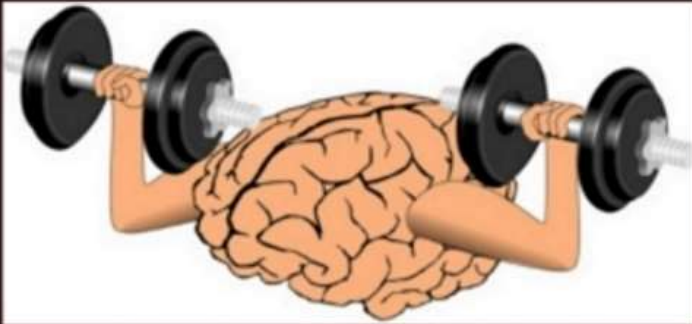


**SECOND CHANCE TO LIVE  
SECONDCHANCETOLIVE.ORG**



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

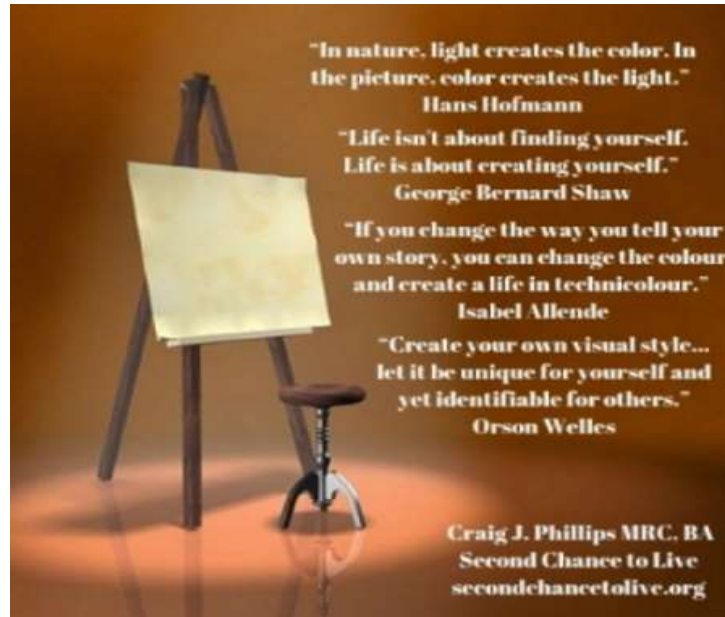
**BELIEVING IN OURSELVES  
THROUGH SELF-ADVOCACY  
We Can Own Our Power**

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

**Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**  
Second Chance to Live  
[secondchancetolive1@yahoo.com](mailto:secondchancetolive1@yahoo.com)

# Empowering the Individual, Not the Brain Injury

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgement that something is more important than fear.” Ambrose Redmon



“You were born to win, but to be a winner, you must plan to win, and expect to win.” Zig Ziglar

## Viktor Frankl

**Austrian neurologist, psychiatrist, philosopher, author, and Holocaust survivor**

During his time in the Theresienstadt Nazi concentration camp, he found that those around him who did not lose their sense of purpose and meaning in life were able to survive much longer than those who had lost their way.

### “Man’s Search for Meaning” Book

#### Reason for Living

Find a meaning – go on to fulfill it, learning how to “be” instead of “have”. “being” rather than “having”, what you make out of this situation.

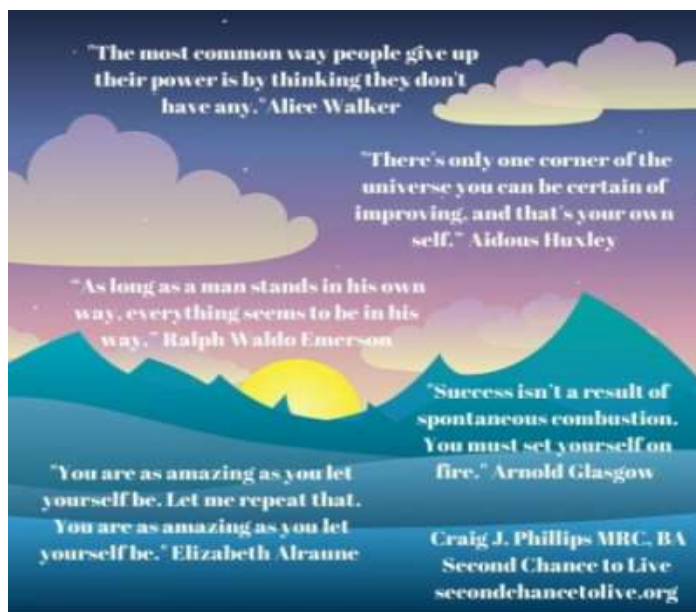
## Abraham Maslow

American psychologist who was best known for creating Maslow's hierarchy of needs – Desire to Become One's Best Self

### “Self-Actualization”

Self-actualization – self-development, self-improvement, cultivating skills, fulfilling our potential, maximizing our internal growth.

“Nothing in the universe can stop you from letting go and starting over.” Guy Finley



“If you advance confidently in the direction of your destiny and endeavor to live the life that you have imagined...you will meet with a success, unexpected in common hours.” Henry David Thoreau

### 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.**

**“Time stays long enough for anyone who will use it.” Leonardo da Vinci**

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**

**To Be Able to Advocate for Myself**

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.

**“Be miserable. Or motivate yourself. Whatever has to be done, it’s always your choice.” Wayne Dyer**

## **Empowering Myself**

### **Overcoming a Learned Helplessness**

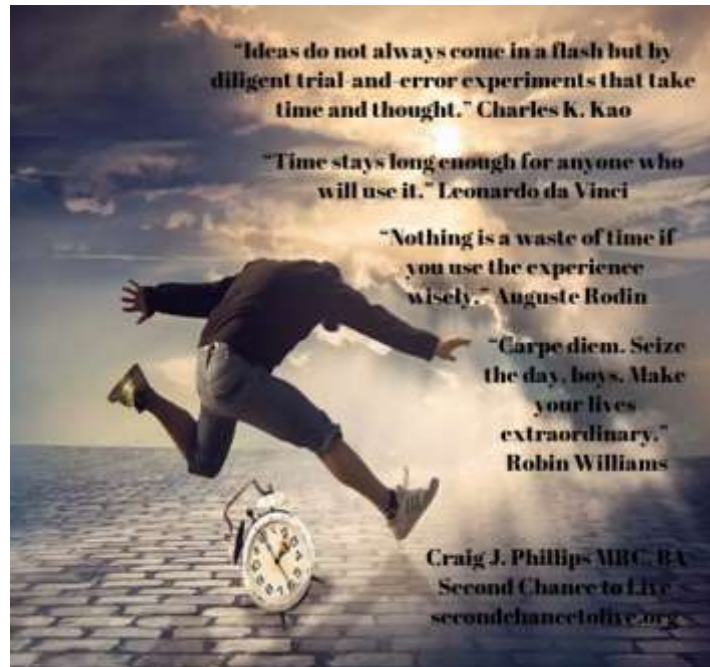
#### **Illustration – The Pike Syndrome**

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.



**But I am made up of a Mind, Body, Soul, Spirit and Emotions.  
All of which I can develop and enhance.**

**"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."  
Thomas Edison**

## Overview of Understanding

**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 and with Further Reflection**

**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.

**“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**

### **To Progress We Must Begin**



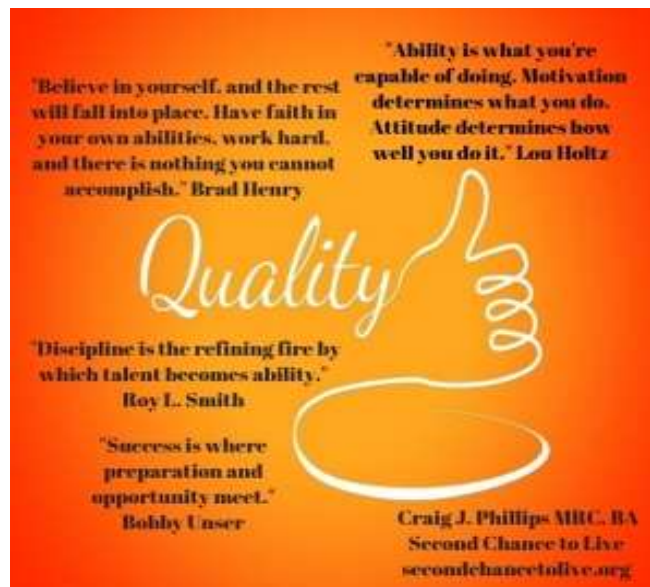
In my experience, I see the process of self-advocacy in brain injury recovery as a building block process. Building on my own lot in life a little at a time. Building through awareness, acceptance and then by taking action.

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**



**“Dreams do not vanish, so long as people do not abandon them.”  
Phantom F. Harlock**

## **Important for Me to Understand – After my Brain Injury**

How my Body, Soul, Spirit, Mind and Emotions are affected:  
**Self-Esteem, Self-Acceptance, Sense of Achievement, Hope, Serenity, Purpose, Dreams, Sticking up for Ourselves and Relationships with Ourselves and with other People**

Building Self-Esteem – Defining for Myself

Understanding We are Not Alone – To Figure “it” Out

Self-Acceptance – It is as it Is – What to Do Now?

Defining and Celebrating Success – Changing the Way

Understanding and Creating Hope in Our Lives

Having Peace in Our Lives – What Does this Mean?

Finding and Living Our Purpose – Increasing Clarity

Fulfilling Dreams – Where Do We Go from Here

Recognizing and Overcoming Bullying

Having a Relationship with Ourselves and other People

**In my experience, I needed to ask myself several questions to be able to advocate for myself.**

**Answering these questions for yourself may help you to advocate for yourself.**

What is limiting me?

What can I do about what I perceive is limiting me?

What am I telling myself?

Am I being bullied?

What am I doing to improve the quality of my life?

Whose shame am I carrying?

Am I at peace with my past?

Am I focusing on symptoms or solutions?

How am I cultivating hope?

Why do I react?

What is defining my worth and value?

Am I judging my insides with other people's outsides?

What critical attitudes do I have toward myself and other people?

What am I doing to move from being a survivor to a thriver in my life?

What am I doing to accomplish my goals?  
Am I identifying with people or comparing myself to them?  
What is keeping me stuck?  
Is the group that I am in helping or hurting me?  
What is keeping me in a 'box' of limitation?  
What do I do when I face adversity?  
Am I waiting for someone to accept me before I can accept myself?  
What am I doing to create hope in my life?  
Is my anger hurting or helping me?  
Am I lying to myself?  
Is my brain injury making me bitter or better?  
Am I living with helplessness or hopefulness?  
What am I doing to replace negative thinking with positive messages?  
What am I doing to empower the relationship that I have with myself?  
Has drama replaced living and why?  
How am I looking at adversity?  
Am I living with limitations or opportunities?  
Is my brain injury awareness making me bitter or better?  
Am I moving from being bitter to becoming better?  
Where do I "fit" after my brain injury?  
Am I OK with being a "square peg" in a world of "round holes"?

Have I given up too soon?  
Why do I feel misunderstood and shunned?  
Am I at peace with God and myself?  
Whose truth am I living?  
Am I dependent or independent?  
What can I do to become more independent?  
Am I living in a “box” given to me or in a “box” that I created for myself?  
Am I / do I challenge my brain injury awareness?  
Am I asking “Why Me” or “Why not Me”?  
Am I looking at “what isn’t” instead of “what is”?  
How can I stop fighting against myself?  
What is holding me back?  
When will I find my destiny?  
How do I keep from being pulled back into a “victim mentality”?  
What is my destiny beyond the “box” of traditional employment?  
How am I going to accel in my life?  
What am I doing to create dreams in my life after my brain injury?  
How am I looking at success?  
How do I now learn after my brain injury?  
What can I do when circumstances change my plans?

### **Self-Advocacy Resources**

Second Chance to Live is a selection of articles, video presentations and e Books. In my articles, video presentations

and eBooks I share answer to the above questions. Answers that have helped me to own my power and experiences a freedom that I never knew existed. Answers that you may find helpful.

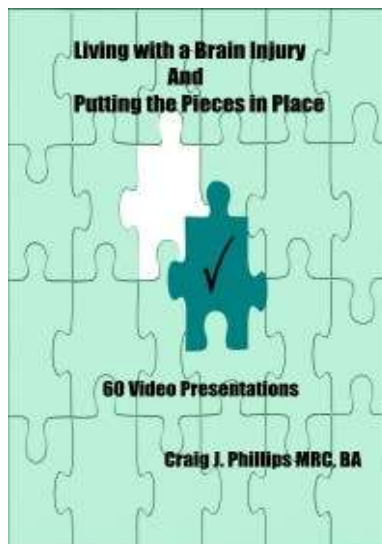


**“Believe in yourself, go after your dreams and don’t let anyone put you in a box.” Daya**

### **My 12 eBooks**

**Click on the below links to read a PDF file of each e Book**

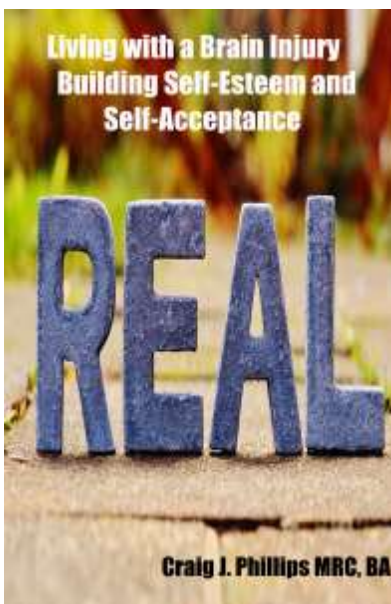
**[Living with a Brain Injury eBook Putting the Pieces in Place](#)  
**[60 Video Presentations \(PDF file\)](#)****



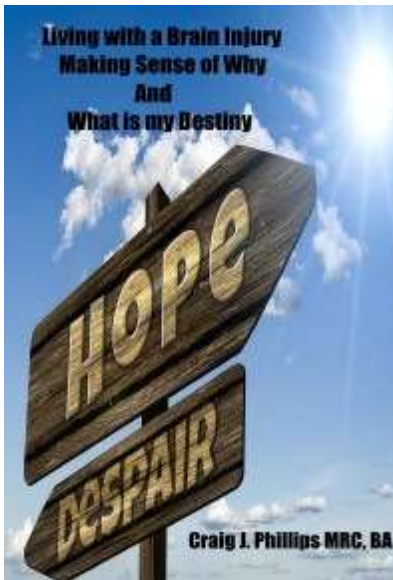
[Being Your own Hero through Overcoming Adversity – Tool for Rebuilding Your Life eBook](#)



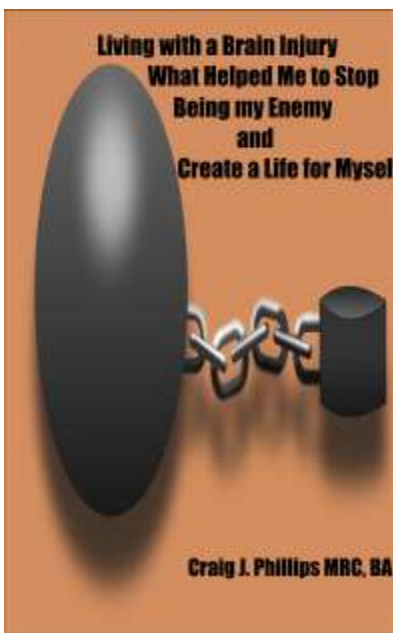
[Living with a brain injury and Building Self-Esteem and Self-Acceptance eBook](#)



[Living with a Brain Injury, Making Sense of Why and What is my Destiny? eBook](#)



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



[It's Never too Late to Create Hope eBook](#)

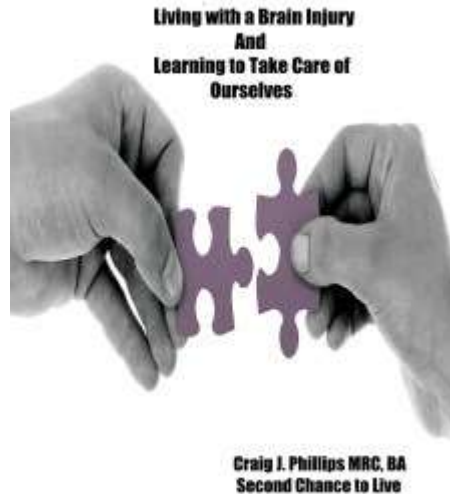


[Moving Forward Following a Brain Injury eBook](#)

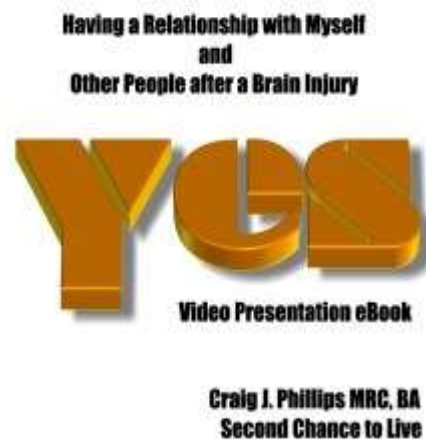




[Living with a Brain Injury and Taking Care of Ourselves  
eBook](#)



[Having a Relationship with Myself and Other People after a  
Brain Injury Video Presentations eBook](#)



[Celebrating Success after a Brain Injury Video Presentations eBook](#)



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



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



**Don't Give Up on Hope**

**“If you do not like something, change it. If you can not change it, change the way that you think about it.” Mary Englebreit**

**HOPE is the Coach that Teaches me to Learn from my Circumstances, Experiences and Opportunities.**

**“The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.”  
Lao Tzu ”**

**“Once we start walking before long we will be able to look back to see how far I have come because we did not give up.”**

**Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

**HOPE**

**HOPE does not Disappoint if I am Willing to Learn..**

**HOPE Empowers Me to be a CO-CREATOR**

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

## **11 Categories to Empower Self-Advocacy**

**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. But as I worked through my anger surrounding my expectations, my self-acceptance grew.

### **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.

### **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 or stroke. Through my recovery process I discovered that my definition and expectations of hope were clouded by my 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 have a part in creating hope in my life. I am glad that I discovered that by creating hope in my life I could learn to thrive, not merely survive with my life.

### **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. But there is peace in the process. In this category I share what I discovered about peace.

### **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 and find ways that worked for me.

### **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. Individuals living with brain injuries may have a difficulty trusting themselves and 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. But thank God that I found a freedom to trust myself and my judgement.

## **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.

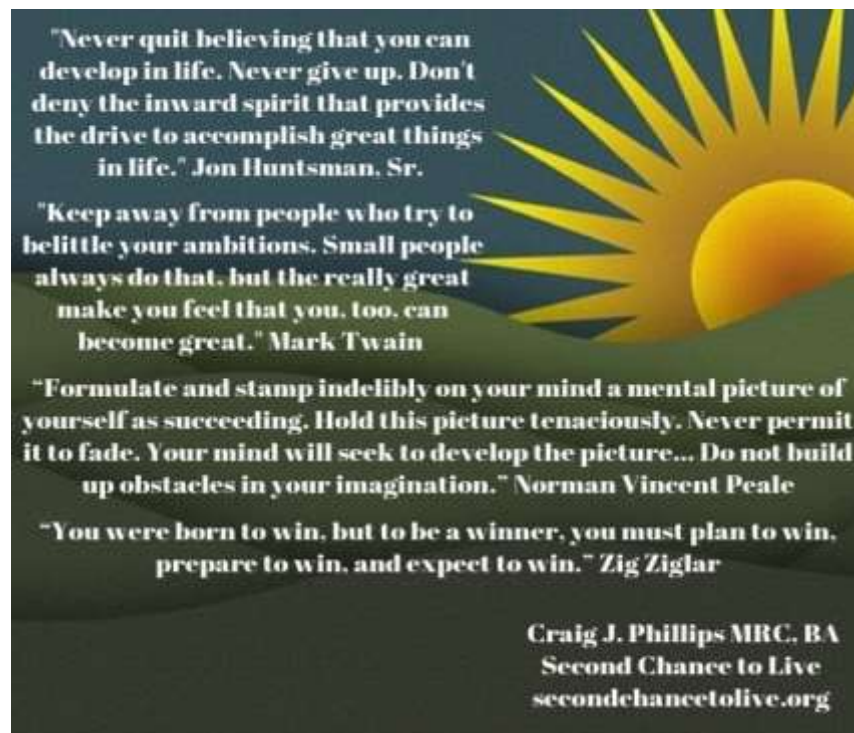
Although I tried to explain "it" to them in a thousand different ways, they could not identify with me. Instead at times they would tell me that they thought I was just making excuses. Their

suggestion continued to frustrate me until I realized what they could not accept my reality, but there were people who could.

### [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. Brain Injuries complicate 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](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](https://youtu.be/4JOel_4upWM)

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

<https://youtu.be/seeH9xbkKDs>

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

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

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

## Complete List of Self-Advocacy Resources

Click on the link to open these resources

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



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