

**SECOND CHANCE TO LIVE
SECONDCHANCETOLIVE.ORG**



**EMPOWERING BRAIN, BODY, SPIRIT
ONE SKILL AT A TIME**

**BELIEVING IN OURSELVES
THROUGH SELF-ADVOCACY
We Can Own Our Power**

**Empowering Our Lives
through Owning Our
Power. The Power in our
Mind, Body, Spirit, Soul
and Emotions**

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The Beginning of Self-Advocacy

Following a brain injury, the way in which the individual relates to themselves, other people and their environment changes.

Because of these changes knowing how to advocate for themselves may seem like a mystery. Because of this mystery, individuals may knowingly or unknowingly give their power away.

In my experience, I discovered that I needed to grow in awareness before I could begin to accept and value myself. In the process, of accepting and valuing myself I was able to determine what I really needed and begin the process of owning my power.

In the process I became aware of what I needed to excel.

To begin to excel in my mind body, spirit, soul and emotions.

Self-Advocacy

“Self-Advocacy is learning how to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your own life, learning how to get information so that you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out who will support you in your journey, knowing your rights and responsibilities, problem solving, listening and learning, reaching out to others when you need help and friendship, and learning about self-determination.”

According to the Parent Center Hub for Information and Resources.

**Self-Advocacy grows as I grow in Awareness,
Acceptance and take Action one Day at a Time.**

In my estimation, self-advocacy is about owning our power in every area of our lives. If we do not own power (over what is in my power to control) we will give our power away.

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”

Theodore Roosevelt

In my estimation, self-advocacy means that I take responsibility for every area of my life. My mind, body, soul, spirit, and emotions. If I do not take

personal responsibility, I acquiesce and give my power away in my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions, by believing I lack power.

If I do not own my power (in my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions) I will develop a learned helplessness. In the process, like the caterpillar that becomes a butterfly, my wings will not be strengthened to fly. And if my “wings” (body, soul, spirit, mind and emotions) are not strengthened, I like the butterfly will not possess the strength to fulfill my purpose through my life.

Overcoming a Learned Helplessness

Illustration – The Pike Syndrome

Tank of water with a big fish at one end of the tank. Little fish at the other end of the tank. Pane of glass separating the big fish with the little fish. Big fish hits the pane of glass attempting to get to the little fish (food). Over time the big fish begins to associate pain with getting to the little fish. After a period of such conditioning the pane of glass is removed. Although the big fish can now readily get to the little fish, because of the learned pain associated with the little fish, the big fish gives up. The little fish can then swim around the big fish without a fear of being eaten. The learned helplessness results in the big fish going without food and starving to death.

How Can I Advocate for Myself to Empower My Body, My Soul, My Spirit, My Mind and My Emotions?

First and Foremost

First and foremost, in my process of self-advocacy is to realize and embrace that I am not a diagnosis or a prognosis. I am not my brain injury, my invisible, my deficits or limitations. I am not what other people may want me to believe about myself. I am not what other people want me to believe that I can or cannot do.

“If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.” Isaac Newton

Second Chance to Live is a selection of articles, video presentations and eBooks. In my articles, video presentations and eBooks I share what has helped me to own my power. The power in my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions to be who I am, not what other people want me to believe about myself or what I can and cannot accomplish with my life

I am made up of a Mind, Body, Soul, Spirit and Emotions.

Overview

Body – Give me the ability to engage physically in my life and relations.

Soul – How I relate to myself and the people in my world.

Spirit – How I communicate with the God of my understanding and with myself.

Mind -- How I gather information that gives me the ability to make decisions and choices.

Emotions – How I interpret what goes on in my world.

More Specifically

Body – working out using both sides of my brain and both sides of my body through repetitive mirrored movements. Using the principles of neuroplasticity to improve hand-eye coordination, balance, body awareness, coordination, focus, body awareness and agility. Create new neural pathways and brain reorganization through repetitive mirrored movements using the right / left sides, affected / non-affected side of our brain and body.

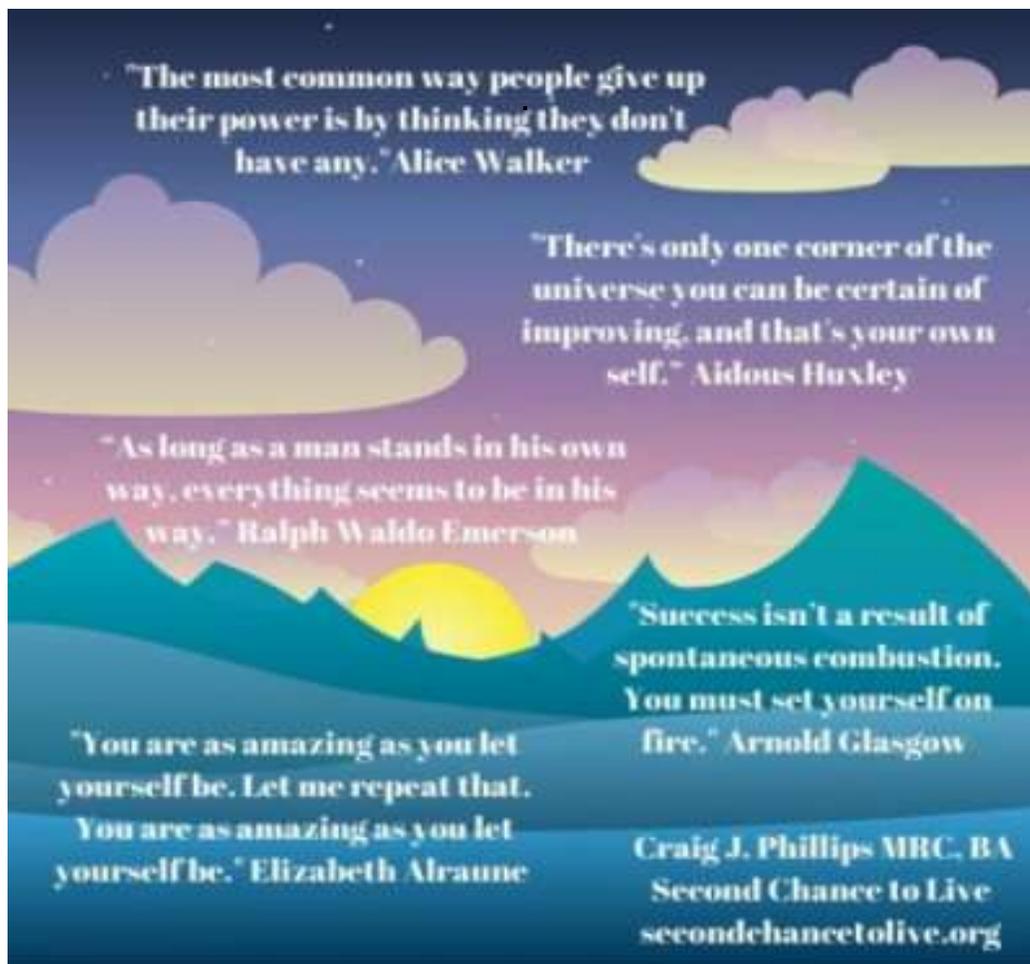
Soul – Growing in knowledge, wisdom and effectiveness through the application of that knowledge and wisdom. The soul is the expression of who the individual is as a unique being. The soul gives the individual the ability to experience and express their belief, desire and intention(s) to make choices and take action. The soul ‘births’ and drives the individual’s purpose.

Spirit – The connection to God. The 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. Not relying on my own limited understanding/ Trusting a loving God to guide and direct my steps each day, one day at a time.

Mind – Gives the individual the ability to think, to imagine, to remember, to formulate the process of our lives. To exercise the intention and motivation. Powers the individuals “will” and “intention” through reason, perception, attitudes, suspicions, and fears. Examines how we look at and see both ourselves, our relationships, and the world at large.

Emotions – Being aware of how I am interpreting my experience and my relationships. Being aware of how I react or respond to my experience. 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. Finding hope through healthy expression.



To Progress We Must Begin

In my experience, I see the process of self-advocacy in brain injury recovery as a building block process. Building on my own lot in life a little at a time. Building through awareness, acceptance and then by taking action.

Taking action in and through by involving my body, soul, spirit, mind, and emotions in the process. In the process of owning my power I create.

But to create I must begin. I must begin and then continue by involving all of what makes me who I am. All of who I am in my life and my interactions.

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

My eBooks

My e Books are a collection of my articles and video presentations in which I share lessons. Lessons that I learned that help me to own my power to create with my mind, body, spirit, soul, and emotions, a little at a time.

To Open and Read my eBooks

Click on the highlighted titles of my **12 eBooks** to open a PDF of the eBook. As you read through my eBooks and questions come to mind, please ask. All questions are good questions and welcomed.

[How to Contact Me](#)

[Living with a Brain Injury eBook Putting the Pieces in Place 60 Video Presentations \(PDF file\)](#)

Needed to examine the pieces that made me, me. What pieces get in my way and what pieces enhance my life.

[Being Your own Hero through Overcoming Adversity – Tool for Rebuilding Your Life eBook](#)

Needed to look at what was getting in my way of experiencing my life in ways that interfere with my being my own hero – instead of looking to someone else to be my hero.

Living with a brain injury and Building Self-Esteem and Self-Acceptance

In this e Book I will share some of what I learned about myself through examining my motives and interactions with various environments – family, education, religious, work, social -- and how I related to myself. What I share in the articles of this e Book are lessons that helped me to identify and address messages that undermined my ability and capacity to build self-esteem and self-acceptance.

Living with a Brain Injury, Making Sense of Why and What is my Destiny? eBook

Looking at “Why Me?” Instead of “Why Not Me?” keeps me stuck in a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. “Why Not Me?” helps me to take a proactive role in my life and well-being, one day at a time, realizing that more will be revealed with time. “Why not Me?” empowers me to move in the direction of my destiny one day at a time. Articles in this e Book helped me in this process, one day at a time.

Living with a Brain Injury, What Helped Me to Stop being my Enemy and Create a life for Myself eBook

In this e Book, I would like to share with you what I discovered in my search to find freedom and gain my focus. In my experience, what I discovered was that as I became aware, I grew in acceptance. As I grew in acceptance, I was able to take a different course of action. Through taking a different course of action I discovered a new set of tools that empowered my ability to find a freedom. A freedom that I never knew existed

It's Never too Late to Create Hope eBook

I created this e Book to share what has helped me to overcome blocks to creating hope in my life. In this e Book I share some of the awareness that I gained that became keys. These keys have given me the ability to open doors that previously remained shut to me. Opening these doors helped me to create hope May you be encouraged to realize that you can have an active role in your relationship with hope to create a good life.

Moving Forward Following a Brain Injury eBook

Because I was unaware for many years that my life was being impacted by a brain injury and an invisible disability, I stayed baffled and confused. The impact of staying baffled and confused left me doubting myself. Through my recovery process I came to realize that. I needed to stop berating myself for what I could not do because of what was out of my control. With this realization I discovered that I needed to grieve my reality.

Living with a Brain Injury and Taking Care of Ourselves eBook

Living with a brain injury can leave us baffled and confused. What adds to the confusion is that once our external wounds have healed, we look “normal”. What was once familiar, no longer seems to make sense to us. In our attempts to adapt, we may find ourselves denying what we cannot understand. In the process, we may find ourselves being blamed for what is out of our control. In our confusion, we may find that our judgment is challenged and questioned.

Having a Relationship with Myself and Other People after a Brain Injury Video Presentations eBook

As I began to come out of my own denial what became apparent was that I was the one who needed to change. What I mean by, I was the one who needed to change is that I needed to stop expecting other people to “understand”, so that we could have a “relationship”. I began to understand how living with the impact of my brain injury and an invisible disability impacted my relationships. As I became increasingly aware I realized that I needed to grow in my own awareness, acceptance and action. I needed to grow in my awareness and acceptance to be able to have a relationship with myself and other people.

Celebrating Success after a Brain Injury Video Presentations eBook

Following a brain injury, an individual's abilities and capabilities may have changed. What once came naturally to them, may now be a struggle. As a result, celebrating the success once gained through those abilities and capabilities may be out of reach. As a consequence, individuals living with

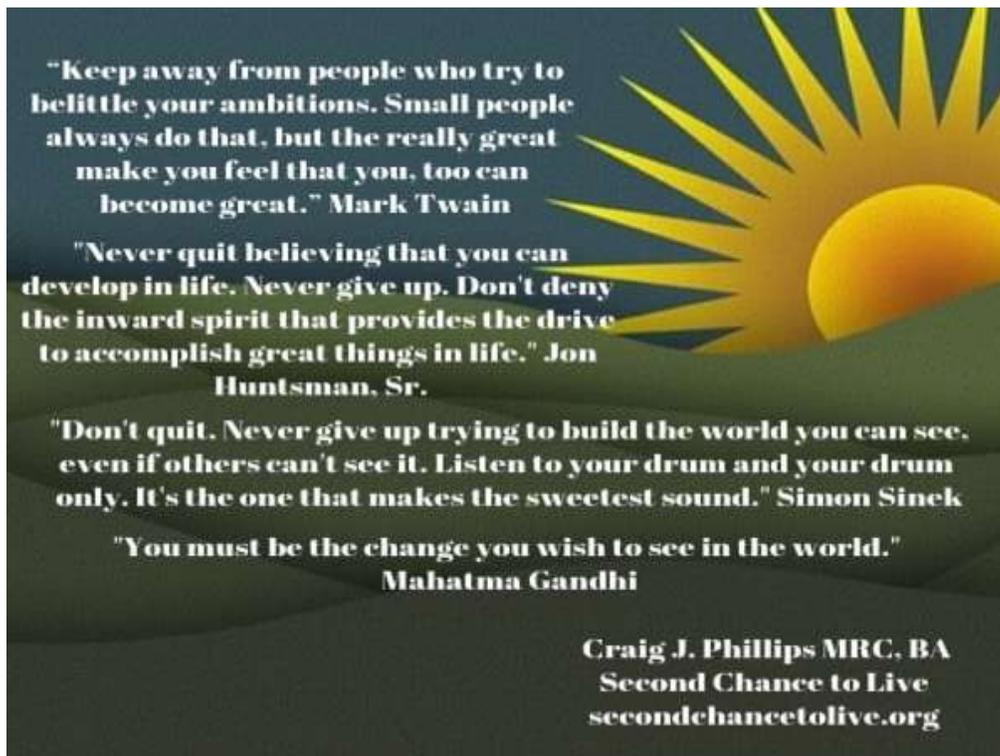
brain injuries may be led to believe that their efforts are not worth celebrating. But that is simply not the case. Although abilities and capabilities may change, individuals living with brain injuries and adversity can begin to celebrate small and great successes.

[Avoiding the Trap of Our Brain Injury e Book for PDF File](#)

Living with a brain injury can leave us feeling baffled and confused. In our confusion we may be led to believe things about ourselves that are simply not true. These beliefs can lead you and I to believe that we are limited because of our limitations. We can be led to believe that we are our brain injuries. We may also be led to believe that labels, stereotypes and societal stigmatization justifiably define who we are as individuals.

[Don't Let Anyone Tell You \(Including Yourself\) that... Video Presentation e Book](#)

Living with a brain injury and an invisible disability can leave us feeling like the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman and the Cowardly Lion in the movie, **The Wizard of Oz**. Feeling as though we are not smart, that we lack heart (motivation and drive) and the courage (ability/ambition) to follow and live our hopes and dreams, one day at a time.



Several years ago, I created topic categories. In these categories I assigned my articles and video presentations. Below is a link to each of these categories.

[Category Building Self-Esteem after Brain Injury](#)

Self-esteem is slowly stripped away following a brain injury. The individual often finds that their relationships have changed. The relationships they had with people and the relationship that they had with themselves. What was once familiar, may now seem foreign. What was once a way to build a sense of self may no longer work. As a result, the individual living with a brain injury may have a difficult time relating to themselves and to people. Articles in this category are written to help the individual living with a brain injury to re-build a relationship with themselves.

In the process of rebuilding a relationship with ourselves we gain a sense of self. In the process, we create our new sense of what it means to esteem ourselves. As we build a relationship with ourselves and gain a sense of self, we gain the power to follow our dreams. Follow our dreams in ways that work for us. In the process we learn how to relate to other people in healthy ways that work for us. In the process, we build self-esteem. Although our relationships may have changed, we discover the value of having a relationship with ourselves and having healthy relationships

[Category Self-Acceptance after a Brain Injury](#)

Self-acceptance may be difficult for an individual living with a brain injury. As a result, individuals living with brain injuries may begin to doubt themselves. This doubt can undermine their ability to trust or believe in themselves. Societal labels and stereotypes may lead them to believe that they are their brain injuries. In this belief, individuals living with brain injuries may find themselves angry at themselves. Angry at the “world”. After coming out of my own denial concerning my brain injury, I was angry. I was angry at the impact of my brain injury. I was angry at the labels, stereotypes that society placed on me.

Category Celebrating Success Following a Brain Injury

Following a brain injury, an individual's abilities and capabilities may have changed. What once came naturally to them, may now be a struggle. As a result, celebrating the success once gained through those abilities and capabilities may be out of reach. As a consequence, we may be led to believe that our efforts are not worth celebrating. But that is simply not the case. Although we may not be able to do what we used to, we can learn to excel in ways that work for us.

“I am only one, but still, I am one. I cannot do everything, but still, I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” 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

Category Creating Hope after Brain Injury

Having hope or believing we can have a part in the process can be very difficult for individuals living with the impact of a brain injury. Through my recovery process I discovered that my definition and expectations of hope were clouded by ability to experience hope. My concept of hope held me hostage when things did not change. Hostage to the belief that hope was for naught. But I am glad that I discovered that hope is not limited by my definition or expectations. I am glad that I discovered that I could both have a part in creating hope in my life. I am glad that I discover that by creating hope in my life I could learn to thrive, not merely survive.

Category Finding and Knowing Peace after Brain Injury

Finding peace after a brain injury can be very difficult. Questions arise, often too many that cannot be answered. With a lack of answers comes a host of emotions, but not peace. Accepting what cannot be understood seems out of the question. How can we accept what has changed our lives forever? And so, we find ourselves stuck and arguing at life. Arguing at life that gets me nowhere.

Category Finding Purpose after a Brain Injury

Following a brain injury finding one's purpose can be a challenge. What was once understood and clear to us may now be unclear. In my experience, I sought for clarity for many years. What I thought was my calling and the way I was to live my destiny did not work out. I struggled in this process for many years. In my experience the answers did not come over night. Increasing clarity came to me as when I stopped trying to prove that I was not impacted by a brain injury.

Category Fulfilling Dreams after Brain Injury

Before our brain injuries, dreams for the future may have seemed bright. Following our brain injuries, those dreams may now seem out of reach. What once seemed attainable, may no longer appear to be realistic. Through my recovery process I discovered that although life may have changed forever, I do not have to give up on my dreams. Although the way in which I once followed my bliss has changed, I do not have to give up on following my bliss. Fulfilling my dreams can be a way of life for me.

Category My Journey Living with a Brain Injury

My Journey Living with a Brain Injury offers insight into my process and journey. My process and journey living with the impact of a brain injury and an invisible disability during the past 54 years.

Category Overcoming Bullying after Brain Injury

Bullying can be a challenge for anyone. Individuals living with brain injuries may have a difficult time recognizing bullies. Individuals living with brain injuries may question their own judgment. Individuals living with brain injuries may have a difficult time trusting. Because individuals living with brain injuries may have difficulty trusting themselves. Individuals living with brain injuries may have a difficult time trusting their judgment. Individuals living with brain injuries may, as a result, become more vulnerable to being bullied. In my experience, I bought into the notion that I deserved to be bullied for many years. I bought into this belief because I believed that I did not just make mistakes, but that I was a mistake.

Category Peer Support after Brain Injury — We are Not Alone

Without peer support living with a brain injury can leave the individual feeling very alone and isolated. Individuals who previously were our friends seem to slip away. As they slip away, we may feel increasingly alienated from both other people and ourselves. In feeling alienated from other people and ourselves we may feel as though no one understands us. We may feel abandoned. As we withdraw even more, we may crave for family members to understand. But sometimes the support and understanding that we long for in family members is not available.

This lack of understanding and support can leave us feeling angry and frustrated at life. I experienced the above for many years until I began to realize that people cannot give to me what they themselves do not possess. Not being able to give to me what I wanted did not mean that they didn't love me. They just have a difficult time accepting what they could not see or understand. Although I tried to explain "it" to them in a thousand different ways, they could not identify with me. Instead at times they would tell me that they thought I was just making excuses. Their suggestion continued to frustrate me until I realized what they could not accept.:

Category Relationships Following a Brain Injury

Relationships create challenges. Relationships after brain injury create different challenges. Each individual brings with them their history. History in terms of what was learned and experienced growing up. History also in terms of what they experienced in past relationships.

If there was dysfunction in those relationships, dysfunction will be brought into each relationship. Such dysfunction can continue to undermine and sabotage relationships. Continue to undermine and get in the way of existing relationships and other relationships... unless new boundaries and behaviors are learned and used in relationships. Articles in this category give ways to recognize, address and change behaviors that no longer work

Owning the Power in my Brain and Body.

In my experience, I discovered that I could own the power in my brain and body through repetitive mirror movements. I would later discover that I was using the principle of neuroplasticity to create new neural pathways and brain reorganization by engaging both sides of my brain and body.

How I Use the Principle of Neuroplasticity to Create new Neural Pathways and Brain Reorganization

I began my process of using repetitive mirrored movements through different martial art disciplines in 1997. In **August 2013** a friend made a video presentation of the progress that I had made up to that point in time.

Since that time other friends have recorded video presentations of the progress, I made using repetitive mirrored movements. Made in **2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018**, (due to a shoulder injury and Covid no recordings in **2019** and **2020**) and in **2021**.

Through the years I have developed gross and fine motor skills, as well as hand-eye coordination, coordination, focus, body awareness, agility, balance and muscle memory through centerline movements

To watch the progress made using the principle of neuroplasticity over the past **8 years**, click on **Start >** for each of the presentations. I share these presentations with you to encourage you to develop your own program.

Your Own Program to Create New Neural Pathways and Brain Reorganization through Repetitive Mirrored Movements.

Neuroplasticity through Martial Arts Disciplines August 2013

<https://youtu.be/snHjkxYrRYU>

Neuroplasticity Demonstration August 2014

<https://youtu.be/sV82V2y-Jrk>

Brain Injury, Neuroplasticity and Personal Gains August 2015

<https://youtu.be/j4BajiK5qB8>

Balance and Coordination through Repetitive Mirrored Movement

2016

https://youtu.be/Ljsr_S18Fng

Brain Injury Recovery and Repetitive Mirrored Movements 2017

<https://youtu.be/EXVq5vICWZI>

**Improving Our Brain and Body's Ability to Excel after Brain Injury
2018**

<https://youtu.be/syCBmRi-P3E>

**Stick Fighting, Knife, Western Boxing & Wing Chun Drills September
2, 2021**

<https://youtu.be/YLOeOUq4170>

**Transition Drills to Improve Agility, Focus, Speed & Coordination
September 6, 2021**

https://youtu.be/4JOel_4upWM

**Hand Eye Coordination and Precision Drills using Fine Motor Skills
Created September 12, 2021**

<https://youtu.be/seeH9xbkKDs>

**Strategies for Achieving the Goals we Set through Using the
Principles of Neuroplasticity**

[Nine Habits to Benefit from Using the Principle of Neuroplasticity](#)

[Neuroplasticity, Setting Goals and Creating Hope after Brain Injury
and Stroke Power Point Presentation](#)