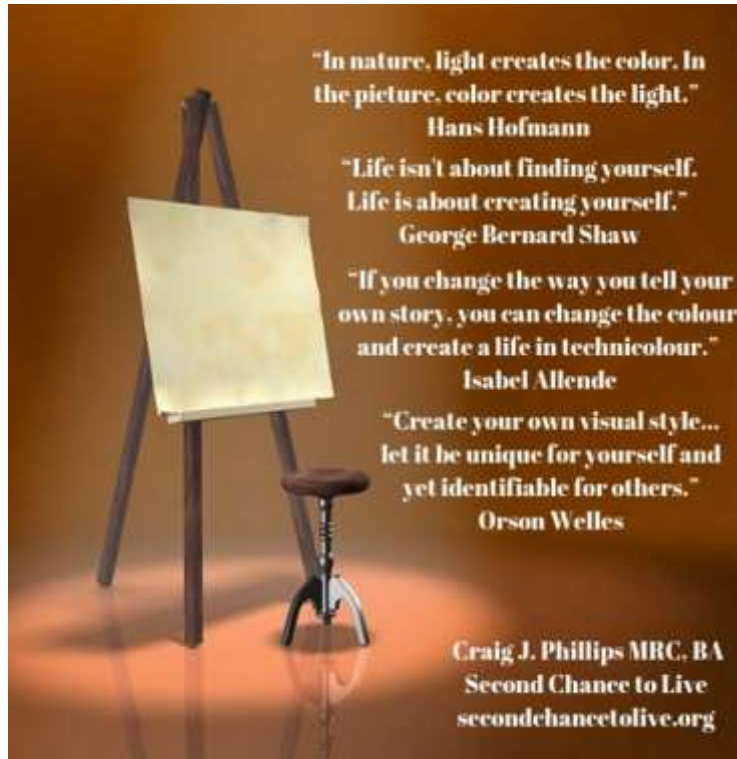


Acceptance and Creating Our New Normal after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live



My Process and Journey in Creating My New Normal

Car Accident 1967 10 years old, Fracture skull, right frontal lobe damage, severe brain bruise, brain stem involvement, coma 3 weeks. Fractured left femur, traction 6-7 weeks, Spica full body cast 5-6 months. Taught myself how to walk, talk, read, write, speak in complete sentences. 2 EEG's, battery cognitive psycho social testing. Results shared with my parents.

Found out the day of graduation with my master's degree from my mom, that I was not expected to succeed beyond high school academically. Took me 10 years to obtain my undergraduate degree with 4 different majors, 2 universities and 1 college. Took me 3 1/2 years to obtain my master's degree with 2 programs and 2 different graduate schools.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Social Security Disability

Had a long history of getting and being fired from nonprofessional and professional jobs. Difficulties in undergraduate and graduate schools. Client of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation 2 times. After 2nd evaluation I was told that I was unemployable. Applied for SSDI 3 times. 3rd application approved. Felt like someone all dressed up with nowhere to go, despite my academic and vocational determination.

Sharing My Experience in How I Created my New Normal

Reached a Point in my Life – Grieving what I Could not Change

Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired — Spiritual Awakenings

1. I realized that I have been giving my power away by trying to fit my square peg into a round hole as an individual living with a brain injury and an invisible disability.
2. I realized that I had been fighting against myself by not accepting that I had deficits and limitations. Deficits and limitations that I could not have in my life.
3. I realized that I had been giving other people the calculator to determine my worth and value as an individual living with the impact of a brain injury and an invisible disability.
4. I began to embrace my power through the power of choice.
5. I began to realize that I could look at my life, as an individual living with a brain injury and an invisible disability in a different way.
6. In the process, with the help and guidance of a loving God, I realized that I could “re-frame” my experience. My experience living with a brain injury and an invisible disability. Reframe as a “**re-birth**”, a “**clean slate**”.
7. By embracing my “re-birth” I began looking at my life through different eyes”. Eyes of “**Why Not Me?**” instead of through “eyes” of “**Why Me?**”
8. By embracing my “re-birth”, I began looking at my life through the eyes of “**What Is**” instead of “**What isn’t**” because of my brain injury.

A Different Lens

By looking at my life through the “lens” of **“Why Not Me?”** and **“What is”**, I gained hope. I began to realize that I no longer have to be limited by my deficits and limitations because of my brain injury and invisible disability.

By What No Longer works for Me

Limited by what no longer worked for me. Instead, I could learn how to use my passion (what makes me feel deeply and vitally alive) in ways that will and would work for me. Work for me to develop my genius.

Work for me to Create Hope in my Life. Hope in my life a little at a time with the Help and Guidance of a loving God. One day at a time.

Hope that Reminds me That I Can

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

“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

In the process of learning to use my gifts, talents and abilities (in ways that would work for me), I can build something beautiful on my lot in life. I can learn how to develop and own my genius. What makes me uniquely me.

“When one door of happiness closes, another open, 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

What Helps me to Create My New Normal

Importance of grieving what I could not change. I am not my brain injury. I am not my deficits or limitations. I am not a label, a stereotype or a stigmatization. I am not meant to stay in someone’s intended box for me.

Concepts and Principles that Help Me to Create My New Normal

Learning Styles, Railroads, Baking Cakes, Tapestries, Elephants, Light Bulbs, Strike Outs, Purpose is Process, Bruce Lee's philosophy, Circumstances

A Fable and a Parable

Fable of the Tortoise and the Hare and The Parable of the Cracked Pot

Embracing my Power to Get out of the "Box"

The above realizations help me to embrace my power as an individual living with a brain injury and an invisible disability. The above realizations help me to create my new normal beyond a diagnosis or a prognosis.

I am Not a Diagnosis or a Prognosis – What other people want or need me to believe that I can and cannot accomplish with my life.

I am Not a Label, a Stereotype or a Societal Stigmatization — what other people want me to believe about myself because of my brain injury.

To Be Able to Create my New Normal

I need to stay focused on "**Why not me?**", instead of "**Why Me?**". I need to stay focused on "**What Is?**", instead of "**What isn't?**".

By focusing on "**Why not me?**" and "**What Is?**" I am able to own my power. The power in my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions to empower my ongoing brain injury recovery process – one day at a time.

Brain Injury recovery can be likened to running a marathon, not a sprint.

To Create and Achieve my New Normal One day at a Time

I need to include every part of what makes me, me. My mind, body, soul, spirit and emotions in my ongoing brain injury recovery process.

I need to examine how my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions have been impacted. Been impacted by the injury to my brain and invisible disability.

Key to Developing my New Normal

With my growing insight and awareness, I am able to develop my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions in my new normal. Develop my new normal in ways that work for me to excel in my purpose.

To understand and develop my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions to improve my well-being, quality of living and ability to be of service.

As an individual living with the impact of a brain injury.

How I Understand my Mind, Body, Spirit, Soul and Emotions

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 my 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 my body. Through engaging both sides of my body, I engage both the right my right and left side of my brain (right and left hemispheres).

Spirit – My connection to God. My connection to myself. Making peace with God so that I can learn to trust Him and His guidance. 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 and 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.

What I Discovered about my Relationship with Hope

My Relationship with Hope

For many years I had a dysfunctional relationship with hope because hope did not play by my rules and fulfill my expectations.

Gaining a Healthy Relationship

Through my process I gained a healthy relationship with hope. I began to see hope as a coach that empowered my ability to be a co-creator in my life and relationships.

Being a Co-Creator

A co-creator through being an actor, instead of a reactor in my life. An actor through being responsible to and for my reactions to my life and circumstance.

"Sometimes adversity is what you need to face in order to become successful." Zig Ziglar

"Our circumstances are not meant to keep us down, but they are meant to build us up. They are meant to build us up by teaching us lessons that provide experiences and offer opportunities." Craig J. Phillips

"History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats." B.C. Forbes

My Encouragement to You

Give yourself permission to look at your life in a different way as an individual living with a brain injury and an invisible disability.

In a way that is separate from a diagnosis, a prognosis, a label, stereotype or stigmatization. In a way that will empower your process and journey.

With your mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions begin to paint on the canvas of your life in a way (s) that will work for you.

With your mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions begin to build on your lot in life in a way (s) that will work for you.

And don't compare your lot or what you are building on your lot with anyone else. Develop your genius, Run your Own Race. Stay in your Lane.

What I Discovered about my Interactions with other People

To Make Changes

Through my grieving process, I discovered that I needed and had to feel feelings and make changes. Feelings that were uncomfortable and changes that were hard to make. But I had no choice.

To not feel these feelings and make these changes meant that I would remain in denial. And staying in denial never worked for me. I needed to grow in awareness and acceptance to be able to get into action to create hope in my life.

My Awareness Helped me to Understand

My awareness helped me to understand that for anyone to come out of their denial would mean that they would have to feel feelings and make changes.

Both of which they may not be willing or able to feel or make. Consequently, I need to remember that I am not responsible for how people chose to treat me.

I AM POWERLESS

I cannot make anyone's decision to feel feelings or make changes. With this awareness, I realized that I need to let people believe what they want or need to believe.

I need to stop trying to convince them to believe... Consequently, I need to remember that I am powerless over what people chose to believe.

With this awareness, I realized that I was really the only one who needed to accept my reality. Accept my reality to get on with my life.

To create a good life for myself and to be of service through my gifts, talents and abilities.

Through my process and on my journey, I have discovered 12 different ways that have helped me to create hope. Create hope in my life and in my new normal. My new normal in my well-being and in my relationships.

Benefits of Creating Hope in my Life through My New Normal

In the process of using these 12 ways I have discovered my purpose, created my new normal, improved my brain/body connection and have learned how to be an advocate.

These 12 Ways may Also Help You

These ways may also help you to create hope your life and your new normal. In the process of creating hope, you may discover your purpose, improve your brain/body connection and help you to be an advocate.

Inch by Inch, Life's a Cinch

“When one door of happiness closes another door opens, but so often we look at the close door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.” Helen Keller

“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

12 Ways that have Empowered and continue to Empower my Ability to Create Hope in my Life and Experience my New Normal

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 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

What Helped me May also Help you to Create your New Normal

Over time and through staying committed to the process I have been able to build on my lot in life. I have been able to paint on the canvas of my life.

Build on my lot and paint on my canvas in ways that work for me.

Still had a desire to find a way to use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that would work for me. I wrote poems, an autobiography and a book (not published) before a friend encouraged me to start a blog. On February 6, 2007 I created Second Chance to Live.

Since that time, I have written **2033 articles** and **12 eBooks**. I have created **446 video presentations** and **40 Posters** to share what has helped me to create my new normal. In addition, I have created **16 power**

point presentations to share what I has helped me throughout the United States.

Over the past **27 months** I have had the opportunity to share these power point presentations with staff and members of organizations, associations, rehabilitation hospitals, clubhouses and groups throughout the United States a total of **90 times** with upcoming presentations scheduled.

Presentations and Resources

To view outlines of the **16 presentations** that helped me to create my new normal, click on this link:

[Second Chance to Live 16 Zoom and Keynote Presentations](#)

To schedule me to share these one of more of these presentations **[Public Speaking; Book Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA — Second Chance to Live](#)**

For a complete list of resources available of Second Chance to Live **[Resources that have Empowered my Ability to Create my New Normal](#)**

To read more about my process and journey click on this link.

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

Below are links to Outlines of my 16 Presentations. I am available to offer each of these presentations.

[Finding Purpose after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

[Acceptance and Creating a New Normal after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

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

[Believing in Ourselves through Self-Advocacy — A Guide to Owning Our Power after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

[12 Ways to Enhance Our Lives, Well-Beings and Relationships after a Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

[The Progression of Living My Best Life after My Brain Injury Presentation](#)

[Making Our Lives Magical One Day at a Time after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

[Cultivating Healthy Relationships after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

[Living with a Brain Injury and an Invisible Disability — How are You Defining Success? Presentation](#)

[Living with a Brain Injury, an Invisible Disability and Change after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

[Instead, We can Create our Own Genius after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

[Grieving the Guilt and Shame of a Traumatic Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation](#)

[Brain Injury — Why Do I Feel so Misunderstood and Shunned? Presentation](#)

[Living with a Brain Injury — I Can Not Do Everything, But Still I Can Do Something Presentation](#)

[Comprehensive History of Second Chance to Live — Answering the Call that never Came Presentation](#)

[Second Chance to Live and Succeeding Beyond my Special Needs from 10 Years of Age Presentation](#)

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

We Have Already Found Our Four-Leaf Clover, because...

"It is not as important what happens to us, but how we respond to what happen to us."
Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

And as we respond to what happens to us, a door to possibilities opens...

and in the process, we can create our own luck

one skill and one skill set at a time.

By not giving up on the process, a loving God or ourselves.



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SECOND CHANCE TO LIVE

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