

Making Our Lives Magical after a Brain Injury and Stroke

A Progression of Ongoing Brain Injury Recovery

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The Pike Syndrome and Overcoming a Learned Helplessness

Metaphor for Individuals Living with brain Injuries and Strokes

“Don’t Give up because of the Pane”

“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.”

Pane of Glass called Disappointment and Discouragement

“Fable of the Tortoise and the Hare”

As Individuals living with brain injuries and many times invisible disabilities we can feel like the big fish in the big tank. The big fish that is trying to get to the little fish to find satisfaction and fulfillment. Satisfaction and fulfillment in the process of achieving our hopes and dreams as we continue to hit disappointment and discouragement.

Making Our Lives Magical by Not Focusing on the Pane of Glass

Making our lives magical one day at a time by realizing that we have more power than we realize. That living with a brain injury does not have to leave us feeling as though we are helpless. That we do not have to succumb to a learned helplessness. That we do not have to be limited or be dissuaded by the “pane” of a diagnosis or a prognosis.

Like the big fish in the big tank, we can learn to swim freely and go after what we need to improve that quality of our lives and well-beings. What might appear as a pane of glass of our or other people’s expectation no longer need to leave US feeling helpless.

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

Although I am Limited, I am not Limited

The pane of glass (disappointment and discouragement) is an indication, not an indicator. A switch on the railroad of life, not the end of the track.

Finding a Way to Live my Purpose

Instead, we can search for a way that will work for us. A way that will empower and enhance our lives, relationships and well-beings. A way that will make our lives magical.

Through the grieving process and by confronting my denial, facing my anger, trying to change what I am powerless to change, processing my sadness over what I am powerless to change, I am able to experience acceptance. Acceptance that opens the door to doing something different. Doing something different to get different results.

“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

I Am Amazing

“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

A Change in Attitude

In the process we are given the gift to look at our set of circumstances through a different lens. A lens of Why not Me? Instead of Why Me? Through the lens of What Is? instead of through the lens of “What Is Not? In the process, we are able to stop focusing on the “pane” of glass of a diagnosis, prognosis, label, stereotype or stigmatization.

As a result of this changed attitude, I no longer have to see myself as limited.

“Research your own experience. Absorb what is useful, reject what is useless and add specifically your own creation.” Bruce Lee

“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

Setting Goals and Creating Hope

Through using the principles of neuroplasticity and repetitive mirrored movements I am able to achieve what I never dreamed possible.

Working on one skill at a time (a bazillion times) I am able to combine those skills together into skill sets. Combining skill sets (a bazillion times) together I am able to improve the quality of my activities of daily living. In the process, I am able to enhance my quality of life, my relationships and my well-being one day at a time.

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

“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.” Jim Rohn

“Goals give you a mark to shoot for and keep you motivated when you face adversity.” Benjamin Watson

Advocating for Ourselves in Mind, Body, Spirit, Soul and Emotions

Through being committed to the process of developing what makes me, me (my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions) I enhance my life, well-being and relationships.

By developing my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions in my ongoing brain injury recovery process, I am able to develop what I need to thrive. Thrive instead of continuing to buy into the notion that I am limited because of the “pane” of glass.

Through being committed to self-development, I tweak and cultivate skills that empower my ability to fulfill my potential and maximize my internal and external growth. In the process, I enhance my ability to be of maximum service to a loving God and my fellows.

“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 that 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

12 Ways to Enhance Our Lives, Well-Beings and Relationships after a Brain Injury

Great News – We Do Not Have to Go “it” Alone

Through my process and on my journey, I have discovered different ways. Different ways that help me to create hope in my life, my well-being and in my relationships.

In the process of using these ways I have discovered my purpose, created my new normal, improved my brain/body connection and have learned how to be an advocate. An advocate for myself and for other people, as an individual living with a brain injury.

What has helped me may help you, too.

These ways may also help you to create hope your life, well-being and relationships. In the process, discover your purpose, create your new normal, improve your brain/body connection and help you to be an advocate for yourself and for other people.

- 1- Admitted that we are powerless over the impact and effects of our brain injury and invisible disability. That our lives have forever changed because of our brain injury. Although we are powerless over the impact of our brain injury and our invisible disability, we are not helpless. As a result, we no longer need to feel like a victim or that we are helpless because of our brain injury or our invisible disability.
- 2- Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could help us to accept what we are powerless to change (the impact of our brain injury and our invisible disability).

Consequently, we can rely on the power that many of us have found to be God. We can rely on a loving God to help us to stop sabotaging and undermining our lives, well-beings and relationships by trying not to be impacted by a brain injury. We can rely on a loving God to help us to accept ourselves and to create a good life for ourselves.

3- With the awareness that we need this power in our lives, we can make a decision to ask Him to lead and guide our process and journey. We no longer have to figure things out on our own. Instead, we can ask Him to help us own our power. Own our power as an individual living with a brain injury and an invisible disability. Own our power through what we can do, not what we can't do. Own our power (what is in our power to control) in our mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions in ways that work for us, a little at a time and one day at a time.

4- With the help of a loving God, we can begin to examine areas of our lives that no longer work for us. That undermine and sabotage our lives, our well-beings and our relationships. With the help of a loving God, we can look for patterns. Patterns such as defense mechanisms in which we defend, answer and explain what we can't do. Patterns that keep you and I feeling like a victim of our brain injury, an invisible disability and our circumstances.

5- We no longer have to remain isolated because of what we are no longer able to accomplish with our lives. By admitting to ourselves, a loving God and another person what we are unable to accomplish, we can come out of the shadows of isolation and break free from feelings of alienation. Alienation from ourselves, a loving God and other people because of what we cannot accomplish. In the process, we can learn how to trust, again. Trust a loving God, ourselves and other people.

6- Through being sick and tired of being sick and tired of getting the same results, we become willing to try something different. Try something different to get different results. Through being willing, we can ask a loving God to help us to stop doing things that no longer work. In the process, we become entirely ready to let go of what no longer works for us.

7- Through being ready to let go of what no longer works for us, we can be actively involved in the process of discovering how to use our gifts, talents and abilities in ways that will work for us. We can humbly ask a loving God to help us in this process of this self-discovery. In the process of letting go and discovering what works for us we can have peace in our lives and relationships.

8- Through letting go of what no longer works we can pursue what works for us. We can stop being a prisoner to our deficits and 5 imitations. As a result, we can stop fighting with and against ourselves by trying to prove that we do not have those deficits and limitations. We can become the individual that we decide to be in our lives.

9- We can let go of the life that we had planned to create the life that works for us. In the process, we can learn how to own the power in our mind, body, spirit, soul and

emotions. We can create our new normal in ways that work for us through our mind, body, soul, spirit and emotions.

10 - We don't have to figure out everything will fit together as we seek to own the power in our mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions. Instead, we can ask a loving God to guide and direct our steps each day. In the process, we can trust that the dots will connect forward.

11- We can let go of the outcomes by trusting the process, a loving God and ourselves. We can learn to trust through doing the footwork and letting go of the outcomes. We can let go of the outcomes one day at a time. We can trust that more will be revealed with time.

12- As we grow in the understanding of ourselves (with the help of a loving God) we continue to use our gifts, talents and abilities. Use our gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for us. In the process, we learn from our circumstances, our experiences, our lessons and opportunities. In the process, we actively participate in our lives, well-beings and the creation of our destinies.

