

# Navigating Life After a Traumatic Brain Injury: Embracing Reality and the Journey to Acceptance Presentation

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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) 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 the process. The process of finding a way to use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that worked. Ways that worked for me. In my search I created Second Chance to Live, on February 6, 2007, **7 years** after my 2nd Depart. of Voc. Rehab evaluation and counselor revealed that I was employable and began receiving SSDI.

## **Finding Peace in My Set of Circumstances**

Following a life changing circumstances, we are faced with a shock and awe, of sorts. Many times, denying what happened and the extent to what happened becomes like a warm blank. That becomes a safe place to begin to adjust to what happened. But that warm blanket can lull us into believing that we are trapped by those life changing circumstances.

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In my experience I had to come to a point in my life when I could no longer deny the impact of my life changing circumstance. As a result of reaching this bottom, I found the courage to confront what I have been denying.

When this occurred, I began to heal when I started to grieve what I could not change. I then became angry at what I could not change, tried to bargain my way out of what I could not change, and then found myself depressed about what I could not change. I stayed there for a time.

But when I got sick and tired of not being able to change my set of circumstances, I reached a place of acceptance. As I began to accept my set of circumstances, I began to realize that I could choose something different. I could do explore beyond what I could not change to be able to find a way that would work for me despite my set of circumstance.

Although you may not have sustained a traumatic brain injury and have a different set of circumstances over which you are powerless to change, what I discovered may be a benefit to you to be able to move forward. Move forward to create a good life for yourself in your set of circumstances.

### **It Just Takes What It Takes**

As I have shared this process took 7 years after all my struggles to change what could not be changed. Below I will share what I discovered about what kept me in denial and essentially fighting against myself.

I will probably not be able to get through all the information, so I would encourage you. Encourage you, at your own pace and rate to process the information in this presentation. Take your time and don't give up.

### **What I Learned about Denial and My Journey to Acceptance**

Today I want to begin talking about the process of acceptance. Through my process of acceptance, I came to a life changing awareness; that I could not begin to accept myself and move on with life until I first made peace. Made peace with what I was powerless to change, to change what I could.

### **In my Experience**

The losses that I experienced because of my traumatic brain injury. In my quest to make peace with those losses I needed to address my sadness. In my experience I could not just "get over it" without first doing the necessary

work. The necessary work to be able to learn how to accept myself despite having invisible deficits and limitations, over which I was powerless.

## **Getting Beyond a Learned Helplessness – The Pike’s Syndrome**

### **Identifying Losses**

I needed help to be able to identify, accept and address my sadness and frustration so that I could move beyond my sadness and frustration. I needed to identify what I was experiencing so that I could move beyond what could not be changed. In my experience I needed to stop avoiding my reality. In Elisabeth Kubler-Ross’s book **On Death and Dying** Elizabeth elaborates on the five stages in the grieving process.

### **The Journey Began**

In her book she introduces the 5 stages that people go through as they grieve their loss (s). The first of these 5 stages is denial. Denial is a defense mechanism that protects the individual from having to confront the shock of their loss. Denial manifests itself in various ways. I have heard denial explained as a warm blanket that insulates and shields the individual from having to face their reality. Denial can be used.

**Denial can also be used as a door to shut out, that which is just too painful to address.**

Denial can also be used to ignore and avoid what we do not want to confront. Denial can be used to erect a dam to hold back unwanted memories and emotional pain. Denial can be used to suppress body memories. Denial can be used as a disconnect, so that our heart won’t let our head know what is or what has happened. Denial can also be used to defend, answer and explain away behaviors that undermine.

### **Undermine our Time and Energy**

That undermine our time, energy and wellbeing. Denial can also be used to dismiss or invalidate another person’s pain or reality. Invalidate another person’s pain, in order to avoid having to interpret or address uncomfortable feelings. Before I began my grief work, I saw denial as an ally. When anguish motivated me to begin my grieving process, I began to see denial as an active adversary. As my eyes slowly opened.

## Trapped in a System

As my eyes slowly opened, I saw that denial was seeking to keep me trapped in a system that would or could not allow me to realize or accept my reality. In collusion with my fear (s), denial shamed me for not being enough even though I sought to do my very best. Denial also sought to keep me distracted so that I could not see a way to my destiny. Denial led me to believe that I was my brain injury and disability.

## Minimized and Discounted

My invisible disability, deficits and limitations. Denial minimized my passion and discounted my gifts, talents and abilities. Denial, in practice, sought to silence my voice. Denial kept me shrouded by a societal stigma that devalued my worth because of my traumatic brain injury. Denial kept me subservient to what other people thought of me. Denial undermined my self-worth and self-esteem. Denial kept me distracted.

## Kept me Distracted

Kept me crouched in the shadows of isolation. Denial told me that what I thought and felt were of no accord. Denial sought to keep me distracted so that I could not see the truth. Denial sought to disparage my value and worth because I did not live up to denial's expectations. But as my awareness grew, I saw how my denial was limiting my life. In my anguish, I made the decision to confront my denial.

## Several Valuable Lessons

Through the process of confronting my denial I learned some valuable lessons. In my experience I discovered that as I confronted my denial, I needed to keep the focus on myself. I needed to keep the focus on my awareness. I needed to be accountable to and for how I was choosing to respond my loss (s). I needed to own my sadness and feel my feelings because of what I had lost because of my brain injury.

**I needed to grieve my losses, instead of denying and detaching from my reality. I needed to stop trying to convince others of my awareness, especially those who want/need me to stay in denial.**

## What kept me Stuck

I needed to sit with my discomfort. I needed to determine why I was reacting to people, places and situations. I needed to determine why I thought that I needed to maintain my denial. I needed to love myself through the process of confronting my denial. Consequently, I could no longer blame anyone for my loss (s) or for how I was choosing to react to my loss (s), including myself. This was an ongoing process for me.

### **Accountable to Myself**

Through my experience of confronting my denial I became more accountable to myself. As I continued and continue to be accountable to and for myself, I have been able to own my process. As I have been able to own my process, I have been empowered to move beyond my denial. In the process, I was able to break free of a denial system that sought to justify and defend its position by denying what could not be accepted.

By confronting my denial, I was able to open the door that denial sought to keep shut. I was able to move on with my journey through growing in awareness and acceptance. The acceptance of my loss (s) and myself.

**In the process, I gave and have given myself the permission to be present for myself.**

### **Strategies Denial Used**

When I decided to confront denial, I became aware of how my life had been infected by a lie. As I examined the strategies that denial used to avoid the truth, I started having spiritual awakenings. One of these spiritual awakenings revealed that denial had been acting as a door.

A door, in that denial denied access to any and all unwanted thoughts or feelings. In effect, whenever any unwanted thoughts or feelings were triggered.

**Whenever thoughts or feelings sought to be heard or experienced, denial would discount and minimize. Discount and minimize the relevance of those thoughts and feelings.**

**Denial imposed a code of avoidance to mask what needed to be addressed. Denial, through shame, actively sought to silence my voice and my acceptance of reality to limit me.**

## **What I Discovered about Denial Systems**

In a denial system that seeks to maintain that reality does not exist, feelings are considered a threat. Especially those feelings that trigger a sense of shame. Shame is different than guilt, in that shame is a being wound.

Debilitating guilt and debilitating shame are very similar in that the individual is led to believe that they don't just make mistakes. They; instead, are led to believe that they are a mistake.

### **Led to Believe**

As an individual living with the impact of a traumatic brain injury and an invisible disability I was led to believe. Led to believe that because I did not live up to expectations, I was a mistake. Despite all of my efforts to prove that I was not a mistake, I still believed that I was a mistake. Because I was led to believe that I did not just make mistakes, for many years I internalized my inability to live up to expectations.

### **Justify my Worth and Value**

Because I was led to believe that I did not just make mistakes, but that I was a mistake I remained in denial. As a result, for many years I sought to justify my worth and value through people pleasing, approval seeking and mind reading. I attempted to do more, to be more, to be enough. When these strategies failed, I sought to discard parts of myself that I found to be displeasing. Displeasing, resulting in my feeling defective.

Displeasing to my family, friends, teachers, schoolmates, employers and coworkers in an attempt to prove that I was not a mistake.

Slowly; but progressively, denial stole bits and pieces of me as an individual. In the process of discarding parts of my reality, I lost myself.

I had no idea of who I was, apart from getting. Getting approval from people, places and things, in order to not feel flawed and defective in being me.

### **Confronting Denial**

As I mentioned, when I realized how denial was limiting my life, I made a decision to confront denial. When I began to confront denial, I experienced various reactions. Among these reactions was anger. I was angry at myself,

angry at other people and angry at my reality. My anger many times came out sideways, because I had no idea why I was feeling. Feeling and because I had no idea how to express my anger in healthy ways.

**I was angry at my deficits and limitations and life in general because I felt helpless in many ways.**

In the process of confronting both my and other people's denial, per my reality, I discovered that I had and held resentments toward various people, places, churches, educational institutions, and employers. Further confrontation of my denial revealed that I also had and held resentments towards myself. I also discovered that I had been undermining myself using huge amounts of time, spiritual and emotional energy.

### **Creative Capacity to Use my Passion**

In ways that undermined my creative capacity. Undermined my creative capacity to use my passion (s) through my gifts, talents, and abilities. What's more is that I had no idea what my passion was, nor how to use and express my passion through my gifts, talents and abilities.

### **Confronting my Denial and Anger**

Per my experience, as I slowly became aware of my anger, I realized that I had bought into a denial system. A denial system that sought to keep me in denial through shame. Because I believed that I deserved to be shamed for not being enough, I internalized my anger.

### **Consequences of Believing that I was a Mistake**

Debilitating guilt and debilitating shame then convinced and contained me in my denial because I believed that I was the problem.

I believed that I was the problem and thus deserved to be shamed and blamed. Blamed and shamed for not being enough. In the process, shame undermined my ability to trust. Trust myself, my judgment and the process.

### **Being a Reactor instead of as an Actor in my Life**

Shame set the stage for me to become a reactor rather than an actor in my life. Reacting to being blamed and shamed. Debilitating guilt and debilitating shame sabotaged my ability to trust the process, a loving God and myself. Debilitating guilt and debilitating shame drained my spiritual and emotional energy. as I attempted to overcompensate. Overcompensate for my unknown invisible disability, deficits and limitations.

### **Buried Under a “mountain”**

I also discovered that much of my anger was buried under a mountain. Under a mountain called debilitating guilt and debilitating shame that fostered resentments, from which I needed to be healed.

**Note:** As I understand, guilt is something one experiences when they do wrong. There is a way to resolve one’s guilt by making an amends. Shame, on the other hand, is a being wound that reinforces to the individual that they do not just make mistakes, but that they are a mistake.

Debilitating guilt and shame convince the individual that no amount of “punishment” or “amends” can take away one’s feeling of guilt or shame.

Debilitating guilt and shame leave the individual feeling trapped and helpless, as they strive to do more, to be more, to hope to feel/be enough.

### **Turning Anger Inward, Festering Resentments, Fostering Depression**

When I started to experience my anger, in my helplessness, I turned that anger inward. **Anger turned inward results in depression.**

**For many years I unknowingly allowed my anger to fester in the realm of resentments, that fostered a low-grade chronic depression.**

I had resentments toward various people, but the biggest resentment I had was toward myself. I was resentful towards myself because I was unable to prove to other people that I was not a mistake. I was angry at myself that no matter how hard I tried, I could not prove that I was doing enough to be.

### **Did enough, to be enough to not be blamed and shamed.**

But I rarely felt that I did enough or that I was enough. Consequently, I spent much of my life apologizing to other people for not being enough.



Through my process, I found that much of the criticism that I had toward other people stemmed from self-criticism. Moreover, the judgment and criticism that I showed toward other people was often in direct proportion to the judgment and criticism that I showed and held toward myself.

### **Mirrored my Relationship with Myself**

Through my process, I found that my relationships with other people mirrored the relationship I had with myself. I also found that my resentments were; in a way, a cry for help, however, no one was listening. Instead, the direct opposite occurred. My judgmental attitude and criticisms of other people and myself alienated everyone and anyone who may have been willing to help. Consequently, I held onto my anger.

In my process, I discovered that as I held onto my anger and my resentment, I pushed people away from me. I also found that in the process of alienating other people, I was in effect alienating myself. Consequently, in the process I became my own enemy, because I held onto my anger and resentment.

### **Shame and Guilt — Masters of Disguise**

**Note:** An excellent book to understand and find freedom from the impact of debilitating guilt and debilitating shame is **Shame and Guilt — Masters of Disguise** by Jane Middleton – Moz. This book has been instrumental in my recovery, healing process and ability to come out of denial. This book helped me to begin to love and accept myself as an individual before I realized the impact of my brain Injury.

**This book helped me to understand and begin to find the freedom to discover, accept and express my creative self.**

### **An Awareness — Turning Anger Inward**

When I started to experience my anger, in my feeling helpless, I turned that anger inward. I turned my anger inwards because I thought that I was to blame. For many years I unknowingly allowed my anger to fester in the realm of resentments. I had resentments toward various people, but the biggest resentment I had was toward myself. I was resentful towards myself because I was unable to prove to other people.

Prove to other people and myself that I was not a mistake. Specifically, I spent huge amounts of energy chiding and berating myself for not being able to do enough, to be enough, to prove that I was enough.

**Consequently, I spent much of my life apologizing to other people for not being enough.**

Once I realized that I needed to address my shame, negativity, and critical attitude I found myself back in a familiar anxiety. Upon further examination, I found that my anxiety stemmed from my fear of physical and emotional abandonment. In the process, I discovered that my fear of abandonment was firmly attached to my core belief — that I did not just make mistakes, but that I was a mistake.

### **Struggling to Prove that I was Not a Mistake**

As I examined my motives, I determined that I sought to prove that I was not a mistake in order to avoid the dread of being physically and emotionally abandoned. This stemmed from if I did not meet expectations, I would experience anxiety, fear and dread. In the process, I discovered that my anxiety, fear and dread stemmed from a core belief. A core belief that I need to make other people OK with me.

### **A Codependent Dance**

For many years I engaged in a dance with other people that involved these steps. If I detected that another person was not alright with me (feeling blamed and shamed by them) I believed it was my fault. Because I bought into the notion that if the individual was upset it was my fault, I set out to make “fix” them. Essentially to “fix” them so that I would no longer feel blame or shame. Blame and shame for being upset.

Fix the other person so that they would not go away. I did so because I believed if the person went away “abandoned me” that there was something wrong with me. My goal in these interactions was to make “you” O.K., so that I we could be O.K., in order to believe that I feel O.K. I did this “dance” in all my relationships to feel safe. Nevertheless, the dance created a “crazy making” experience in all my relationships.

### **When I Became Sick and Tired of Doing the Dance**

When I realized that I needed to address my denial, anger, negativity, criticism and judgmental attitudes I began a program of rigorous honesty. I found that I needed to examine the resentments that I held toward other people and myself. In my process, I found that by examining my resentments I was able to look at the patterns that I maintained in my relationships with other people and with myself. Through my process.

**Through my process I discovered that the resentments that I held toward other people and myself actually sustained my denial. Sustained my anger, negativity, criticism and judgmental attitudes.**

### **Freedom from Self-Reproach**

Through being honest with myself I discovered that my anger and resentments held onto the keys that kept me trapped. Keys that kept me trapped behind the door that left me feeling isolated and alienated. I discovered that to take the keys to open the door, I needed to own my anger and resentments.

### **Freedom from Isolation**

In my experience, I found that I needed to determine who I held resentments towards and why. Why I sought to maintain those resentments. Anger and resentments toward those individuals, family, places, churches, significant relationships, and institutions. I need to make peace with the anger and resentment that I held so that I could open the door. So that I could come out from behind the door.

**Come out from behind the door of isolation, alienation and feelings of self-reproach.**

### **Free of Resentments**

In my desire to be free of my anger and resentments I needed to make a list of the people that I resented. Next, I needed to ask myself a series of questions regarding the people that I resented. I needed to determine what I believed those individuals did to me, how my life as a result was impacted. How my self-esteem, emotions, security, ambitions as well as my personal and sex relationships were impacted.

Next, I needed to explore how the situation, that led to my resentment, made me feel? I then needed to determine how I responded to the event.

Next, I needed to examine what was my part that led to my resentment. How I contributed/participated in/to the situation that led to my resentment.

Was I self-fish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, inconsiderate, etc.?

Lastly, I needed to examine what I did right.

### **What I did right, if anything, in the situation that led to my resentment.**

#### **A Strategy that Helped Me to Stop the Crazy Making**

In my experience, I needed to examine specific time periods in my life in order to be able to identify my resentments. Specifically, I needed to examine how I related to my family, friends, educational venues, churches, employers and other significant relationships. Because I wanted to be free of the negative energy that my resentments created, I did an inventory of my resentments during specific times.

**Specific periods of time in my life. I examined as far back as I could remember. About 6 years of age. I then examined time periods from ages 6-12, 12-18, 18-24, 24-30, 30- 36, 36-42 and so on. I did so to examine patterns that led to my anger and resentment toward people, places and things.**

As I identified patterns in my behavior, I was able to address what was my part. What was not my part, and how I could be freed from the negative consequences of my resentments. As a byproduct, I was able to begin to recognize where other people ended and where I began. My expectations and their expectations. As a result of my inventory work, I was able to begin to begin and establish healthier relationships.

#### **Healthier relationships with both other people and with myself.**

##### **Stop participating in the Codependent Dance**

Through practicing rigorous honesty in my own ongoing recovery process, I was able to slowly stop participating. Stop participating in the codependent dance that led me to believe that I couldn't be "OK".

##### **As I Grieved what I was powerless to Change**

As I have grieved, I have grown in the awareness of my reality. In the process of becoming aware, I have grown in my ability to love and accept myself. I have been able to address, confront and understand the impact of

my denial, anger and resentments. Being aware helps me to understand myself.

### **The Impact of my Denial, Anger and Resentments**

I discovered that denial, anger and resentments produce a “spiritual and emotional plaque”. A spiritual and emotional plaque that attaches itself to the walls and channels of my creative capacity.

The effect of which blocks the flow of my spiritual and emotional energy. Clearing denial, anger and resentment gives me the ability to use emotional and spiritual energy to create hope in my life.

### **Making Peace with Other People and Myself**

I found that as I made peace with other people and with myself spiritual and emotional energy became available. Spiritual and emotional energy that I once used to manage my denial, anger and resentments became available to empower my process. With this change I have been able to channel my spiritual and emotional energy in ways. In ways to use my passion to enhance my gifts, talents, and abilities.

Use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for me. By addressing my denial, anger, and resentments I have been able to flush my previously blocked channels so that my spiritual and emotional energy can flow freely.

As I have been able to examine the roots of my denial, anger and resentments, I have been able to make peace. Make peace with my past, so that my past no longer spoils my present.

### **Addressing Distractions**

In my experience, I have found that by addressing the distractions of my denial, anger, and resentments I have been able to keep the focus on what is my business. I have learned to be responsible to rather than for other people and their choices. Consequently, I have been able to keep my side of the street clean in my relationships. I have been able to be aware of when I am participating in a dance of crazy making.

**I have also discovered the power of choice. Consequently, I no longer need to believe that I am a victim of my circumstances. Instead, I am able to trust the process, a loving God and myself.**

## **Growing in the Power of Acceptance**

I have been able to learn valuable lessons. I have been able to take advantage of opportunities. I have been able to consider the possibilities. I have been empowered to be of service in healthy ways.

Relate to other people and myself during those time periods. As I identified patterns in my behavior (s), I was able to address what was my part, what was not my part and how I could be freed from the negative consequences of my resentments.

## **Accepting what I cannot change**

As a bi-product, I was able to begin to recognize where other people ended and where I began. Consequently, I was able to begin to establish healthier relationships with both other people and with myself. Healthier relationships with the people who choose to remain in denial.

People who choose to remain in denial, while realizing that I no longer need to remain or participate in that denial. As a bi-product of working through my resentments, I was/am able to learn how to trust the process, a loving God and myself.

## **This too is a process, one day at a time.**

**“Sometimes the easiest way to solve a problem is to stop participating in the problem.” Johnathan Mead**

## **12 Ways to Help Navigate Life after a Brain Injury**

**Below are 12 Ways that helped me accept the people, places and things that I could not change, so that I could discover what I could change. 12 Ways that helped me to move beyond my brain injury awareness to create a good life for myself and be of service.**

## **When I Got busy, I got Better**

In my experience and through my process I discovered a set of ways. A set of ways that have helped me to learn to live and thrive in my ongoing brain injury recovery process. These set of ways may also help you to live and thrive in your ongoing brain injury recovery process.

**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**

**Defining Success for myself**

**Owning my Power to be of Service**

**Brain Injury and The Power of “I CAN”**

**Developing My Brain / Body Connection**

**Finding the Freedom from Feeling Stuck**

**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**

