

The Tortoise and The Hare

There once was a speedy hare who bragged about how fast he could run. Tired of hearing him boast, Slow and Steady, the tortoise, challenged him to a race.

All the animals in the forest gathered to watch.

Hare ran down the road for a while and then and paused to rest. He looked back at Slow and Steady and cried out, "How do you expect to win this race when you are walking along at your slow, slow pace?"

Hare stretched himself out alongside the road and fell asleep, thinking, "There is plenty of time to relax."

Slow and Steady walked and walked. He never, ever stopped until he came to the finish line.

The animals who were watching cheered so loudly for Tortoise, they woke up Hare.

Hare stretched and yawned and began to run again, but it was too late. Tortoise was over the line.

After that, Hare always reminded himself, "Don't brag about your lightning pace, for Slow and Steady won the race!"

Brain Injury Recovery is a Process, Not a Destination



**Sustaining a Brain Injury can be Likened
to Emptying a Box of Jigsaw Pieces onto a Table.**

**Let me share a little about my process of making sense of the individual pieces
of my puzzle living with an invisible disability, called a brain injury.**

My Process and My Journey Living with a Brain Injury

My Brain Injury – MVA, August 1967 when I was 10 years old New Jersey. Open Skull Fracture, Right Frontal Lobe, Severe Brain Bruise and Brain Stem Involvement – Coma 3 weeks. Fractured Left Femur. Traction for 8 weeks, Spica full body cast 5 months.

I had several EEG's – one with spikes and one with paste – and a battery of cognitive and behavioral testing. The results were shared with my parents, but they did not share the results with me. I did not find out about the test results, done when I was 10 years of age, until the day I obtained my graduate degree.

Once my external wounds healed, the impact of my brain injury became invisible. The impact of my traumatic brain injury was never again discussed or considered as significant. I grew up being blamed for not being enough. I internalized feeling as though I did not just make mistakes, but that I was a mistake.

My Journey Living with a Brain Injury

I graduated on time with my high school class and went on to obtain my undergraduate degree in 10 years – with 4 different majors, two universities and one college. I then obtained my graduate degree in 3 ½ years and 2 different graduate schools. I obtained my graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling.

While working as a vocational rehab counselor with the Florida Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, due to difficulties on the job, I disclosed that I experienced a TBI when I was 10 years old. As a result, I was made a client of DVR while still working as a counselor with DVR. 3 months later I was terminated.

Following an unsuccessful job placement I was terminated as a client of the DVR. After being terminated by DVR I was fired from several more jobs. Hearing that North Carolina was hiring Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, I sent resumes to North Carolina. After being recruited, I moved to NC in June 1996.

My Process and My Journey Living with a Brain Injury

Four months after moving to North Carolina and beginning the job, I was terminated. After being terminated and an unsuccessful job search I reapplied for SSDI for the 3rd time and applied to begin receiving services through the North Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.

After the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation evaluation was completed the decision was made that I was unemployable. Not long after being deemed unemployable, my 3rd application was approved in late 1998 and I began receiving SSDI. Nevertheless, I had a difficult time letting go and accepting my reality.

When I reached a point in time when the pain of denying my reality exceeded my need to deny my reality a shift occurred. When this shift occurred I began a process of grieving. I moved from a place of denying to being angry for what I could not change, to trying to bargain my way out. But my efforts to bargain changed nothing.

My Journey Living with a Brain Injury



- When my efforts failed to change and control what could not be changed, I became depressed and despondent.
- When I became sick and tired of being sick and tired, I reached a place of acceptance and surrender.
- When I reached a place of surrender and acceptance, a whole new world opened up to me. I began to realize choice.

Experiencing a Second Chance to Live



- “When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.”
Helen Keller
- “Regardless of your lot in life, you can build something beautiful on it.” *Zig Ziglar*
- “It is not as important as what happened or happens to us, as how we respond to what happened or happens to us.”
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

Awareness, Acceptance and Action

Through grieving my reality, I was able to stop beating up on myself for what I could not do and begin looking for ways to use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that would work for me:

**Backstory of Second Chance to Live 1 and
Backstory of Second Chance to Live 2**

On February 6, 2007 I created a blog Second Chance to Live. Over the course of the past 10 years I have written 1645 articles, created 335 video presentations and published 10 e Books. Below this presentation I have included a series of links to these various resources.

In this keynote presentation I am going to share several of the concepts and principles that have helped me in my ongoing recovery process. As you listen to what I have learned through my ongoing recovery process, may you also be encouraged in your ongoing recovery process.

Lessons Learned through my Process and Journey Living with a Brain Injury

In my experience I had to get to a point when the pain of denying my reality was less than the pain of needing to deny my reality. Pain that I could no longer defend or deny the reality of the impact of my traumatic brain injury over which I was powerless to change.

I had to move through a grieving process – 5 stages – Confront my and other people's denial, move through being angry, trying to change what I was powerless to change, move through a period of depression to get to a place of acceptance – in order to do something different.

Acceptance comes out of awareness. Acceptance gives me the ability to take action.

What I began to realize after moving through my process of grieving: I am not my brain injury, a label, a stereotype or a stigmatization that someone wants my to own.

I may learn in a way that people do not know how to teach. In my experience I came to realize that people learn in different ways – visual, auditory and by doing or a combination of these ways.

I needed to learn how to do things in ways that worked for me and this just took time.

Lessons Learned through my Process and Journey Living with a Brain Injury

Recovery is about a process and a journey, not a destination.

Wanting other people to accept our reality is not wrong. What I have found is that for people to accept our reality would mean they would have to feel feelings that they may not know how to process or want to feel. Make changes that they may not know how to or want to make those changes.

What is most important is that I learn to accept my reality and not wait for other people to catch up.

Learning how to trust the Process, a Loving God and myself.

A brain injury is like a “switch” on the railroad of life that points us off in another direction that we would have otherwise traveled. A direction to our destiny. In a way to use our gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for us.

Tapestries, Puzzle Pieces,

Strike-outs and Light Bulbs,

Ingredients, Elephant Riddle,

Stepping up Plate and keep Swinging

Lessons Learned through my Process and Journey Living with a Brain Injury

What you may be being told what you need to settle for in your life. You don't have to stay in a "box"

Seeing our circumstances as opportunities to learn, instead of seeing them as a gauntlet to be endured.

Repetition

Persistence

Tenacity

Tweaking, Adapting

Owning and Assimilating

Creating a Healthy Relationship with Hope

Moving through the Door of Hope

Creating hope one circumstance or ingredient at a time

The Flight of the Butterfly and Struggle to Strength

Keep from Falling into the Victim Role

Creating New Neural Pathway and Brain Reorganization through Repetitive Mirrored Movements otherwise known as Neuroplasticity



- 18 years ago I began training in a program using different martial art disciplines. Little did I know that I was creating new neural pathways and brain reorganization.
- Through my program, I discovered that I had a difficult time learning new sequences of information. To compensate for my difficulties, I engaged in repetitive mirrored movements.
- In the process, I discovered that I was able to, over time, become proficient in my abilities through learning one skill at a time, to then combine those skills into many skill sets.

Creating New Neural Pathway and Brain Reorganization through Repetitive Mirrored Movements otherwise known as Neuroplasticity



- **A program to engage both sides of your brain and both sides of your body to create new neural pathways and brain reorganization to enhance both the dominant and non-dominant sides of your body.**
- **Do a short demonstration using the short sticks.**

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

I have created 12 Categories with list of Articles on Different Topics

Peer Support after Brain Injury

Fulfilling Dreams after Brain Injury

Overcoming Bullying after Brain Injury

Building Self-Esteem after Brain Injury

Celebrating Success after Brain Injury

Creating Hope after Brain Injury

Brain Injury Recovery – An Ongoing Process

Self-Acceptance after Brain Injury

Relationships following a Brain Injury

Finding and Knowing Peace after Brain Injury

Finding Purpose following a Brain Injury

My Journey living with a Brain Injury

Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network Lists of Articles within each Topic Category

Peer Support after Brain Injury — We Are Not Alone -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-peer-support-brain-injury-not-alone-list-articles/>

Fulfilling Dreams after Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-fulfilling-dreams-after-brain-injury-list-articles/>

Overcoming Bullying after Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-overcoming-bullying-brain-injury-list-articles/>



Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network Lists of Articles within each Topic Category

Building Self-Esteem after Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/building-self-esteem-after-brain-injury-list-articles%20/>

Celebrating Success following a Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-celebrating-success-following-brain-injury-list-articles/>

Creating Hope following Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-creating-hope-brain-injury-larticles/>

Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network Lists of Articles within each Topic Category

Brain Injury Recovery -- An Ongoing Process -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-brain-injury-recovery-ongoing-process-list-articles/>

Self-Acceptance after Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-self-acceptance-brain-injury-list-articles/>

Relationships following a Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-relationships-following-brain-injury-list-articles/>

Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network Lists of Articles within each Topic Category

Finding and Knowing Peace after Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-finding-knowing-peace-brain-injury-list-articles/>

My Journey Living with Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-journey-living-brain-injury-list-articles/>

Finding Purpose following a Brain Injury -

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-finding-purpose-brain-injury-article-list/>

Second Chance to Live Resources



- Created a way to Translate Second Chance to Live
<http://secondchancetolive.org/translate-into-your-language/>
- Written and published 10 e Books that are free for download
<http://secondchancetolive.org/healing-10-free-ebooks-traumatic-life-events-major-physical-injuries/>
- Created and uploaded 300 + Video presentations to YouTube
<http://secondchancetolive.org/a-list-of-300-video-presentations-created-to-empower-the-individual-not-the-brain-injury/>

Second Chance to Live Resources



Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network

<http://secondchancetolive.org/2016/06/05/global-brain-injury-peer-support-network-empowering-the-individual-not-the-brain-injury/>

I am available to be of service

<http://secondchancetolive.org/i-am-a-vailable-to-be-of-service/>

Some Quotes that Empower my Process Pieces

“Don't judge your day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.”

Robert Louis Stevenson

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

“Things turn out best for people who make the best out of the way things turn out.” *Anonymous*

“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 that they have taught me.” *Scott Adams – American Cartoonist*

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

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

Some Quotes that Empower my Process Pieces

“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 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*

“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*

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.”

“One who gains strength by overcoming obstacles possesses the only strength which can overcome adversity.” *Albert Schweitzer*

Some Quotes that Empower my Process Pieces

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

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

“Dreams do not vanish, as long as people do not abandon them.” *Phantom F. Harlock*

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

“Seek out that particular mental attribute which makes you feel most deeply and vitally alive, along which comes the inner voice which says, 'This is the real me' and when you have found that attitude, follow it.” *James Trusdale Adams*

How to Get In Touch with Me



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