

Cultivating Healthy Relationships after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live

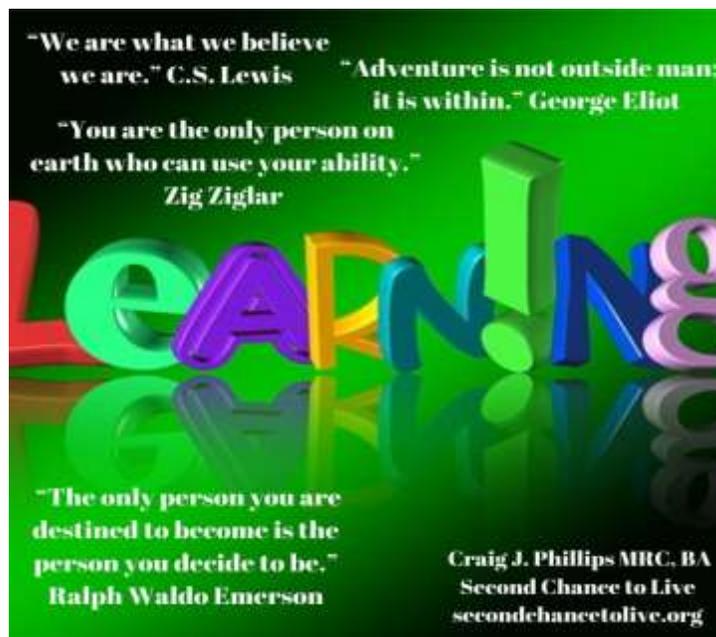
My Relationship with Hope

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

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.



Relationships after Brain Injury and Stroke present a set of challenges.

Challenges that often sabotage individuals and their relationships.

My Perspective

Relationships create challenges. Relationships after brain injury and strokes create different challenges. Challenges in the way that individuals relate to themselves, to family, friends and society at large.

What compounds these challenges is the history that each individual brings into these relationships.

History in terms of what was learned and experienced growing up in their family of origin. Behaviors and coping skills that are then carried into their relationships after their brain injuries and strokes.

Behaviors and coping skills that no longer work and create difficulties in relationships.

Family of Origin History

History in terms of what they experienced and how they interacted in past relationships. If there was dysfunction in those family of origin relationships, that learned dysfunction will be brought into other relationships.

Such dysfunction can continue to undermine and sabotage relationships unless new behaviors are learned and used in relationships.

Apart from awareness and acceptance individuals living with brain injury and strokes may find themselves blamed, shamed and scapegoated for difficulties.

The Impact of Denial

To not address the dysfunction in relationships, denial enters in and feelings are frozen. Once an individual experiences a brain injury or a stroke another dynamic enters into their relationships.

Once external wounds heal, the impact of the brain injury and stroke become invisible. Denial from the impact of "history" and denial surrounding the impact of a brain injury or stroke now compounds difficulties in relationships

Navigating Relationships

Navigating relationships amidst denial of “history” and denial of the impact of the brain injury and stroke often becomes a mystery.

As a result, the individual may find themselves alienated from relationships with other people and themselves.

The result can be an acute sense of isolation.

My Own Experience

For many, many years I had no idea that my life was being impacted by the open skull fracture and brain injury that I sustained when I was 10 years old. Once my external wounds healed, I looked “normal”.

When asked, friends would tell me that there was something different about me, but they could not put their “put their finger on it.” I could not “put my finger on it” either because my and other people’s denial kept it hidden.

The result from adopting the denial of my reality was alienation. Alienation from myself and alienation from other people. Alienation from myself for not being able to “get it right” and alienation from other people for not “getting it right”.

In response, I strove all the more while experiencing a tremendous amount of shame. Shame for feeling that I did not just make mistakes, but that I was a mistake.

But thank God that I did not give up on the process. Give up on the process, a loving God or myself.

What I Discovered about Denial and Relationships

What I discovered is that people often need to stay in denial for several reasons. People stay in denial because they believe we are making excuses.

People stay in denial because to come out of their denial would mean that they would need to make changes and feel feelings. Changes that they may not know how to make or want to make.

Feelings that they may not know how to feel or want to feel as they relate to us in our reality.

Nevertheless, the reality was and is that I am the only one who needed and needs to accept and own my reality.

I was and am the only one who could and can do anything about how my life is being impacted by my history, my brain injury and my invisible disability.

I am the only one who can improve the quality of my life and my relationships by taking responsibility for how my brain injury, invisible disability and family or origin “history”.

I am the only one who can change, to find the acceptance and freedom from my history to have functional relationships.

The Buck Stops with Me – Finding Freedom from the Impact of Denial

I was and am the only one who could or can work a program of recovery to change my behavior and how my “history” impacts me. I was and am the only one who could or can change the way that I relate to myself and to other people.

I was and am the only one who could or can stop participating in behaviors that no longer work for me. I was and am the only one who could or can do anything to make my life, well-being and my relationships better in time.

I am the only one who could or can stop sabotaging my life and relationships, a little at a time. I have a choice.

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

“There’s only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that’s your own self.” Aldous Huxley

Understanding the People, We Have Relationships

To grow in self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-esteem and self-respect I need to understand that I interact with different types of people.

Different types of people understanding or denying their “history” and different types of people who are aware or unaware of brain injuries, strokes and invisible disabilities.

Through being aware of these different types of people I find the freedom to detach, keep the focus on myself and run my own race.

People I interact with as an individual who is being impacted a brain injury survivor, an invisible disability with my history.

1. They are completely oblivious to my being a traumatic brain injury (tbi) survivor or for that matter do not care.
2. They hear that I am a tbi survivor, but because my disability is invisible, believe that I am somehow using my invisible disability as an excuse.
3. They know that I have am a tbi survivor and that my brain injury has been affected me in some manner, but still want me to function as an individual without a brain injury.
4. They thankfully realize that I am a traumatic brain injury survivor and that my brain injury interferes with my ability to work with people, especially with those in the first three groups.

People that I interact with as individuals with “history”

1. They are oblivious to their “history” and how their “history” impacts their lives, their relationships and other people.
2. They are aware of their history, but chose to blame other people for how their lives and relationships have and are being impacted.
3. They are aware of how their “history” impacts their lives and relationships and take responsibility for how they react and respond.
4. They are aware of how their “history”, their brain injury and/or stroke impacts their lives and relationships and they work to be empowered.

“If you want to improve your self-worth, stop giving other people the calculator.” Tim Fargo

Through my experience I have found that it is a waste of time and energy to try and change people's minds. By accepting that reality, I am able to grow in self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-esteem and self-respect.

“Not everyone will understand your journey. That’s okay. You’re here to live your life, not to make everyone understand.” Banksy

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

Opening the Door to Hope a Little at a Time

“Big things have small beginnings.” Prometheus

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 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

In my experience and through my process I discovered a set of ways. A set of ways that have helped me in my ongoing brain injury recovery process, one day at a time. These set of ways may also help you in your ongoing brain injury recovery process, one day at a time.

Inch by inch, life’s a cinch. Yard by yard, it’s very hard.

These ways have helped me to be able to accept the things that I cannot change, change the things I can and let go of the rest to a loving God. To a loving God to help me to sort out, to fulfill my purpose and to be of service.

“Adventure is not outside man. It is within.” George Eliot

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

Benefits that I have Gained through Working the 12 Ways

Accepting my Reality

Creating my New Normal

Changing the Things, I Can

Defining Success for myself

Finding and Living my Purpose

Owning my Power to be of Service

Developing My Brain / Body Connection

Discovering How to Make my Life Magical, One Day at a Time

Examine the Messages that I am Listening to and telling myself

Advocating for Myself in my Mind, Body, Spirit, Soul and Emotion

Cultivating a Healthy Relationship with myself, a loving God, people

Grieving the Guilt and Shame of my brain injury / invisible disability

Understanding Why I feel Misunderstood / Shunned to Find Freedom

Creating and Continuing to Develop my Own Unique Genius in Life

My Perspective

When I reached a point in time when I could no longer defend or deny the impact of my brain injury and invisible disability I began to grieve.

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

Application

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 to change because of our brain injury/invisible disability.

My Perspective

By realizing that all my efforts to try to change what could not be changed, I surrendered. By surrendering I became open and willing.

“We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.” E.M. Forster.

Application

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.

My Perspective

Through accepting my inability to change what I simply could not change; I made a decision to ask for help from a power greater.

“Decision is the spark that ignites action. Until a decision, nothing happens.” Wilfred A. Peterson

Application

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/ one day at a time.

My Perspective

By asking for help, I began to examine patterns of what got in the way of my ability to create hope in my life, well-being and relationships.

“As long as a man stands in his own way, everything seems to be in his way.” Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Application

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 strive to defend, answer and explain what we can't do. Patterns that keep you and I believing/feeling that we are victims of our brain injury, our invisible disability and our circumstances.

My Perspective

As I examined what got in the way of my life, my well-being and my relationships I realized that needed to learn how to trust.

“Accept what is, let go of what was, have faith in what will be.” Sonia Ricotti

Application

5. We no longer have to remain isolated/alienated because of what we are no longer able to accomplish with because of our brain injuries and invisible disabilities. 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 can no longer accomplish. By letting go of these expectations we can learn how to trust, again -- a loving God, ourselves and other people.

My Perspective

By realizing that I needed to trust, I discovered that I needed to let go of what no longer worked for me to discover what works for me.

“Nothing is a waste of time, if you use the experience wisely.” Auguste Rodin

Application

6. Through being sick and tired of being sick and tired of getting the same results, we become willing to try something different. Become willing to try something different to get different results in our lives and relationships. Through being willing, we can ask a loving God to help us to stop doing things that no longer work for us. Doing things that get in the way and sabotage of our ability to get on with creating a good life for ourselves. In the process, we become entirely ready. Entirely ready to let go of what no longer works for us living our lives.

My Perspective

To discover what would work for me, I needed to let go of my will to ask a loving God to lead, guide and direct my discovery process.

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

Application

7. Through being ready to let go of what no longer works for us, we can be actively involved. Actively involved in the process of discovering how to use our gifts, talents and abilities. Discovering how to use our gifts, talents and abilities through trial and error. In

the process, we can find ways that will fit our gifts, talents and abilities. We can humbly ask a loving God to help us in/with this process of self-discovery. In the process of letting go and self-discovery we can find and have/experience peace in our lives and relationships.

My Perspective

By examining the patterns of what no longer works for me, as I live my life, I am able to make peace with what no longer works for me.

“If you take responsibility for yourself, you will develop a hunger to accomplish your dreams.” Les Brown

Application

8. Through letting go of what no longer works we can pursue what works for us. In the process, we can stop being a prisoner to our deficits and imitations. Instead of trying to not be impacted by our deficits and limitations, we accept them. As a result, we are able to stop fighting with and against ourselves. Stop fighting with ourselves and other people by trying to prove that we do not have those deficits and limitations. As we stop fighting with our deficits and limitations, we gain the freedom to run our own race. In the process, we become the individual that we choose and decide to become in our lives.

My Perspective

I am able to make peace with what no longer works for me in my life, well-being and relationships by changing the way I use my energy.

“If you do not like something, change it. If you cannot change it, change the way that you think about it.” Mary Engelbreit

Application

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. Own our power through

the use of our time and energy. In the process, we can create our new normal in ways that work for us. In ways that work for us, through being an advocate for, in our mind, body, soul, spirit and emotions.

My Perspective

As I seek to change the way that I interact in my life and relationships I continue to be aware of what no longer works for me each day.

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

Application

10. And the good news is that we don't have to figure out how everything will fit together. Fit together as we seek to own the power in our mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions. Instead, we can take the process, one day at a time, one step at a time. In the process, we can ask a loving God to lead, guide and direct our steps, one day at a time. In the process, we can trust the process. Trust that the dots will connect forward as we learn how to use our gifts, talents and abilities. Learn to use our gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for us.

My Perspective

Because I realize that brain injury recovery is an ongoing process, I ask a loving God to guide, lead and direct my process, each day.

“If you feel like you don't fit into the world you inherited it is because you were born to help create a new one.” Ross Caligiuri

Application

11. We can ask a loving God to give us direction each day. We can do the footwork, while letting 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 to us with time. We can ask and trust that we are being guided in the direction of fulfilling our purpose, to be of service.

My Perspective

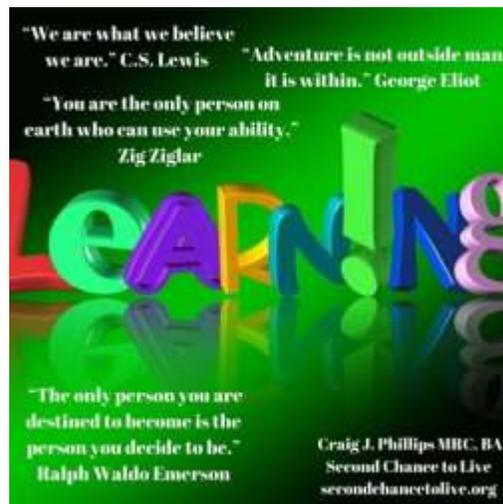
As I continue to ask a loving God to lead, guide and direct my process in ways that work for me, I encourage others to do the same.

“Ideas do not always come in a flash but by diligent trial-and-error experiments that take time and thought.” Charles K. Kao

Application

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. Learn from them, instead of being threatened by our circumstances, experiences, lessons and opportunities. In the process, we create hope in our lives, well-beings, relationships. In the process, we create our destinies one lesson, one experience, one opportunity and one day at a time. In the process, we share hope.

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



Below are 18 other presentations that I have created to share what helped to improve my life, well-being and relationships

The information that I share in these presentations may help to improve your life, well-being and relationships.

I am available to share these presentations with your members, staff, association or organization through zoom.

Schedule Availability

Finding Purpose after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation

Acceptance and Creating our 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

Living with a Brain Injury and the Messages We Tell Ourselves Presentation

Brain Injury and The Power of “I CAN” in an Ongoing Brain Injury Recovery Process Zoom Presentation

Brain Injury, Stress, Anxiety, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Zoom 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

Living with a Brain Injury, an Invisible Disability and Change after Brain Injury and Stroke Presentation

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

To Schedule me to share one of more of these presentations, click on this link: [Schedule](#)

Below are my 12 eBooks (4 of which are video presentation eBooks) in which I share what I discovered about my history.

My history in terms of how my life and relationships had been impacted apart from my brain injury and invisible disability.

Through being aware, I was able to find a freedom from that which was out of my control and stop being a prisoner of my “history”.

An Invitation

I would invite you to read through, or watch and listen to the articles in my eBooks. By doing so, you may find what I learned about my history and my brain injury insightful. Insightful into how your “history” and your brain injury or stroke may be impacting your life and relationships.

Click on the below links to read the PDF file of each eBook.

[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](#)



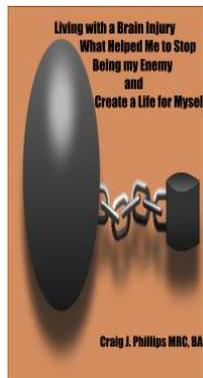
[Living with a brain injury and Building Self-Esteem and Self-Acceptance eBook](#)



[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](#)



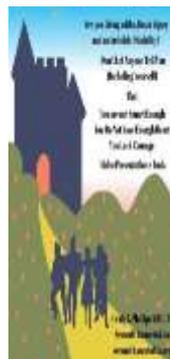
Celebrating Success after a Brain Injury Video Presentations eBook



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



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



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

