

"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

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

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

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

Understanding the Impact of Invisible Disabilities

“Acceptance and Discovering a New Normal”

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live

“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

We are not our brain injury. We are not a diagnosis, prognosis (what people tell us we can and cannot accomplish). We are not a label, a stereotype, or a societal stigmatization (what people may want us to believe about ourselves as brain injury survivors).

Our brain injuries were merely an event that occurred on the railroad of life. A switch that pointed our lives in a different direction. A direction that would help us to live our destinies. Live our destinies by learning how to use our gifts, talents and abilities.

Looking at my Life in a Different Way

With these realizations I am given the opportunity to look at my life after my brain injury in a different way. A way in which I am able to own my power. Own my power, through using my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for me after my brain injury.

Owning my Power

Accepting my brain injury does not mean that I like it. What it does mean is that by accepting that my life has been changed because of my brain injury, I have a choice.

A Choice

A choice with whether I own my power, with a loving God's help and guidance or a choice to give my power away by believing that I don't have any power.

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"**.

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 our Brain Injury.

"Re-Birth"

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.

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.

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

Through seeing my experience as a “re-birthing” process 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

“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

‘What Makes Me Who I Am in My Life’

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

First of All, which if Very Important

Get tested to determine how you now learn.

Are you a Visual, Auditory or Kinesthetic Learner?

How You Learn Now May Be Different

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. As a result, those who teach us may be frustrated and we may be discouraged. By discovering how we learn we can find the right teachers.

What I Discovered about Ongoing Brain Injury Recovery

I need to stay committed to developing every area of my life.

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

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.

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.

Another Important Factor to Owning Our Power

“Why do I feel so misunderstood and shunned?”

Became Apparent

In my experience and through many struggles the answer to the question became apparent to me.

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 dismissed, discounted, misunderstood and shunned.

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

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

What Became Apparent to Me

That I could not wait for people to break free from their denial to accept my reality.

That I could not wait for people to accept my reality and walk across the bridge of acceptance.

In my experience and through my own recovery process, I became aware of two realities.

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.

Too Painful

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.

Justify

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.

Created Ongoing Conflicts

Conflicts in them 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.

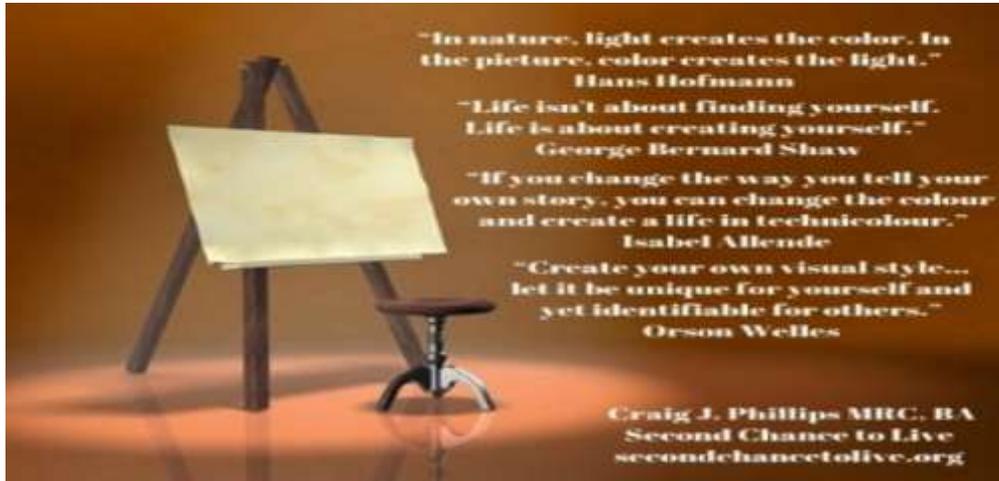
To Own Your Power

Below is a link to several tools that have helped me to own my power in my ongoing “re-birthing” brain Injury recovery process.

You may find these tools to be helpful in the process of owning your power.

Click on this link to open these resources.

[Second Chance to Live – Empowering the Individual, not the Brain Injury Resources for Empowering Re-birthing](#)



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

