

“Acceptance of what has happened is the first step to overcoming the consequences of any misfortune.” William James

“Freedom is nothing but a chance to be better.” Albert Camus

“Just keep on going and keep believing in your own original vision, no matter what odds you have to overcome. And especially don't be stopped by your own fears.” Angelina Maccarone

FREE

“Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.” Winston Churchill

More will be revealed with time

**Craig J. Phillips MRC,BA
Second Chance to Live
secondchancetolive.org**

Understanding the Impact of Invisible Disabilities -- “Why do I Feel so Misunderstood and Shunned?” Part 3 Zoom Presentation

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live

Comment and Question

Recently I received a comment and a question. As an individual living with the impact of a brain injury and an invisible disability, I have asked the question many times.

The question I received was, **“Why do I feel so misunderstood and shunned?”**. In my experience and through many struggles the answer to the question became apparent to me. If you have asked this question too, I would invite you to read on to find out what became apparent.

What became apparent to me helped me to have peace in my life when misunderstood and shunned.

What became apparent to me helped me to grow in self-acceptance, despite being misunderstood and shunned.

What became apparent to me helped me to let go of the people who misunderstand and shun me.

What became apparent to me helped me to move across the bridge called hope and create a good life for myself.

What Became Apparent to Me

In my experience and through my own recovery process, I came to realize two realities.

The **first reality** is that many people do not want or do not know how to process their feelings.

The **second reality** that helped me to begin to have more peace in my life was that many people either do not know how to or do not want to change.

To face the reality that our lives have been forever changed because of our brain injury may be too painful.

Too painful for them to accept. Because accepting our reality may be too painful, individuals may stay in and defend their denial.

As a result, and because of the lack of acceptance, they may justify, in their minds, the way they treat us.

I Need to Remember

Defending their denial for what they do not want to accept is not our fault.

Justifying the way, they treat us, because of their lack of acceptance; is not our fault.

Did Not Work

In my experience and for many years (once I began to come out of my own denial) I attempted to get family members and friends to understand and accept my reality.

I tried to explain to them in many different ways that I was not “fudging” or “making excuses”.

I tried to convince them otherwise, but the more I tried the more I felt frustrated.

What was conveyed to me was, that if I just tried harder then, I would not be affected by my brain injury or by my reality.

But the reality was that I had tried “every which what way”. Every way possible to prove that I was not affected or impacted by the open skull fracture and brain injury that occurred when I was 10.

Ongoing Conflicts

Instead of helping them to understand and convincing them of my reality, my efforts **only created ongoing conflicts**.

Conflicts in them because of what they could not accept and conflict in me for feeling that there was something wrong with me.

Conflicts in me for not being able to not be impacted by a brain injury. Conflicts in me by attempting to disprove my reality.

Conflicts in them that would leave them angry. **Conflicts in me** that would leave me frustrated.

Conflicts in me that left me with a sense of shame. A sense of shame for not being able to overcome the impact of my **brain injury** and my **invisible disability**.

Awakening

After much toil and cycles through the above-mentioned conflicts, I had a spiritual awakening.

A realization that I needed to do something different. A realization that I needed to do something to be able to accept myself to get different results.

A realization that what I was trying to change, was not changing the impact of my brain injury or helping my relationships...

Insanity – doing the same things over and over again expecting to get different results.

Making Choices

When I reached a point when I could no longer deny and defend my reality, I made some life changing choices.

I began to grieve my reality.

Grieving my reality helped me to get to a place of acceptance. Acceptance provided the “bridge” to taking a different course of action. A course of action to create hope in my life.

A Bridge of Acceptance to Cross Over to Create Hope



Through my grieving process, I discovered that as I was able to face, confront and address my own denial. By facing, confronting and addressing my denial I started to walk across the bridge.

Finding Freedom from the Struggle

What I discovered was that by confronting my own lack of acceptance, I was able to let go of **the struggle**.

The **struggle** to get them to be **OK** with me, so that we could be **OK**, so that I could hope to be **OK** with me.

The **struggle** that convinced me that I needed to get “them” to understand and accept what I could not change.

The **struggle** that led me to believe that I needed them to accept my reality before I could get on with my life.

What I Discovered

I alone needed to accept the impact of my brain injury and my invisible disability.

I can not wait for people to start or come across the bridge of acceptance.

I needed to and need to let go of what other people think of me because of their lack of acceptance.

I needed to cross the bridge of acceptance and keep walking to fulfill my destiny.

I needed to keep walking to create a good life for myself in my reality.

I needed to discover how to be effective in my reality despite my deficits and limitations.

Realization

I began to realize that being misunderstood and shunned was the “way” in which “they” coped with what they could not accept.

I began to realize that I needed to let go of the people. Let of the people who misunderstand and shun me to grow in acceptance.

I began to realize that I needed to let them believe what they need to believe, for whatever reason.

I began to realize that I needed to discover how to use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that would work for me.

A Metaphor

Several years ago, I wrote an article and created a video presentation of the article to illustrate our great value. Our great value because of our reality.

“Living with a Disability and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer”



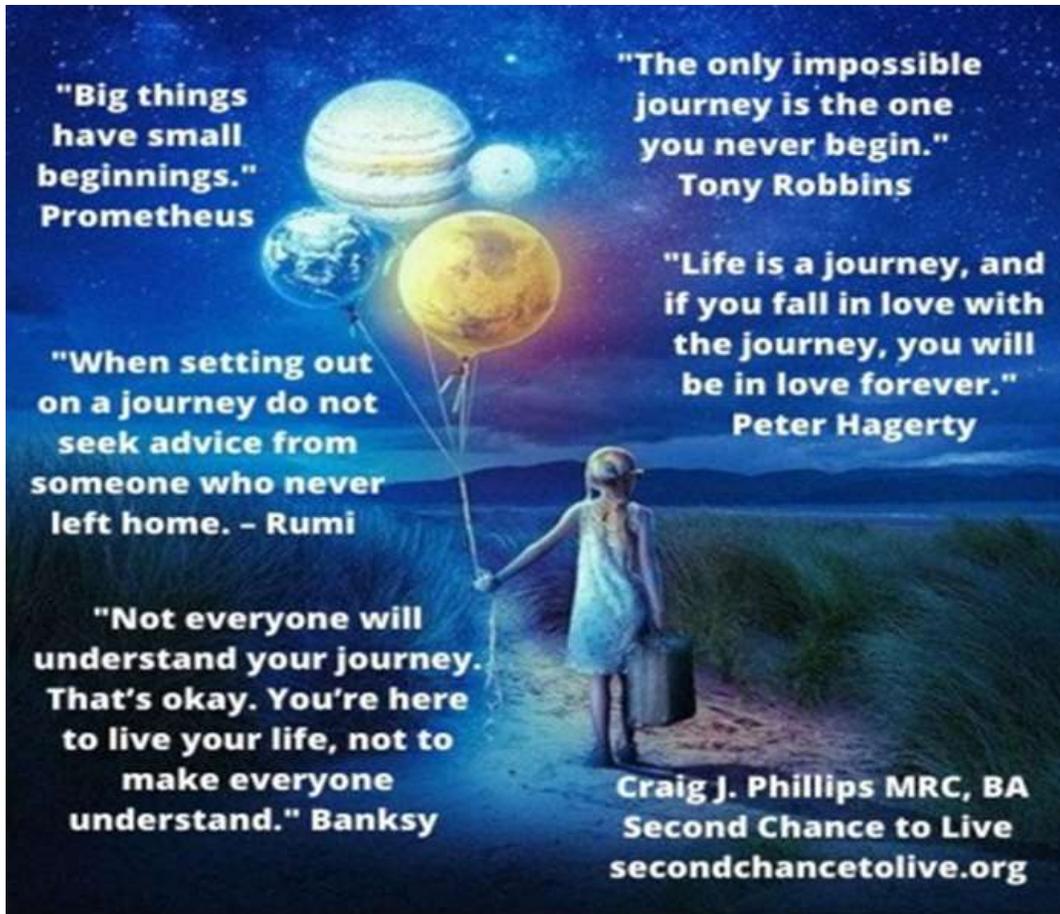
Click on the Links to Read or Watch the Presentation

[Living with a Disability and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer](#)

[Living with a disability and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer](#)
[Video Presentation](#)

Acceptance

In my experience, as I grew in acceptance, I found a new freedom. A freedom to run my own race and stay in my own lane. A freedom to realize and use my great worth and value.



Hope

My experience may help you to let go of the people who misunderstand and shun you because of what they are unable to accept.

My experience may help you to find more peace in your life by accepting who you are as an individual living with a brain injury and an invisible disability.

My experience may help you to not feel less alone.

To read about my experience, process and journey click on this link.

[Second Chance to Live Author's Autobiography in Bullet Points](#)

