

**“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**

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# **Understanding the Impact of Invisible Disabilities “Acceptance and Discovering a New Normal”**

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**What I shared with a professional working with people  
living with brain injuries when asked about the term  
“new normal”**

## **We are Not Our Brain Injuries – They Do Not Define Us A New Normal**

I believe that life is likened to being on a train. The train runs down what I envision as the track of life.

Along the track, I come to various places that look familiar to me.

And then the day came when I experienced a brain injury.

### **A Switch Pulled**

On that day, unbeknownst to me, a “switch” was pulled and my life headed down a different track of the railroad. The railroad of my life.

The track that once looked familiar no longer looks familiar to me. Although being switched to a different track wasn't my choice,

I now find my life traveling in a different direction.

**Accepting Something Does Not Mean I Like “IT”**

To be able to accept my “new normal” after my brain Injury I discovered that I needed to grieve that I was no longer on the same “**track**”.

**What I found was that I needed to confront what I could not do (my denial).**

In my experience, I had to move through the stages of grieving (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance) to be able to begin the “re-birthing” process.

### **Brain Injury, Re-birth and New Normal**

Re-birthing, re-framing and seeing my life’s experience in a new way after my brain injury

Re-birth in place of the term “a new normal”. I used the term “re-birth” to illustrate the need to own our power.

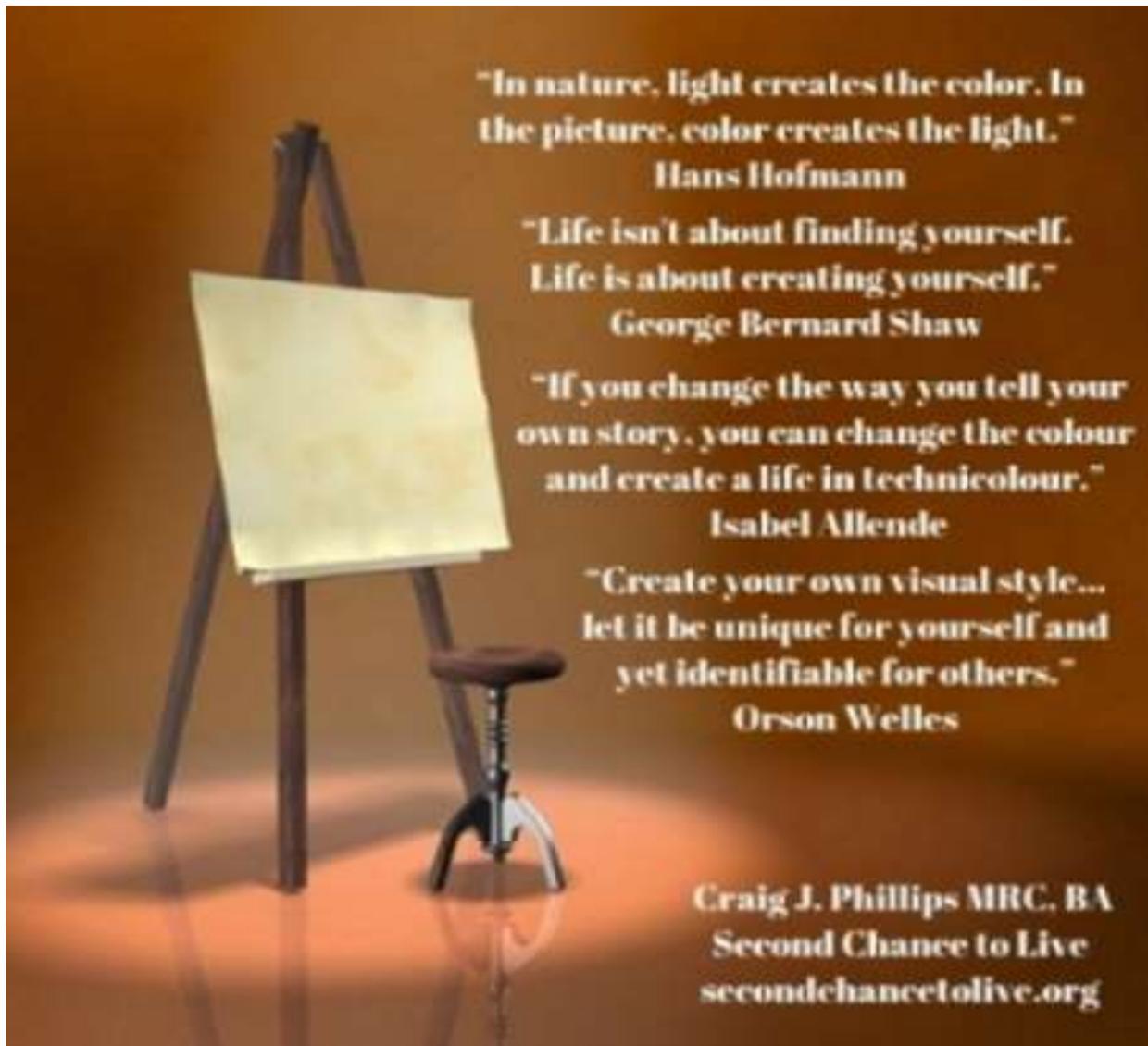
**Own our Power after Experiencing a Brain Injury.**

### **“Re-Birth”**

I shared the term “rebirth” with him because I believe new opportunities exist apart from the “old me”.

By framing my experience as a “rebirth” I am able to start fresh. I am able to start with a “clean slate” or a clean “canvas”.

I am able to “create in ways that work for me. Create in ways that work for me instead of being distracted.



"In nature, light creates the color. In the picture, color creates the light."

Hans Hofmann

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself."

George Bernard Shaw

"If you change the way you tell your own story, you can change the colour and create a life in technicolour."

Isabel Allende

"Create your own visual style... let it be unique for yourself and yet identifiable for others."

Orson Welles

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## Owning Our Power

Owning my power instead of feeling like I had been "cheated" out of something because of my brain Injury.

### Not "Why Me" but "Why not Me"

Why not me gets me out of a mindset of merely being a "survivor" to accepting "what is" to be a "THRIVOR" in my life.

**To THRIVE in my Life, instead of surviving in my Life.**

## **“What Is”**

Through owning my power, I am able to move forward with my life, instead of being stuck by comparing the “old me” with the “new” me.

**By re-framing (looking at “what is” instead of looking at “what isn’t”) I gain hope.**

Instead of comparing the “old me” with the “new me”, I am able to see my experience “what is” as an opportunity to create anew.

By owning my power and accepting what no longer “works” for me (after my brain injury) I no longer have to see myself as limited.

**Limited by what No Longer works for me**

**Moving Forward with my Life after a Brain Injury**

By re-framing, my experience and letting go of what cannot be changed I am able to move forward with my life.

Through seeing my experience as a “re-birthing” I am able to create with “what is”, instead of looking back to “what could have been”.

**By building on “what is” I am able to create my dreams in ways that work for me.**

**“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**



**"Never quit believing that you can develop in life. Never give up. Don't deny the inward spirit that provides the drive to accomplish great things in life." Jon Huntsman, Sr.**

**"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great." Mark Twain**

**"Formulate and stamp indelibly on your mind a mental picture of yourself as succeeding. Hold this picture tenaciously. Never permit it to fade. Your mind will seek to develop the picture... Do not build up obstacles in your imagination." Norman Vincent Peale**

**"You were born to win, but to be a winner, you must plan to win, prepare to win, and expect to win." Zig Ziglar**

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**"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**

## **Strategies that Have Helped Me in my Re-birthing Process**

**(Discovering my New Normal) after my Brain Injury**

Through my recovery process, I became aware that I am much more than my brain injury. I am made up of a **mind, body, soul, spirit, and emotions.**

**With this realization, I became aware that I needed to include my mind, body, spirit, soul, and emotions in my ongoing brain injury recovery process.**

By examining how to involve my mind, body, spirit, soul, and, emotions in my ongoing brain injury recovery process I developed strategies.

### **Strategies for Discovering Our New Normal after a Brain Injury**

Strategies that have Given me the Ability to Own My Power in my Ongoing Brain Injury Recovery Process

#### **What Makes Me Who I Am in My Life**

**Mind** – Growing in wisdom and understanding of how to relate to ourselves, other people and the world around us.

**How We Learn** — Understanding ourselves and how we learn after our brain injury. How we learned before our brain injury may now be different. As a result, we may find ourselves frustrated with learning. Consequently, the way people (teachers) may be trying to teach us may not be the way we learn.

**Get tested to determine how you now learn.**

**Visually, Auditorily, Kinesthetically** or a **combination** of these learning styles.

**Body** – Using the principles of neuroplasticity to improve your hand-eye coordination, balance, body awareness, coordination, focus, and agility. Create new neural pathways and brain reorganization through repetitive mirrored movements using both the dominant and non-dominant sides of our bodies.

### **Connections**

**Spirit** – My connection to God. My connection to myself. The importance of making peace with God so that I can learn to trust Him and His guidance. The importance of making peace with my past is so that my past does not spoil my present.

**Soul** – Growing in knowledge and wisdom of how to accomplish what I discovered through my process of acceptance. Learning to use my gifts, talents as I tap into my ability to live my purpose through my being.

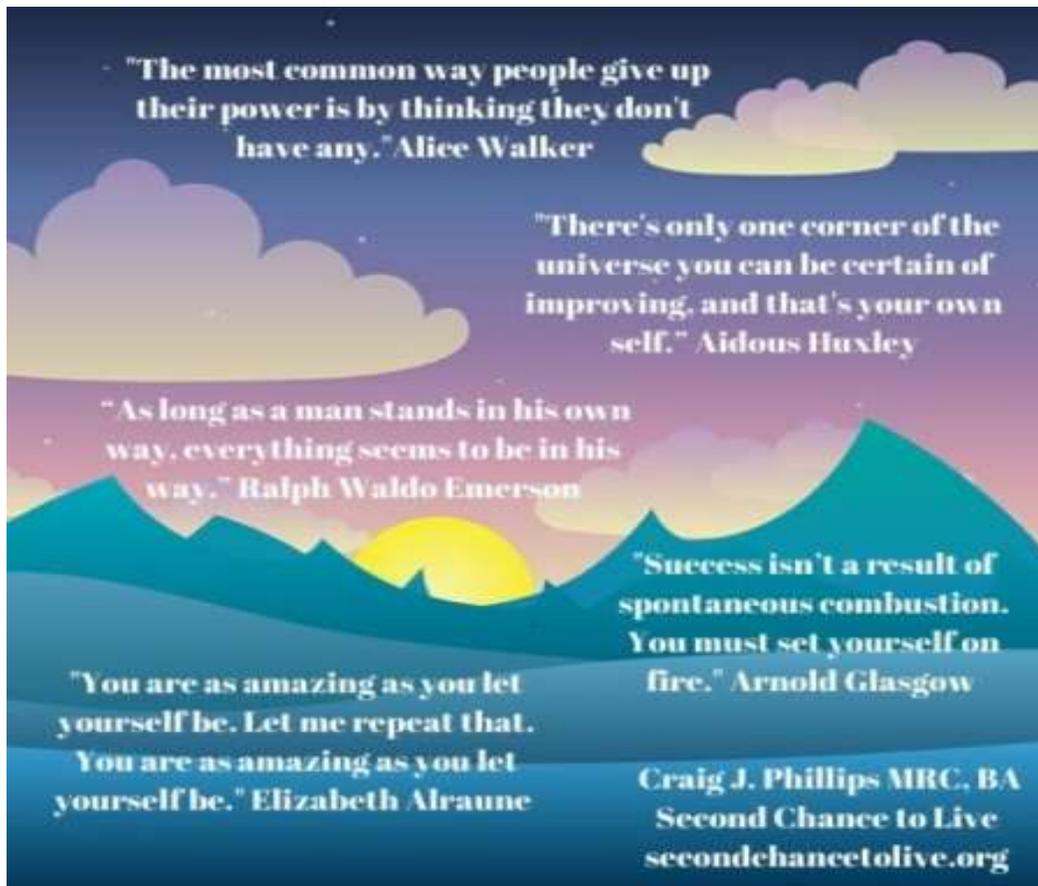
**Emotions** – Learning how to talk, trust and feel with safe people. The power of identification. Coming out of the shadows of isolation and breaking free from feelings of alienation.

### **Give Yourself Permission**

Give yourself permission to look at your life and your experience in a new way. In a way that empowers your process.

Begin to “paint” (if you have not already begun) on the canvas with your gifts, talents, and abilities in ways that work for you.

Begin to build on your lot in life (if you have not already begun to build) and don’t compare your lot to anyone else’s lot.



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

**Brain Injury “Re-Birthing” is an Ongoing Process**

**Develop an Ongoing Recovery Process Strategy**

Develop an ongoing recovery strategy to include your body, soul, spirit, mind, and emotions in your ongoing recovery process.

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 cannot 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](#)**

**Resources that have Helped me to Create my New  
Normal**

**[Resources for Ongoing Brain Injury Recovery --  
Empowering the Individual, not the brain injury](#)**

