

Second Chance to Live and Succeeding Beyond my Special Needs from 10 Years of Age Presentation

Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live

My name is Craig J. Phillips. In 1967, at the age of 10, I sustained a severe traumatic brain injury in an automobile accident.

A fractured skull with right frontal lobe damage, a severe brain bruise with brain stem involvement and in a 3-week coma.

Consequently, I grew up with special needs that left me in the “dark”. Left me in the dark’ as I sought to navigate life.

Understanding my Process and Journey with Unbeknownst to me and with little direction, special needs.



[Finding Craig — Growing Up...](#)

Open skull fracture with right frontal lobe damage.

[Finding Craig — Learning to Walk Again](#)

Learning how to walk again after left femur fracture.

[Finding Craig — My Academic Path](#)

Education when there was little assistance known.

[Finding Craig — My Brain Injury Awareness](#)

With my experience, I grew in my awareness.

[Finding Craig — Empowering My Life](#)

Empowering my life as I grew in awareness

[Finding Craig — My Physical Recovery Process](#)

Empowering my physical recovery process.

[Finding Craig — Making Sense of Brain Injury](#)

Excelling in my life despite special needs

And Don't Give Up!

Although I encountered many disappointments and discouragement along the way due to my special needs, I did not give up. My encouragement to you is to not give up on your process because of your special needs.

Instead, find a way that will work for you beyond your special needs.

On February 6, 2007 I created my website to share what I learned growing up and learning how to both navigate and thrive. Navigate and thrive beyond the “box” of a label, stereotype, or stigmatization.

Navigate and thrive beyond the “box” of a disability, a diagnosis, a prognosis and a set of circumstances.

My website offers hope and encouragement to both teachers and students.

To read a **Comprehensive History of Second Chance to Live — Answering the Call that Never Came**, click on this link:

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

“The three most important ways to lead people are: ... By example... By example... By example.” Albert Schweitzer

What I Believe

I believe what I bring to the table is unique in that what I provide is hope to both the brain injury community worldwide, as well as to the special needs community worldwide.

I see my role as 2 pronged.

As an educator, I educate the educators to empower their service providers. As an educator, motivational and inspirational speaker I bring **hope** and **encouragement** to individuals, families, friends and caregivers.

Hope and Encouragement

Hope and encouragement to not give up on their process or journey, a loving God or themselves.

More will be revealed with time.

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

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

Through **Second Chance to Live** and my **2053 Articles, 454 Video presentations, 12 eBooks, 20 Slideshow Presentations, 29 Keynote and Workshop Presentations** my gift is to educate and inspire.

All of what I create and present focuses on and addresses a **holistic** and an **ongoing personal development process** and **journey** in the **brain injury community** and in the **special needs community**.

Personal development in **mind, body, spirit, soul** and **emotions**.

Click on this link to see [resources](#) available on **Second Chance to Live** to be used to **educate, motivate, inspire and enhance lives**.

Since Late June 2020

I have had the opportunity to speak publicly around that country via zoom through the below **29 different presentations, 130** times.

See this link: [Public Speaking; Book Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA —
Second Chance to Live](#)

I am available to give one or more of my below presentations to your faculty and staff. At this time, I do not charge a fee to share my presentations through zoom or in person.

Note: Although the titles are specific to brain injury and stroke, the content of the presentations have universal application. Universal application, regardless of specific special needs or circumstances.

Empowering Our Lives through Neuroplasticity

Improving my Brain and Body Connection One Skill and One Skill Set at a Time

Little by Little

Little by little, we can achieve what we never dreamed possible. In the process, we can begin to celebrate successes as we are learning/relearning skill sets.

In today's article, I would like to share with you something that has helped me to learn new skill sets. Through learning these skills, I have been able to use those skills in other areas of my life. In the process of applying those skills to other areas, my quality of life has improved. In my experience, learning these skills did not come over night. But through staying committed to the process I have experienced both small and huge successes.

As explained in MedicineNet.com, I had been using the principle of the concept of neuroplasticity:

“Neuroplasticity allows the neurons (nerve cells) in the brain to compensate for injury and disease and to adjust their activities in response to new situations or to changes in their environment. Brain reorganization takes place by mechanisms such as “axonal sprouting” in which undamaged axons grow new nerve endings to reconnect neurons whose links were injured or severed. Undamaged axons can also sprout nerve endings and connect with other undamaged nerve cells, forming new neural pathways to accomplish a needed function.”

Recently I wrote and published an article, **Living Life on Life's Terms and Small Successes** in which I spoke about life as a process and a journey, not a destination. As I embrace life — as a process and a journey — I am able to live life on life's terms. As I live life on life's terms, I am able to celebrate the progress that I make through small successes. These small successes have been gained through working on each part of the desired skill. These small successes have been gained through endless repetitions.

By breaking the skill down into individual parts, I have been able to enjoy the process, instead of judging my individual efforts. By working on individual parts of the skill, I have been able to celebrate the small successes, instead of focusing on the destination (having the skill). As I combine individual parts (small successes) I learn the desired skill. As I combine learned skills, I am able to combine skills into a series of learned skill sets. As I combine these skill sets, I create new neural pathways and, in the process, I reorganize my brain.

Not Judging my Efforts

As I have been able to combine a series of small successes — becoming proficient in specific drills — I have been able to learn how to execute a series of skill sets in each martial art. These small successes (parts) of my drilling and training, have not only improved my abilities as a martial artist but have also given me the ability to apply the hand-eye coordination, agility, motor and fine motor skills, speed, precision and focus to other areas of my life.

Celebrate Small Successes

What I discovered is that my drilling, training, and mirroring of skills and skill sets — on the non-dominant side of my body — has improved the quality of my life that I experience in other areas of my life. My encouragement to you my friend would be, start slow, but start. Learn a new skill and skill set through a series of small successes. By doing so you will improve the quality of your life. By doing so you can move beyond a diagnosis or prognosis. By doing so you will move beyond the confines of any “box”.

Run Your Own Race

I share the above information with you for this reason. Applying the principle and concept of neuroplasticity may help to improve the quality of life of the individuals whom you serve. Through persistence and tenacity, those individuals may find, as I have, that they are able to accomplish learn/relearn skills. Skills and abilities that may have previously seemed out of reach to them. Skills and abilities that they may have lost due to a stroke or other cognitive changes. Skills and abilities that may have seemed to be out of their grasp. Skills and abilities that may help them to have experience “awakenings”.

Stay in Your Own Lane

Exercise:

Whatever you are able to do with your dominant side of your body, start doing – mirroring – the same ability with your non-dominant side of your body. Start out slowly, but be persistent in your commitment. Work on one part (drill) of the skill at a time. As you become comfortable with that particular part of the skill, move onto the next part of the skill. By combining parts of the skill (small successes) you will find that you have learned or relearned a new skill. As you master that skill, begin working on parts of another skill.

One Skill and One Skill Set at a Time

Combine those parts (small successes) into learning that skill. As you continue in that process, you will be able to combine each skill into a skill set. As I have found, by doing so you will be able to learn or relearn new skills sets. In the process, you will create new neural pathways and brain reorganization. In the process, you will improve your quality of your life through small successes.

Riddle:

“How do you eat an elephant?”, one man said to the other. The man asked, “Tell me the answer”. One bite at a time. What you see as an elephant (skill or ability) may seem overwhelming. My encouragement to you my friend — as I need to remember too — would be that you work on consuming the elephant, one part at a time. By doing so, your elephant will be reduced

(through small successes) to a new or relearned skill., because you kept “chewing”.

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

Below are links to short video presentations showing the progression of how the concept of neuroplasticity through repetitive mirrored movements has benefited my mind and body.

I began my process of using repetitive mirrored movements through different martial art disciplines in October of 1998.

In August 2013 a friend of mine made a video presentation of the progress that I made using the principle of neuroplasticity. Other friends have helped me to make video presentations of my progress in each year since 2013.

Below are links to YouTube presentations of the progress made using repetitive mirrored movements. To watch the progress made using the principle of neuroplasticity over the past 9 years, click on **Start >** for each of the demonstrations.

Developing both Gross and fine Motor Skills and Skill Sets

To own the power of my brain (right and left hemispheres) and the functional ability of the right and left sides of my body (to improve balance, coordination, eye and hand/foot coordination, body awareness, focus, agility, spatial orientation, and precision).

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>

Due to a shoulder injury, I was unable to create a video presentation in 2019. Due to Covid I was unable to create a video presentation in 2020.

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>

Using upper and lower body coordination and movement to improve focus, agility and balance of upper body and lower body martial art skills. Created February 14, 2022

<https://youtu.be/nBSQx0y3aP0>

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

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

Below is a link to a Keynote presentation that I created and am available to present at coming to groups or at conferences

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

Invitation to Join Our Two Communities

Second Chance to Live Community which you are welcome and invited to join. Click on the link below. Once the page has opened, and at the top right of the page, click subscribe. Enter your email. Each time I publish an article on **Second Chance to Live** that article will be sent to you email inbox.

[Second Chance to Live Community](#)

Building Your Life after Traumatic Brain Injury Facebook Community, which you are also welcome and invited to join. Click on the below link and ask to join the community.

[Building Your Life after Traumatic Brain Injury Facebook Community](#)

We look forward to having you as a member in both of our communities.

