



"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." Alice Walker

"There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self." Aldous Huxley

"As long as a man stands in his own way, everything seems to be in his way." Ralph Waldo Emerson

"You are as amazing as you let yourself be. Let me repeat that.

You are as amazing as you let yourself be." Elizabeth Alraune

"Success isn't a result of spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire." Arnold Glasgow

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

“I Am More Than My Brain Injury” Zoom Presentation

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

Second Chance to Live

Living with a Brain Injury can be likened to a box of jigsaw puzzle pieces that are dumped out onto the table of life. Individually the puzzle pieces make little sense, however when put together bring clarity.

In this presentation I will share what I discovered about these individual puzzle pieces. I will share what helped me to learn how to live and thrive with the conundrum of a brain injury jigsaw puzzle.

- 1. How my brain injury happened:** Car Accident in 1967 at the age 10 (open skull fracture, right frontal lobe damage, severe brain bruise with brain stem involvement.
Coma 3 weeks)
- 2. Greatest Challenge:** For many years, buying into my denial (lack of awareness) and the denial (lack of awareness) of family members. Breaking free from my denial.
- 3. Greatest Achievement:** That I have persevered and not given up along the way, when doing so would have been much easier. That I kept looking for a way that worked.

4. One Word or Sentence that Describe you:

Tenacious; “Research your own experience, absorb what is useful, reject what is useless and add specifically your own creation”. Bruce Lee philosophy of Jeet Kune Do applied to my journey.

My Process and Journey Living with a Brain Injury and an Invisible Disability

Mainstreamed into elementary school 6th grade.

Graduated on time with my high school class 1975.

University of Arizona: Geology then Physical Ed.

Transferred to Pima Community College to take prerequisites. Applied to the Licensed Practical Nursing program. Obtained my Nursing Assistant Certification. Eight weeks before graduating with my LPN was asked to leave the LPN program.

Transferred to Oral Robert’s University – parents asked to meet with undergraduate program chair due to unknown difficulties on campus?

Graduate School – Asbury Theological Seminary. On probation. Difficulties as a student chaplain during a J-term. Asked to meet with Department chair at the Seminary. Not admit for my 2nd year.

Graduate School – University of Kentucky. Difficulties with 1st practicum, met with Department Chair Graduate

program. Was given 1 more practicum, Internship difficulties. 1 hour before graduation was told.

Passed the exam and obtained my credentials as a certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC). Worked in Worker's Comp out of Graduate School.

Florida

Employment – fired from 4 professional jobs.

Applied 2 times for SSDI in Florida and then 1 time in North Carolina.

Client of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation in Florida, while I was still working as counselor on probation and then terminated as a counselor. Later terminated as a client due to an unsuccessful job placement.

North Carolina

Recruited Insurance Company as a CRC – Fired 4 months later. Could not find other employment.

Applied for SSDI for the **3rd time**. Applied to the North Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation as a client. After the evaluation process, my Vocational Rehab Counselor determined that I was unemployable.

Felt like someone all dressed up with nowhere to Go although I diligently applied myself both academically and vocationally.

Shortly after being told, I was unemployable, my 3rd application for SSDI was approved. Still had a desire to use my gifts, talents and abilities to be of service.

Got a computer with back pay. Wrote poems, an autobiography, a book and then started a blog, Second Chance to Live on Feb 6, 2007.

Since February 6, 2007

1895 articles, 423 video presentations, 12 e Books, 20 slide show presentations, 34 inspirational posters – body, soul, spirit, mind and emotions approach to an ongoing brain injury recovery process.

Could no longer Deny

When I reach a point in my life

I Discovered that Interest Inventories and Career Assessments do not Factor in Brain Injuries or Invisible Disabilities

What I Discovered about Purpose

“Purpose is about a process and a journey, not a destination. I cannot know until I know and knowing just takes what it takes. There are no shortcuts, “silver bullets” or “magic potions”. By accepting that reality, I am given the gift of knowing by not giving up. I am given the gift of knowing by trusting the process, a loving God and myself.”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

What is VERY IMPORTANT to Remember
Because there are Voices that Want you and I to
Agree with their Assessment of Who we Are as
Individuals living with Brain Injuries.

You and I are not our brain injuries.

You and I are not defined by labels and societal
stigmatization.

Our brain injuries were only an event that occurred in our
lives.

Our brain injuries do not have to define who we are as
individuals.

We are not our deficits or limitations

What Can Do to Empower our Lives

Grieve the impact of our brain injuries. Grieve the impact
of what I am powerless to change.

“Confront our Denial”, “Face our Anger”, “Work through
our Bargaining”, “Embrace. our Depression”, “Accept our
Reality”

Awareness, Acceptance, and Action

Rail Roads — Brain injury was a switch on the railroad of
life, pointing me in a different direction. A direction in
which I get to learn how to use my gifts, talent, and
abilities in ways that work for me.

Quotes that Inspire You and I to Not Give Up

“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 what happens to us, as how we respond to what happens to us.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

“It is not that I am so smart, it is just that I stay with problems longer.” Albert Einstein

“Everyone is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb trees, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.” Albert Einstein

Concepts that Empower the Process of Finding and Living our Destiny

Learning Styles / Strategies — How we learn may have changed after we sustained our brain injuries. Get tested to find out how you learn –Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic or a combination of these learning styles.

Jigsaw Puzzle — Learning from one circumstance (puzzle piece) to be able to step on another puzzle piece. Puzzle pieces will connect as I learn each lesson.

Baking Cakes — learning to combine ingredients — Sensei gives me ingredients to put together to become a black belt

Tapestries — Each thread (combined threads) look like jumbled threads on one side of the tapestry, on the other side combined create a beautiful story.

Elephant Riddle — Question — How do you eat an elephant? Answer — One bite at a Time

Light Bulbs — Thomas Edison

Strike Outs — Babe Ruth

Circumstances — lessons, opportunities, more lessons and opportunities

The Fable of the “Tortoise and the Hare

The Story of the Crack Pot

Bruce Lee’s Philosophy — Research your own experience, absorb what is useful, reject what is useless. And add specifically your own creation.

**Click on this Link to Access my Autobiography
in Bullet Points**

**Click on this Link to Access All of the Resources
Available on Second Chance to Live**