made me different. My spiritual awakening revealed to me that I needed to begin to use what made me different despite the “herds” continued ridicule and exclusion. My spiritual awakening revealed to me that a loving God wanted to use what made me different to be a blessing to the “herd”, as well as to individuals ostracized by the herd – just as Santa used what made Rudolph different to bless the herd, the mission and to many individuals outside of the herd.

In your experience, you may have also found that – as Rudolph and I have discovered – that there is something that makes you different. You may be a traumatic brain injury survivor, an individual living with a disability or you may have experienced some other kind of trauma, abuse or adversity. Consequently, you may find yourself feeling ridiculed, ostracized and excluded by the herd. In the process, you may have a difficult time accepting yourself for being who you are as an individual. As I have shared in this article, I can identify with you. But that is not the end of the story.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Living with a Disability, Feeling Excluded and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Part 3**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 16, 2014

The end of the story is that a loving God is going to use what makes us different, as Santa used Rudolph. What makes you and I, different is essential. What makes you and I different, is essential to God fulfilling a unique mission through us. What makes you and I different, will be used to draw the herd to fulfill its purpose. What makes you and I different, will be used as beacons of hope to draw our brother and sisters from the shadows of isolation feelings of alienation. What makes you and I different, will make us leaders. What makes you and I different, will help dreams live in people. What makes you and I different will empower people to move beyond the shore (s) of their fear and apprehension. What makes you and I different, will give people courage. What makes you and I different, will bring about the change that we want to see in our world.

**“First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.” Mahatma Ghandi**

**“Be the change you want to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi**

**“Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.” Mother Teresa**

**“You don’t have to be a person of influence to be influential. In fact, the most influential people in my life are probably not even aware of the things they’ve taught me.” Scott Adams American Cartoonist**

**“Insist on yourself, never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life’s cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half-possession...Do that which is assigned to you, and you can not hope too much or dare too much.” Ralph Waldo Emerson**

**“If you advance confidently in the direction of your dreams and endeavor to live the life that you have imagined...you will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.” Henry David Thoreau**

You may watch a video presentation of the article, by clicking on this link: [Celebrate What Makes You Different and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Video Presentation](#)

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Overcoming Self-Sabotage

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 31, 2011

Yesterday I started a new chapter in my journey with Second Chance to Live. I created and published my first video on YouTube. Click [here](#) to view the presentation. Through my recovery process I have learned a life changing lesson: **With everything there is a learning curve.**

**In my experience, I have learned that life is about a process, not a destination. What I learn on my journey is more important than any destination. Consequently, as I allow myself to progress through my “learning curves” I give myself the permission to celebrate because of my process, instead of judging my efforts because I am not moving more quickly through my process.**

In the process of making the YouTube Video, I took approximately 7 “takes” before I decided to upload the one I did to YouTube. Although – at the time – I realized that the “take” to be uploaded to YouTube was not perfect, I was satisfied that the “take” was good enough. With my realization and though remembering the lesson of “learning curves” I accepted the reality that –with time – I will undoubtedly grow in my ability to produce better videos for the Second Chance to Live channel.

**By celebrating the lesson of the “learning curve”, I am able to celebrate the gains that I make – in my process — instead of fighting against myself. By celebrating the gains that I make through my learning curve, I am able to stop sabotaging myself.**

### Today’s Thought

My friend, I would encourage you to start on a new chapter of your journey – today. And as you start of that journey remember, you don’t have to do “it” perfectly. Instead, you can use the principle of the “learning curve”. By doing so you can give yourself the permission to explore, grow and mature in your process. By doing so, you can celebrate your gains. By doing so, you can stop judging your efforts. By doing so, you can stop fighting against yourself. By doing so, you can stop sabotaging yourself.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Hope, Encouragement and the Parable of the Cracked Pot Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 16, 2009

Earlier this evening I felt led to share the parable of the cracked pot with a group of my friends. The message of the cracked pot appeared to have a profound impact on several of my friends.

**I am not sure who is the author of the parable of the cracked pot, however to the author I would like to say thank you. You are a very wise person.**

Because the message of the parable is so very powerful I decided to share the parable of the Cracked Pot with you.

May you be encouraged to just be ... yourself.

### The Parable of the Cracked Pot

A Water Bearer in India had two large pots; each hung on each end of a pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pot's full of water in his masters house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water-bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your masters house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts." The pot said.

The Water Bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the masters house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the Pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

"It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us."

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Hope, Encouragement and the Parable of the Cracked Pot Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 16, 2009

The bearer said to the pot, “Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot’s side? That’s because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you’ve watered them.

For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my masters table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.”

### Today’s Thought

We may have bought into the notion that our lives are too cracked to be of use. We may find ourselves comparing our vessels to other vessels. We may be experiencing shame and sadness because we see ourselves as failures. In the process we may have developed a fear of failure. Consequently, we may be thinking about giving up.

**We may want to give up trying to make a difference. We may be saying to ourselves, “What’s the use in me trying anyway and anymore?”. To that I would say, please continue to read.**

With out you and I being just the way we are, hope would remain only a concept. With out you and I being the way we are — to some — hope would be lost. Because of who you and I are vision (s) becomes reality. Because of you and I people’s prayers are being answered.

Because of you and I, people are being set free. Because of you and I people are blooming and blossoming into creation. Because you and I those individuals will ultimately feed the masses. Because of you and I people believe in miracles. Because of you and I destinies are being birthed and dreams realized.

Because of you and I people have an advocate. Because of you and I people choose to get up...one more time. Because of you and I people learn to trust...again. Because of you and I people learn to love and be loved...again. Because of you and I people are inspired to pursue new opportunities and fresh possibilities.

**Because of you and I people take risks. Because of you and I people are be drawn to the light of God’s love.**

So when you remember or some one else reminds you of your crack (s) in your pot be encouraged my friend. Rejoice that cracks exist in your pot, for with out your cracks the flowers — people — along your path may never be watered.

**And remember, “You are a Gift to Your World!”**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Overcoming a Fear of Failure and Making Changes Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 14, 2012

In one of my recent articles I shared with you that I felt as though I had come up against a wall. In another recent article I shared with you an article that I wrote approximately 5 1/2 years ago [Living my Destiny through Walls](#). In that article, I shared with you what I learned – through my experience – when coming up against these proverbial walls. For the past several days I have been writing in a journal about my experience with my recent wall.

During the course of the past several days, I spent time meditating, praying, writing in a journal and examining what I was experiencing due to my current wall. In the process of meditating, praying, writing in a journal and examining my current wall, several realities came to light. Let me share some of those awareness' with you. If nothing changes, it will remain the same and if I keep doing what I have always done while expecting to get different results I am practicing what I have heard is a form of insanity. My awareness gave way to acceptance.

My acceptance helped me to realize that I needed to take action. My acceptance helped me to realize that if I want to get different results in my life, I need to make changes. My acceptance helped me to realize that I may only need to make minor changes, for my life and experience to take on new meaning.

For many years of my life I felt driven to be perfect to avoid feeling shame at a core level — because I did not just feel like I made mistakes, but I felt as though I was a mistake. My drive to be perfect was motivated by my fear of failure, my fear of abandonment and fear of self-annihilation. In my fear of experiencing shame, my fear of failure, my fear of being abandoned — emotionally, spiritually and physically – and my fear of self annihilation – that my life did not matter — I lived my life from an all or none and black and white rigid perspective.

In my rigid perspective, I continually sought and strove to overcompensate for my insecurities and my fear of self-annihilation — at the core of my being — because of the reprisal for making mistakes. In my overcompensation, I lived my life in a state of hyper vigilance in an unsuccessful attempt ward off my fear of failure, my fear of abandonment and my fear of self annihilation at the core of my being.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Overcoming a Fear of Failure and Making Changes Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 15, 2012

As I thought about what I had written in my journal, I remembered a meeting that I attended several years ago. In this meeting the subject of coming up against walls in our lives was brought to the table for discussion. As I listened to the members of the group share their experience I gained a new perspective. What one person shared in that meeting gave me hope and helped me to realize that I could trust a loving God to be with me in whatever decision I felt led to make at the time — whether I decide to turn to the left or to the right when I am at a wall.

I attended a meeting last night and the topic of the 11th step was presented for discussion, “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” When the time came for me to share, I shared what I had heard in the meeting some years to go. When faced with a wall, I can pray for the knowledge of God’s will for me and the power to carry that out and then make a decision to turn to the right or to the left.

Once I make the decision to turn to the right or to the left, I can trust that a loving God will be with me in whatever decision that I make at that time. I do not have to fear that a loving God will abandon me if I make the wrong decision. My experience has taught me that if, at some point — after making the decision to turn to the right or to the left — I then decide that I should have gone in the opposite direction, I can turn around. With my awareness, I can have the assurance that a loving God will be with me as I move in the opposite direction.

With my awareness, I can take the risk to make changes in my life apart from a fear of failure. With my awareness, I can make changes in my life apart from the fear of being abandoned by a loving God.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## How I Found Myself and Broke Free of Agendas Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 25, 2014

Several days ago I wrote and published an article, [More than a Survivor](#). In that article I encouraged individuals who are living with adversity to see themselves as more than survivors and to not get trapped in a “box” set forth for us by a diagnosis, treatment plan, prognosis, stereotype or a societal stigmatization that is based on a contempt prior to investigation. In July of 2014 I wrote an article, [Life may not be the party we had hoped for, but...](#). In this article, I encouraged my readers to live life to the fullest, regardless of what we may have found powerless to change.

In today’s article I would like to echo what I shared in these 2 articles and add some thing else to keep in mind. In my experience, I had to let go of the way that I expected my life to turn out, before I could learn to grow and create with in my set of circumstances. In my experience, I had to work through a grieving process so that I could stop blaming other people and myself. In my experience, I had to work through my own denial, anger, depression and bargaining before I could get to a place of acceptance. In my experience, I had to address my own denial, anger and depression, that festered with in me; before I could stop fighting battles with other people and myself. Before I could find my true self and break free of agendas.

In my experience, I had to do the work to get comfortable in my own skin, so that I could stop looking back to at the way that I envisioned the way my life was supposed to look. In my experience, I discovered that I did myself a **HUGE** favor by doing the work that enabled me to stop fighting against other people and with myself. In my experience, through doing the work; I discovered that other options existed. Options that I never knew existed or thought could be a fit to me. Options to use my gifts, talent and abilities in ways that once seemed out of my grasp. In the process, I discovered that I could live my life beyond the expectations that other people set for me. In the process, I discovered parts of myself that I had disowned many years ago.

**Parts of myself that I had disowned, for many years; in order to live in a belief system that unknowingly sought to manipulate and control me. A belief system, rooted in denial and fueled by unresolved pain and anguish. A belief system that needed for me to remain in denial and fighting against myself. A belief system that, in effect; sought to hold me hostage to a variety of agendas.**

Several years ago I wrote an article to share what I discovered that helped me to find parts of myself that I had disowned for many years. In the process, I became aware and my awareness helped me to break free from a variety of agendas. I would like to share the article with you. Due to the length and content of the article, I have divided the article into Parts. To aid in accessing the article, I have included a link to each of the 10 Parts of the article. Each Part defines and further explains what I share in the previous part (s) of the article. Consequently, I would encourage you to read each Part of the article to gain the benefit of the complete article. The information helped me to find a freedom. A freedom that I never knew existed.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **How I Found Myself and Broke Free of Agendas Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 25, 2014

Although you may not be living with a brain injury, the information in the series can benefit you. Replace the word Traumatic Brain Injury with whatever you may be facing and apply the principles to your particular set of circumstances. I believe that by doing so, through reading the article series; that you will experience a freedom. A freedom that you never knew existed.

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Go and Make it a Good Day — On the Road to Healing — Part 1](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Go and Make it a Good Day — On the Road to Healing –Awareness — Part 2](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Go and Make it a Good Day — On the Road to Healing — Acceptance — Part 3](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Go and Make it a Good Day — On the Road to Healing — Action — Part 4](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Go and Make it a Good Day — Coming out of Isolation — Part 5](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Go and Make it a Good Day — Breaking Free — Part 6](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Make it a Good Day — No Longer in the Shadows — Part 7](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers me to Go and Make it a Good Day — Exchanging a lie for the truth — Part 8](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Go and Make it a Good Day — On the Road to Healing — Learning to Trust — Part 9](#)**

**[Traumatic Brain Injury — What Empowers Me to Go and Make it a Good Day — On the Road to Healing — Empowerment — Part 10](#)**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Traumatic Brain Injury, Self-Esteem and Significance Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 7, 2008

Over the past several days I have been thinking about the concept of significance. As a traumatic brain injury survivor I have struggled to find my place of significance in the world. In my attempts to establish my significance I sought to define my meaning and purpose through the identity of a career, through my participation with various churches / groups / organizations and through what I achieved in my doing. Each of my efforts to find and establish my significance appeared to be thwarted by my traumatic brain injury and invisible disability. But not everything was as it appeared to be.

**In my experience I found that none of these pursuits proved to secure my place in this life or my significance.**

When I failed to establish my place of significance I experienced disillusionment, despair and depression. My disillusionment, despair and depression continued for many years — as I struggled to find my place of significance and meaning. Through my struggle I reached a point in time when I surrendered to the notion that my significance could be secured or tied to a career, affiliation or achievement. As I surrendered to the notion that I needed to have my significance validated from outside of me I found a new freedom. My freedom arose as I realized that my significance no longer needed to be validated by my doing through a career, affiliation or achievement.

**“When I reached point in my life where I surrendered to the idea that I could find my significance through an identity, affiliation or achievement, I slowly stopped fighting against myself.” Craig J. Phillips**

When I made the decision to stop fighting against myself I had a spiritual awakening. I realized that I no longer needed to have my significance defined for me. With my awareness my focus slowly changed from an external need of approval to an internal sense of validation. Consequently, my need to have a significance in life shifted from a need to do to a need to be. With my awareness, my motivation began to shift from having to do, to needing to be. Through being, I discover that my significance evolved naturally as I express who I am. Subsequently, as I have allowed myself to be, I have been able to learn to create with the seeds of my significance — apart from the need to perform to have a significance.

**“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.” Robert Louis Stevenson**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Traumatic Brain Injury, Self-Esteem and Significance Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 7, 2008

Subsequently, as I plant with the seeds of my being I am set free from the need to have significance, because significance no longer needs to be my goal. Because significance no longer needs to be my goal I am able to let go of my need to be significant. Significance, therefore no longer needs to be the bench mark to validate my meaning, significance, self-esteem or value. With my understanding I no longer need to dependent upon the harvest — that is brought about by the seeds that I plant — because I no longer need to be invested in the harvest or outcomes. By letting go of the outcomes or harvest, I am able to accept that my being is simply enough. Through accepting that my being is simply enough, I am able to surrender to and trust the process.

By surrendering to and trusting the process I am able to cease from my striving, because I no longer need to judge who I am by the outcome or the harvest. Because I realize that I no longer need to judge who I am, I am freed from the notion that I need to prove my significance, worth or value. Consequently, I am freed to celebrate who I am — just because I am. I am able to celebrate my being apart from having to do to prove my significance or value. Therefore, I am free to create with my being, not in my doing.

**I am only one, but still I am one. I can not do everything, but still I can do something. Helen Keller**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## How to Manage Money while Living on SSDI — Social Security Disability Insurance

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 2, 2012

For individuals who learn more effectively through watching and listening, I have created a video presentation of this article. Here is a link to the video presentation: [How to Create and Maintain a Budget while Living on a Fixed Income Video Presentation](#). I explain how to manage money while living on SSDI in this video presentation and the principles can benefit anyone living on a fixed income. What I would suggest for individuals watching the video presentation, is that you come back to this article to see the charts that I use to set up the budget.

Hello and welcome back to Second Chance to Live my friend. I am happy to see that you decided to stop by to visit with me. You are always welcome around my table. As I shared in my article and video series, My Journey thus Far, I had a long history of getting and losing jobs. The impact of getting and losing jobs was that I experienced a tremendous amount of financial insecurity in my life.

Because I experienced ongoing financial insecurity in my life, when I was deemed to be unemployable and approved to begin receiving a monthly SSDI check, I made a decision to curb my financial insecurity. The way in which I curbed my financial insecurity was to set up a monthly budget and stick to that budget. I have been told that I should share the system with other people who are living on a monthly SSDI check.

Below, I will share how I set up my monthly budget. The success of any budget is that I need to adhere and maintain the budget and live with in my means. Consequently, I am prudent and frugal with how and when I spend the funds allotted to me by my monthly SSDI check. I hope by studying my system, you too will be able to curb any financial insecurity that you may be experiencing my friend.

At the beginning of each month I have my check deposited into my checking account. When that money is deposited into my account, I set up my monthly budget accordingly. I will use the below table (s) to show how I set up my budget. At the top of each of the columns I put the category or what I need to pay for as the bill comes due each month. With in each column I place the budgeted amount of money.

General	Food	Savings	Gas	Rent	Auto/Renter's Insurance
800 This amount is not going to change each month. To avoid financial insecurity be prudent. Do not spend money that you do not have and Do NOT use credit	I live with in my means and do not purchase items that I do not need, just because I may want	I add to this section, as I am able to each month from my general section – for a rainy	I approximate this amount from previous gas expenditures from the previous month. Deduct each gas purchase from this amount and pay attention to	Contact your area Programs for Accessible Living. They helped me get connected to an agency called the Neighborhood Development Program which	I have this amount drafted from my checking account. Check with your insurance company – for your car – to

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

<p>cards unless you already have money saved up and budgeted for that purchase. When making purchases to pay for miscellaneous purchases, make sure to keep your receipts. By keeping your receipts from your purchases you can check for discrepancies when balancing your check book / register when you receive your bank statement.</p>	<p>them.</p>	<p>day.</p>	<p>how much money is left for gas for the rest of the month.</p>	<p>helped to assist me with my rent. Apply for Housing Assistance with the Housing Authority in your area.</p>	<p>see if bundling your car and renter's insurance will save you money.</p>
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In the General section I put my monthly SSDI check. From that check I deduct my monthly expenses and the items that I budget for as I have a need. For sake of an example, say that I receive \$800 SSDI check each month. When I have added together each of the amounts as shown below — to pay for bills and my budget — I then deduct the total from the monthly SSDI check that I have listed in my General section. Below is an example of how I add up my monthly bills and the money I allot for different budgets.

Bills	Budget
Food	Toiletries
Gas	Automobile
Rent	Shoes

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
 Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

Car / Renter's Insurance	Clothes
Utilities	Sneakers
Cable	Whatever else you would like to budget for to purchase in the future my friend
Gym Membership	
Savings	
Total Amount	Total Amount

Once I add up my bills and my budget expenses, I then deduct the total amount from my General Section and my SSDI check. Once I deduct the combined bills and budget items from my SSDI check amount, I then place the figured amounts that I will need to pay for those expenses under the designated column to pay for my expenses and budgeted items. When a bill comes due or is automatically deducted from my checking account, I then deduct that amount from each of the designated sections.

After I deduct my bills and my budget items from the General section – My SSDI Check – the left over money is used to pay for miscellaneous items during the month. With all my food, toiletry and miscellaneous purchases made during the month, I save all of my receipts and place them in an envelop. I started this practice to check for errors that I may have made in my calculations when I receive my bank statement from the bank. By saving the receipts — if there is a discrepancy — I can check my records.

As a note, although I may not be able to budget only \$5 or \$10 each month for such things as toiletries, shoes, sneakers and clothes, etc., by budgeting some thing each month – over a period of months – I am able to budget enough money to pay for those items.

Planning, Prudence and being Frugal minimizes financial insecurity.

Utilities	Cable	Gym	Toiletries	Automobile	Shoes
I approximate this amount each month, based on the previous month's bill. If it is more I take the amount from my	Basic cable and internet. No frills, movies or services. I can watch TV shows online	The YMCA that I work out at has a program to help individuals with low incomes. Check into similar	When you go to purchase these items and you are also buying food items, when you get to the		

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 Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

general section to make up the balance.

through Hulu, Fancast or other similar free services.

programs that your local YMCA or YWCA. By doing so you may find that you can afford to work out at a gym on a regular basis. I am glad I checked into the program.

register separate the toiletries from the food items. Then ask the person at the register / check out to put your food items on one receipt and your toiletries on another receipt. By doing so, when you get home, you will be able to deduct your food items from that section and your toiletries from your toiletries section.

Sneakers                      Clothes                      Budget Item                      Budget Item                      Budget Item                      Budget Item

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
 Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

In the event that you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask those questions my friend. All questions are good questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

As you listen to, watch or read my articles and questions come to mind, please send those questions to mind. All questions are good questions. In the event that you would like to leave a comment, I would love to hear from you. To do so, please use the below contact form. I will respond to your comments and questions.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## The Power of Identification Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 18, 2007

Through my process and in my experience I have discovered an undeniable truth. There is tremendous power in identification. Although living with brain injuries, invisible disabilities, other disabilities — or adversity in general — can leave you and I feeling alone and isolated, the good news is that we no longer have to remain alone or isolated. We can reach out to one another. We can find comfort, courage and hope through the power of identification.

By reaching out to and identifying with my fellows, I find the comfort, courage and hope to explore beyond my feelings of being alone and isolated. By reaching out and identifying with my fellows, I find the ability to move beyond my struggle to accept myself. By reaching out and identifying with my fellows, I find the ability to trust the process, a loving God and myself.

Several years ago I wrote an article to share what I have learned about the power of identification. Because I have experienced comfort, courage and hope — through the power of identification — I share very personal information in the articles that I write for Second Chance to Live. My motivation in sharing this information is that as you read my articles, you will no longer feel alone or isolated.

My hope is that as you read, listen to or watch articles from Second Chance to Live, you will experience the power of identification. My hope is that you will be given the comfort, courage and hope to explore beyond your feelings of being alone and isolated. My hope is that as you read, listen to / watch articles from Second Chance to Live, you will be able to move beyond your struggle to accept yourself.

### The Power of Identification

Welcome back and I am so glad you decided to stop by and rest. You are a gift to me. I am fired up about a particular topic today. I have been fired up about this topic for most of my life. As a person with a disability, I never quite felt like I was enough or that I measured up. I never quite understood why I did not measure up until I began to understand the insidious nature of comparison. For too long, I measured my worth by the status quo. I allowed the measuring stick of other people to dictate how and what I thought about myself.

When I started treating myself with dignity and respect, I began having spiritual awakenings. One of these awakenings revealed that having a disability challenged the status quo. Although I sought to measure up to expectations, I found myself consistently falling short in my efforts. Living with my brain injury and my invisible disability left me clueless in my attempts to compensate for my real — yet unknown — deficits and limitations. In the process of my attempting to overcompensate I lost sight of who I was as a person. In the process, I became a human doing rather learning how to be in life.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## The Power of Identification Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 18, 2007

Doing, instead of being became more important as I sought to prove my standing amongst the status quo. Even as I attempted to overcompensate through overachieving I had no idea how my brain injury and my invisible disability intrinsically impacted my world. What made matters worse was that I sought to defend the notion that my brain injury, invisible disability, deficits and limitations had nothing to do with my inability to meet expectations. In the course of defending my denial, I found that I was denying who I was as an individual.

In the course of maintaining and defending both my denial and the denial of family and friends, I grew weary in my attempts to prove that I was not an individual living with a brain injury, an invisible disability with real deficits and limitations. In my weariness, I reached a point in my life when I could no longer deny my reality. When I reached this place of despair — in which I could no longer deny my reality — I discovered a series of cause, effects and contrasts. I will share some of what I learned through examining those cause, effects and contrasts. This list is not exhaustive and can be expanded.

After you read my contrasts, get a pen and paper and determine what other contrasts you can add to my list. In the process of reading my cause, effects and contrasts and then developing your own list, you may find that you have been berating yourself for no good reason.

### Identification as opposed to Comparison

Identification empowers, where as comparison minimizes contribution. Comparison asserts stipulation to inclusion. Comparison mandates that certain criteria be met. Comparison predicates acceptance. Comparison demands compliance. Comparison postulates performance. Comparison shuns that which is different. Identification encourages progress while comparison specifies and expects outcomes. Identification celebrates small successes, whereas comparison, by its nature seeks to invalidate. Identification encourages individuality and motivates self-expression. Identification cultivates creativity.

Individuality is not considered a threat. Status quo is dismissed. Identification empowers and motivates. Identification musters enthusiasm in the face of any discouragement. Identification breaks down the walls of isolation. Alienation is dismissed. Eccentricity is held in esteem. Self-respect, self-esteem, and self-worth no longer need to be qualified. Value and ability is accepted at face value. Identification seeks to reconcile. Identification promotes humility.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

### The Power of Identification Part 3

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 18, 2007

As I seek to identify with others I practice love and tolerance. Identification frees my humanity to explore apart from comparison's dictates. Identification encourages individual expression. Identification encourages hope, where as comparison predicates performance. Identification encourages process. Identification promotes self-confidence. Progress is accepted as a function of seeking to accept both others and one self. As I love and accept myself, I am free to create with my being.

My being and worth is not tied to a specific "toy" or outcome. I no longer need to keep up with the Jones. I no longer need to chase after external validation. Identifying with others dispels my need to judge. Identification gives me permission to take risks and to scrape my knees in the process. Identification promotes excellence, not perfection. Identification frees me to stay in the moment and to live life on life's terms. Identification promotes unity.

I am interested to know what other contrasts you may have discovered. If you have any, please share them with me.

"It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us."  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Empowering Your Life — The Difference between Humility and Humiliation Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 14, 2012

Several years ago I wrote the below article under the title of Live Beyond Limitations. I feel led to share that article with you at this time. In the Live Beyond Limitations article, I divided the article into 4 Parts. In this article, I will present the article in 2 Parts. The information that I present in this article served to empower my life, as I began to understand that humility had nothing to do with humiliation.

If I may make a suggestion, please take your time as you read through each of the 2 parts. By taking the time to reflect, digest and absorb the distinctions, I believe that your life will take on new meaning, you will be empowered and you will begin to understand that humility has nothing to do with humiliation.

Living Beyond Limitations was originally published on June 16, 2009 in Second Chance to Live.

### **Empowering Your Life — The Difference between Humility and Humiliation Part 1**

Welcome back to Second Chance to Live. I am happy to see that you decided to stop by to visit with me. I have been thinking about a very powerful principle. I have found that this principle — when applied — helps me to step out of my limitations into the abundance of possibilities. Discouragement is disbanded as an illusion of lack. The conceivable becomes attainable while apprehension is traded for hope.

**Progress rather than perfection becomes a way of life. The bondage of needing to be perfect is replaced with the pursuit of excellence.**

The voice of inadequacy is replaced with the voice of enough. I no longer have to be right to feel secure. I am free to say, “I don’t know”. I am made strong when I am weak. I am free to take risks because I realize that I can not fail. I am able to laugh at myself because I know that I am learning. I am able to let go of outcomes because I know that I will get what I need. I can trust the process, a loving God and myself because I do not have to know the big picture.

**The principle that I am referring to is humility. Through my process, I have learned a very valuable lesson. Humility is not humiliation.**

Humility promotes and empowers the individual through meekness. Humility sets the individual free to accept themselves — because the individual knows that they do not have to prove their worth or value. Humility regales the individual with hope because the individual knows that possibilities exist. Humility encourages learning, because the individual realizes that they do not have to already know everything. Humility encourages sets the stage for learning curves.

Humility breeds brings security, because the individual knows that they can trust the process, a loving God and themselves. Humility encourages the individual to let go of that which is out of their control. Humility motivates the individual to ask for help because the individual realizes that they do not have to lean on their own understanding or resources. Humility empowers hope — through trust — because the individual knows that more will be revealed.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## Empowering Your Life — The Difference between Humility and Humiliation Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 16, 2012

Humility seeks to set the individual free, because the individual knows that they can practice easy does it. Humility motivates the individual to take risks because there is no threat of reprisal. Humility encourages the individual to succeed, while at the same time cheer leading their efforts. Humility celebrates the individual as a work in progress. Humility teaches the individual to stay in the moment, to enjoy the process, to do the foot work and to let go of the outcomes.

Humility reinforces self-esteem, self-respect and self-worth. Humility does not seek justification. Humility does not disparage, minimize or marginalize. Humility does not condescend. Humility is free of contempt. Humility is patient and kind. Humility champions and supports the individual. Humility readies the individual for service. Humility empowers with wisdom. Humility gently reveals power through change.

Humility teaches the individual that they are on a journey. Humility teaches the individual that on that journey, the process is more important than the destination. Humility teaches the individual that — some times with seeming serendipity — they are being led in the direction of their destiny

Humiliation on the other hand scorns. Humiliation's motive is to control and limit. Humiliations by nature strips the individual of their uniqueness, self-esteem, self- respect and value. Humiliation demands justification. Humiliation seeks to disparage, minimize and marginalize the individual — at their very core. Humiliation promotes fear and insecurity. Humiliation undermines enthusiasm and motivation. Humiliation promotes fear. Humiliation cripples initiative.. Humiliation quashes hope.

Prior to understanding the distinction between humility and humiliation I berated myself on a daily basis. I believed that I was the problem and thus deserved to be victimized and humiliated by life and the people in my world. Consequently, I felt trapped by the voice of criticism and the clamoring of shame. My efforts to be enough were constantly chided as inadequate. Consequently, I developed insecurity, low self-esteem and low self-worth. I did not believe that I made mistakes, but that I was a mistake.

At the core of my being, humiliation chided me as inadequate and unlovable. My attempts to quiet the voice of humiliation — shame and criticism — only seemed to reinforce the impact that humiliation had upon my life. Unrealistic expectations kept me anxious and depressed. Humiliation reinforced the belief that I could not do enough to be enough. Humiliation stymied my being through intimidation. Humiliation consequently demanded that I be perfect before I could hope to find peace — with other people, much less than with myself.

Humiliation, rather than humility subsequently reinforced my sense of shame and inadequacy. Humiliation distorted my perceptions and held me captive to the belief that who I was and what I had to contribute in life did not matter. Because of my distorted perceptions — prior to understanding the distinction between humility and humiliation — I could not take the risk to be humble. I had to keep hyper vigilant. I had to be on guard.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## **Empowering Your Life — The Difference between Humility and Humiliation Part 3**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 16, 2012

With time and through my recovery process I came to understand that humility validates and heralds my best efforts as good enough for today. Because I have learned how to trust the process — rather than trying to control the process — humility has been able to encourage me to do the foot work and then let go of the outcomes.

**Through maintaining humility I am able to revel in what I am experiencing in the now — without a fear of reprisal. As I let go of my need to justify, answer and defend who I am — I am able to be. As I am able to be I am free to create without the threat of being criticized or shamed for my efforts. Consequently, I am able to focus on excellence — instead of striving to be perfect — with each new day.**

In the pursuit of excellence, I no longer need to listen to the voice of humiliation or be humiliated by my efforts. Consequently, I can rest through my efforts and live beyond my limitations because I do not have to focus on my limitations. Humility allows me to accept who I am, where I am at today. Humility allows me to learn from my experience — rather than judging my experiences. Humility empowers my perspective and motivates me to learn from my circumstances.

**Humility gives me the freedom to be who I am, where I am... Humility releases me to live beyond my limitations because I do not have to depend on my own resources. Humility teaches me to stay in the moment. Humility helps me to find my center. Humility teaches me to trust the process, a loving God and myself.**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## More than a Survivor Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 21, 2014

Recently I heard some one describe themselves, as a survivor. As I thought about how they described themselves, I found myself annoyed. Not annoyed at the person who called themselves a survivor, but at the mindset that often accompanies the word “survivor”. The mindset that, in practice; serves to diminishes the worth and value of the individual.

The mindset that seduces the individual into believing that they are a victim of the adversity, that has befallen them. The mindset that leads the individual to believe that their choices are limited. The mindset that leads the individual into believing that they are prisoners in their own skin. The mindset that lulls the individual into believing that their dreams have been crushed and that their destinies are too far out of reach to them.

The mindset that squelches ambition and motivation. The mindset that fosters complacency. The mindset that spawns secondary gains and secondary dependencies. The mindset that creates an identity through a diagnosis, a treatment plan and a prognosis. The mindset that leads the individual to believe that they are left to live their lives in a “box”. A “box”, in which there are limited options. A “box”, from which there is little hope of escape.

### Today’s Thought

We can move beyond the “box” of a system, that by design seeks to define who we are as individuals; through a diagnosis, a treatment plan and a prognosis. We can move beyond the mindset, that leads us to believe that we are limited as “survivors”. We can move beyond a mindset, that leaves us feeling like prisoners, in our own skin. We can move beyond a mindset, that perpetuates a stereotype; that is based on contempt prior to investigation.

We can live our lives beyond a mindset, that keeps us focused on our limitations. We can move beyond a mindset, that leads us to believe that we have few choices. We can move beyond a mindset, that minimizes and marginalizes who we are as individuals. We can move beyond a mindset, that dismisses, discounts and does not take us seriously. We can move beyond a mindset, that shows us little respect.

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

## More than a Survivor Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 21, 2014

### Epilogue

I share the above with you to encourage you, as I need to remember; that we no longer have to remain trapped by a “survivor” mindset. We can live our lives beyond the confines of diagnosis, a treatment plan and a prognosis. We can live beyond the grasp of a stereotype and a societal stigmatization. We can live beyond the “voices”, that seek to undermine our hope, dreams and destinies.

I wrote **More than a Survivor** to encourage people. who have been faced with adversity; to not get trapped into believing that they are victims of what has befallen them. I did not mean to challenge the reality of what has transpired in our lives, that we have survived.

I wrote **More than a Survivor** to encourage people who are faced with trauma, abuse and life changing events to not allow those events to define who they are as individuals.

I wrote **More than a Survivor** to encourage people to see themselves as more than a survivor of those life changing events. By seeing myself as more than a survivor, I begin to realize that I have choices. These choices help me to grow in awareness and acceptance of the event so that I can get into action.

I wrote **More than a Survivor** to encourage people faced by life changing events to get into action to pursue their dreams, their destinies and to impact their world.

**We can live our lives beyond the mindset, of a “survivor”. We can be more than a “survivor”.**

**Below are several quotes that inspire me to remember, that I can be more than a survivor. As you read these quotes, may you also be inspired to remember; that you can be more than a survivor.**

**“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” Helen Keller**

**“Insist on yourself, never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life’s cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous half-possession...Do that which is assigned to you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much.” Ralph Waldo Emerson**

**“History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.” B.C. Forbes**

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

### **More than a Survivor Part 3**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 21, 2014

**“Regardless of your lot in life, you can build some thing beautiful on it.” Zig Ziglar**

**“Don’t judge your day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.” Robert Louis Stevenson**

**“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” Theodore Roosevelt**

**“Absorb what is useful, reject what is useless and add specifically your own.” Bruce Lee**

**“If you advance confidently in the direction of your dreams and endeavor to live the life that you have imagined...you will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.” Henry David Thoreau**

**“I will prepare and some day my chance will come.” Abraham Lincoln**

**“What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.” Zig Ziglar**

**“Decision is the spark that ignites action. Until a decision is made, nothing happens.” Wilfred A. Peterson**

**“Our circumstances are not meant to keep us down, but they are meant to build us up.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

**“Sometimes adversity is what you need to face in order to become successful.” Zig Ziglar**

**“In my experience I have found that adversity is what has made me successful, because I refused to give up because of adversity.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

**“Here’s to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes... the ones who see things differently — they’re not fond of rules... You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them, but the only thing you can’t do is ignore them because they change things... they push the human race forward, and while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.” Steve Jobs**

**“Be the change you want to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi**

**“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

## Biographical Information About the Author

My name is Craig J. Phillips. The reason for my writing to you is to share a little about myself and to also encourage you to not give up on your dreams. My hope is that my experience will encourage you to not give up on your process or your self. My hope is that you will not let disappointment to keep you from pursuing your bliss and your destiny. My hope is that you will not give up on hope, because – as I have found – more will be revealed in time. My hope is that as you read a little about my story, you will see your circumstances and experiences in a new light, you will find a way to follow your bliss in ways that will work for you and that you will be encouraged and empowered to follow your dreams.

I am a traumatic brain injury and survivor. My injury occurred as a result of a motor vehicle accident in 1967 when I was 10 years old. I sustained an open skull fracture, right frontal lobe damage, a several brain bruise with brain stem involvement. In 1967 there was not much known about brain injuries or neurological rehabilitation. Once my external wounds healed my traumatic brain injury was never again considered to be a factor in my development or my difficulties. Because I was able to teach myself how to walk, talk, read, write and speak in complete sentences the effects of the injury to my brain became invisible and hidden.

Although I was not expected to succeed beyond high school academically, I was able to graduate on time with my high school class and then go on to obtain my undergraduate (4 majors, 2 universities and one junior college in 10 years) and graduate degree (3 1/2 years and 2 different grad schools). I later discovered that the difficulties that I encountered during both my undergraduate and graduate degree programs were due to the residuals from my brain injury. In addition to having difficulties in both my undergraduate and graduate programs I had a long history of getting and losing jobs. While working as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, I became a client of the Dept. of Vocational Rehab.

After becoming a client of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and completing their evaluation process, I was deemed to be unemployable. Because I had been able to obtain my undergraduate and graduate degrees I found myself in a very frustrating predicament. Although I had diligently applied myself – both academically and vocationally – I felt like some one all dressed up with no where to go and with no one seeming to want what I had to give, despite my efforts. After all of my struggles to succeed I found myself unable to succeed and was declared disabled by the Social Security Administration in 1999 and began receiving monthly SSDI benefits.

Although I had diligently applied myself both academically and vocationally for many years, I found myself being effectively discounted and dismissed. Although I felt discounted, dismissed and like some one all dressed up with no where to go, I still had a desire to follow my dreams and my destiny. Although I felt minimized, marginalized, dismissed and discounted by people who did not want what I had to give, I still had a desire to encourage, motivate, empower and share hope. In my process of finding a way that would work for me I wrote an autobiography, a book and then on February 6, 2007 at the encouragement of a friend, I found my way to share hope through my web log Second Chance to Live. I began writing and publishing articles on Second Chance to Live.

To read a more detailed About Page concerning my process and journey, please click on this link: [Detailed About Page](#)

“It is not as important as what happened to us, but how we respond to what happened to us.”  
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA