

# **Neuroplasticity, Setting Goals, Repetition and Creating Hope After Brain Injury and Stroke Keynote Presentation**

**Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live**

**“Our disappointments and discouragement do not have to limit our ability to create a good life for ourselves.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

My 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Mainstreamed back into elementary school in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Graduated on time with my high school class in 1975. Went on to get my undergraduate degree in 10 years (2 universities, 1 community college). Obtained 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. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vocational Rehabilitation evaluation determined that I was not employable. Applied 3 times for SSDI, the 3<sup>rd</sup> application approved. Felt like someone all dressed up with nowhere to go. A lot of disappointments and discouragement despite all my efforts.

Created Second Chance to Live 7 years after it was determined that I was not employable. I did so on February 6, 2007 to share what helped me to recover mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally after my brain injury.

**“Inch by inch, life's a cinch. Yard by yard, life's hard.” John Bytheway**

**After we Sustain a Brain Injury or a Stroke**

**What Was Once Familiar**

**We May be Discouraged**

**Give Up on Our Hopes and Dreams**

**Tendency to focus on Symptoms, not Solutions**

**The Good News is that We don't Have to Stay Stuck**

**We Can Create Hope in Our Lives after Brain Injury**

## **Building Blocks to Create Hope in our Lives**

**“Big things have small Beginnings.” Prometheus**

**Nerve Conduction**

**Communication**

**Corpus Callosum**

## **Creating New Neural Pathways and Brain Reorganization**

**Nerve Cells Die**

**Damaged Nerve Cells are not Dead Never Cells**

**Healthy Nerve Cells connect to Damaged Nerve Cells**

**Connections between the Left Hemisphere and the Right Hemisphere**

**of Our Brain through the Corpus Callosum**

**Damage to the Right or Left Sides of Our Brain**

**Important to Understand**

**Damage to the Right side of our Brain affects the Left Side of our  
Body**

**Damage to the Left side of our Brain affects the Right Side of our  
Body**

**Unaffected Side of Our Brain can Help Restore the Affected Side of  
our Body**

**My Brain was Damaged on the Right Side of my Brain**

**Which Side of Your Brain was Damaged**

**My Brain was Damaged on the Right Side**

**Your Brain May have Been Damaged on the Left Side**

**Right Side – Left Side of Body**

## Left Side – Right Side of Body

### Accepting the Limitations of my Brain Injury, but Not Being Stopped by Them

#### Not Being Stopped

Accepting the Limitations of my Brain Injury Does Not Mean that I Like Them

Accepting my Limitations Just Means that I Do not have to Be Stopped by Them

Accepting my Limitations Gives me the Ability to try Something Different to get different Results

Accepting My Limitations Gives me the Ability to Find a Way that will Work for me

“I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.”  
Thomas Edison

#### Free to Move Beyond

I free to Move beyond what I am led to believe about myself (my diagnosis) to run my own race.

I am free to Move beyond what I am told that I can accomplish (prognosis) so that I can find ways that work for me.

I am free to Stop judging my efforts and I Learn at my own pace.

“I was told over and over again that I would never be successful, that I was not going to be competitive and the technique was simply not going to work. All I could do was shrug and say “We’ll just have to see”. Dick Fosbury (**Gold Medal** winner High Jump)

“Absorb what is useful. Discard what is not. Add what is uniquely your own.” Bruce Lee

## Definition of Neuroplasticity

**The ability for the brain to create new neural pathways and brain reorganization through repetitive mirrored movements**

**My Encouragement to You as I Need to Remember**

**Start Now and Don't Give Up**

**Set a Goal**

**Skills and Skill Sets**

**Improving the Quality of Your Life**

**Beyond a Diagnosis**

**Beyond a Prognosis**

**"Baby steps turn into miles when put together." Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

**Living Beyond Limitations one Skill and Skill Set at a Time**

**Moving Beyond Limitations**

**Moving Beyond the Confines of a Prognosis**

**Find a Way that Works for You**

**To Build a New Life**

**Tenacity**

**Persistence**

**Not Giving Up**

**Exercise to Learn and Re-Learn Skills One Skill and One Skill Set at a Time**

**Let the Journey Begin  
Repetitive Mirrored Movements**

**Both Sides of Brain Communicate**

**Start Slowly, but Don't Give Up!**

**Skills and Skill Sets**

**“Though no one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending.” Carl Bard**

**The Process Just takes Time, so Don't Give Up**

**Just Takes what it Takes**

**Achieving Your Goal**

**Don't be Discouraged**

**Elephant Riddle**

**Keep Chewing**

**Small Successes**

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

**Little by Little We can Achieve What We**

**Never Dreamed Possible**

**Dream Possible – Stay Positive**

**Celebrating Small Successes – Inch by inch**

**Not Judging Our Efforts – Progress not perfection**

**Running Our Own Race, Staying in Our Own Lane**

**Tortoise and the Hare -- Slow and Steady wins the Race**

**“Believe in yourself, go after your dreams and don't let anyone put you in a box.” Daya**

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

**Although the Process May Seem Slow at Times Have Fun**

**Have Fun with the Process. What you Enjoy doing You will Stick with through times of Discouragement.**

**Although Progress may Seem Slow at time, Don’t Give Up. You are Making More Progress that you Realize.**

**“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 and see how far we have come, because we did not give up.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

**The Principle of Baking Cakes and Eating Elephants**

**One Bite at a Time**

**Life Goals one “step” at a time**

**Gather Ingredients to Bake Your Cake**

**Combine Ingredients**

**One Skill and One Skill Set at a time**

**And Keep Chewing**

**“Big things have small beginnings.” Prometheus**

**“Everyone is trying to accomplish something big not realizing that life is made up of little things.” Frank A. Clark**

**My Process and Journey using the Principle of Neuroplasticity through Martial Arts after my Brain Injury**

**My Journey with Neuroplasticity Began**

**1997 Using Different Martial Art Disciplines**

**Muay Thai Kick Boxing, Western Boxing, Filipino Stick Fighting, Kali,  
Jeet Kune Do and Wing Chun Drills**

**To Train and Develop through Endless Repetitive Movements**

**Large and Small Muscle Groups**

**Gross and Fine Motor Skills**

**How I Use Repetitive Mirrored Movements to Create New Neural  
Pathways**

**Stick Fighting, Knife, Western Boxing muay Thai & Wing Chun Drills  
Created September 2, 2021**

**Hand Eye Coordination and Precision Drills using Fine Motor Drills  
Created September 12, 2021**

**Upper/Lower Body Coordination Drills to Improve Focus, Balance and  
Agility Created February 14, 2022**

**In My Experience I Needed to Exercise Diligence to Succeed**

**Born to Win and Succeed after a Brain Injury**

**Plan**

**Prepare**

**Execute**

**Succeed**

**“You were born to win, but to be a winner you must plan to win,  
prepare to win and expect to win.” Zig Ziglar**

**Plan, Prepare, Execute, and Succeed in Ways  
That will Work for You**

**Commit to Succeed One Day at a Time**

**“a willingness to give your time and energy to something that you believe in, or a promise or firm decision to do something”  
Cambridge Dictionaries online**

**Commitment to me involves loyalty, first to myself. Commitment encourages me to stick with a goal, regardless.**

**Although the way that I set out to accomplish something may change, my commitment teaches me that I can find a way that will work for me to be able to accomplish my goal.**

**“Regardless of Your Lot in Life You Can Build Something Beautiful on It.” Zig Ziglar**

**To Achieve what will Improve the Quality of our Lives and our Well-beings One Day at a Time**

**By Applying Diligence in the Training Camps of Life after Brain Injury**

**Ingredients of a Successful Training Camp to Create Hope**

**Hard work or Work-ethic**

**"Something requiring lots of effort to do, either physical, mentally or emotionally; labor; toil." Your Dictionary.com**

**Hard work to me means being diligent, to accomplish a task or a goal. Hard work or a work-ethic can be likened to running a marathon, not running a sprint.**

**“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**

**Determination**

**“is a positive emotion that involves persevering towards a difficult goal in spite of obstacles.**

**Determination occurs prior to goal attainment and serves to motivate behavior that will help achieve one’s goal.” Wikipedia**

**Determination helps me to focus on what I want to accomplish, in spite of obstacles and setbacks.**

**Obstacles become a sign on the road that helps me to realize that adjustments need to be made to accomplish my desired goal.**

**“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”  
Thomas Edison**

## **Drive**

**“There are three major components to motivation: activation, persistence, and intensity. Activation involves the decision to initiate a behavior...**

**Persistence to me is the continued effort toward a goal even though obstacles may exist...Finally, intensity can be seen in the concentration and vigor that goes into pursuing a goal.” About Education — What is Motivation**

**Motivation can either be external or internal. External motivation only last until the threat is removed. Internal motivation is sustainable because of the individual’s internal desire to achieve.**

**“Sometimes adversity is what you need to face in order to become successful.” Zig Ziglar**

## **Discipline**

**“Training to act in accordance with rules; drill, activity, exercise, or a regimen that develops or improves a skill, the rigor or training effect of experience, adversity” Dictionary.com**

**For me, discipline means that I keep working on my craft, tweaking and taking away; adding to and making what works, work for me.**

**“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.” Jim Rohn**

## **Fortitude**

**“Fortitude meaning courage or bravery is the ability and willingness to confront fear, pain, danger, uncertainty, or intimidation.”**  
Wikipedia

For me fortitude means that I commit to pursuing my dreams and my destiny. That I stay focused on my vision and mission. That I remain true to myself.

**“Every strike brings me closer to the next home run.” Babe Ruth**

## **Persistence**

**“the quality that allows someone to continue doing something or trying to do something even though it is difficult or opposed by other people” Merriam-Webster**

For me persistence is the decision to get up more times than I fall down. Persistence for me means that I don't give up regardless... Persistence means believing in myself.

**“Believe in yourself, go after your dreams and don't let anyone put you in a box.” Daya**

## **Tenacity**

**“an unwillingness to yield or give up, being dogged, stubbornly, persevering and steadfast” Wiktionary**

Tenacity keeps me moving toward what I want to accomplish in my life. Tenacity means that I keep looking for ways to win in life. Tenacity means that I do not give myself no for an answer.

Tenacity means that I trust the process, a loving God and myself. Tenacity means that I keep moving forward, do the footwork and let go.

**“It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer.”**  
Albert Einstein

## **Courage**

**“The state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger, fear, or vicissitudes with self-possession, confidence, and resolution; bravery.” The Free Dictionary**

**Courage to me means I stay committed to the process, the footwork and the journey. Courage helps me to remember that I do not have to do things perfectly.**

**“My mother said that if you are a soldier, you will become a general. If you are a monk, you will become the Pope. Instead, I was a painter and became Picasso.” Pablo Picasso**

**Friends videoed me to show and document the progress made to increase new neural pathways and brain reorganization. Click:**

**[Neuroplasticity through Martial Arts Disciplines August 2013](#)**

**[Neuroplasticity Demonstration August 2014](#)**

**[Brain Injury, Neuroplasticity and Personal Gains August 2015](#)**

**[Balance and Coordination through Repetitive Mirrored Movement 2016](#)**

**[Brain Injury Recovery and Repetitive Mirrored Movements 2017](#)**

**[Improving Our Brain and Body’s Ability to Excel after Brain Injury 2018](#)**

**Due to a shoulder injury and then Covid, I was unable to create a demonstration in 2019 and in 2020.**

**[Stick Fighting, Knife, Western Boxing muay Thai & Wing Chun Drills Created September 2, 2021](#)**

**[Hand Eye Coordination and Precision Drills using Fine Motor Drills Created September 12, 2021](#)**

**[Upper/Lower Body Coordination Drills to Improve Focus, Balance and Agility Created February 14, 2022](#)**

**[Brain-Body Connection --Craig J Phillips MRC, BA, Second Chance to Live March 16, 2024](#)**