

My TED TALK Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA -- Second Chance to Live Keynote Presentation



My TED talk Will Inspire Creative Hope in the Process and Journey of Ongoing Brain Injury Recovery

“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

**“You may be the only person left who believes in you, but it’s enough. It takes just one star to pierce a universe of darkness. Never give up.”
Richelle E. Goodrich**

For more Information click on these Links

[168 National and International Associations, Organizations, Universities, and Rehabilitation Hospitals](#)

[Biographical Information for Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live](#)

[Some Testimonies and Endorsements of Second Chance to Live](#)

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

[Beyond Brain Injury Symptom Management — Resources to Empower an Ongoing Holistic Brain Injury Recovery Process](#)

Since the end of **June 2020** I have been spoken **132 times**, with **8 upcoming** speaking opportunities.

Among the places spoken and will be speaking at publicly

Cleveland Clinic, Medstar National Rehabilitation Hospital, Penn Presbyterian Hospital, Overland Park Rehabilitation Hospital, Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital, Inova Loudon Outpatient Specialty Rehabilitation Hospital, Magee Rehabilitation Hospital, Encompass Rehabilitation Hospital, Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital, Carolinas

Rehab, Colorado Department of Education, University of North Dakota, University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill, Harvard University Synapse, University of California at Berkley Synapse, Columbia University Synapse, Synapse National Conference, NeuroRestorative-Charlotte, Brown University Synapse, Temple University Synapse, University of Michigan Synapse, University of California – Irvine Synapse, University of Pittsburgh Synapse, University of California – Davis Synapse and Johns Hopkins University Synapse and various State Brain Injury Associations

My Process, Journey and Evolution

Traumatic brain injury, car accident, in 1967 when I was 10 years old. Open skull fracture, right frontal lobe damage, a severe brain bruise with brain stem involvement. Coma for 3 weeks. Fractured left femur (thigh bone), traction 7 weeks, Spica (full-body) cast for 5 months. 2 EEG's, battery of psychosocial testing. Was not supposed to succeed beyond high school academically. Learned how to walk, talk, read, write and speak in complete sentences. Tutored at home in 5th grade. Mainstreamed back into elementary school in the 6th grade. Graduated on time with my high school class in 1975. Went on to obtain my undergraduate degree in 10 years (2 universities, 1 community college). I then went on to obtain my master's degree (2 graduate schools) in Rehabilitation Counseling. Credentials CRC. 20-year history of getting and losing jobs, client with 2 different State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (Florida and North Carolina), 2nd Vocational Rehabilitation evaluation determined that I was not employable. Applied 3 times for SSDI, the 3rd application approved. For many years I felt like someone who was all dressed up with nowhere to go. I experienced a lot of disappointments and discouragement despite all my best efforts to succeed academically and vocationally. But I am glad that I did not give up on finding a way to use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that worked. On February 6, 2007, 7 years after my Voc. Rehab evaluation revealed I was employable and my 3rd SSDI application was approved I created Second Chance to Live 17 years ago.

Stop Fighting against Myself

In my experience, I discovered that for people to come out of their denial to accept us would mean they would have to do 2 things. Feel feelings that

they may not want to or know how to feel. Make changes that they do not know how to make or want to make. Both of these decisions are out of my control. Consequently, by accepting this reality, I am able to get on with my life. Get on with accepting my lot in life, instead of waiting for them to feel and change. Both of which may never happen. This awareness helped me to stop fighting against myself. This awareness helped me to stop joining in with the chorus of voices that criticized and berated me for what I was powerless to change. This awareness helped me to stop focusing on what I could not accomplish because of my brain injury and invisible disability. This awareness gave me the ability to discover how to use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that would work for me. This awareness helped me to learn how to respect who I am, given my limitations; although I may not understand my limitations. This awareness helped and help me to realize that I am powerless over what people choose to think or believe about me. This awareness helped me to realize that I need to keep the focus on myself, stay committed to my own course and run my own race. This awareness helped me to stop being driven to live someone else's dream for me and start living my own "magical" dream.

I am Equipped and I Am Able

I am enough because I say so (smart enough, intuitive and courageous). I am able to make my life magical, one inch at a time. Experience the progression of living my best life. Use adversity to empower my vision and mission. Advocate for myself in my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions. Empower my life through creating new neural pathways and brain reorganization through repetitive mirrored movements. Use 12 ways to enhance my life, well-being and relationships. Embrace my reality and in the process embrace the power of acceptance. Stay committed to my mission, vision and purpose. Celebrate my goals and dreams, in the now, one repetition at a time. Develop and continue to express my own creative genius. Find freedom from isolation and feelings of alienation through identifying with others. Answer the call that never came to offer hope and encouragement. Offer information to current and future professionals and providers to encourage holistic self-advocacy (mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions) in an ongoing recovery process.

Feeling Dismissed and Discounted, but not Deterred

Although I realized that I did not have to own or take on any of those feelings personally, “that I was not enough”, I realized something else. I realized that needed to remind myself that, **“Yes I am disabled, but Don’t Count me Out because...”**. I realized that I did not have to own or take on the feelings “that I am not enough because I am disabled and not able to work in traditional employment”. I needed to remind myself that I am the only one who can run my race. I needed to stay committed to using and developing my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for me. I needed to stay focused on running my race and not lose “sight of” my mission and vision. I needed to press on, regardless of whether anyone else sees, values, understands or respects why I am committed. Committed to running my race and staying in my own lane.

My Encouragement — Stay Committed to Your Course, Mission and Vision

In the event that you are living with a disability, that interferes with your ability to work; let me encourage you with this my friend. What makes you and I valuable is that we have a unique mission and purpose to fulfill with our lives. A mission given to us by a loving God that no one else can fill. A mission that we can alone discover. A mission that we can alone live. Although we may have people in our lives who leave us feeling minimized and marginalized, we can rise. Although we may have people in our lives who dismiss and discount who we are, we can stand strong. Stand strong and fulfill our God-given purpose. Stay committed to our course. Run our own race. Keep our focus on the goals that are in front of us. Keep using our gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for us and don’t lose sight of our mission, vision and purpose.