

# **Creating our New Normal after a Brain Injury through Self-advocacy to Own the Power in Our Mind, Body, Spirit, Soul and Emotions Keynote Presentation – Copyright 2024**

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

**Please note: I am available to give this presentation to your group, organization, rehabilitation center, hospital setting or in any other venue to offer hope.**

## **Empowering the Individual, Not the Brain Injury**

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

## **Understanding the Railroad of Life**

### **The Beginning of Self-Advocacy**

Following a brain injury, the way in which the individual relates to themselves, other people and their environment changes. Because of these changes knowing how to advocate for themselves may seem like a mystery. Because of this mystery, individuals may knowingly or unknowingly give their power away.

### **Growing in Awareness of Myself**

In my experience, I discovered that I needed to grow in awareness before I could begin to accept and value myself. In the process, of accepting and valuing myself I was able to determine what I really needed and begin the process of owning my power. In the process I became aware of what I needed to do to start and begin to excel in my life in ways that worked.

### **To Enhance my Ongoing Recovery Process**

**I needed to involve my mind body, spirit, soul and emotions.**

### **Understanding the Process of Self-Advocacy**

#### **Self-Advocacy Defined**

**“Self-Advocacy is learning how to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your own life, learning how to get information so that you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out who will support you in your journey, knowing your rights and responsibilities, problem solving, listening and learning, reaching out to others when you need help and friendship, and learning about self-determination.” According to the Parent Center Hub for Information and Resources.**

### **Grieving What I Can Not Change**

Self-Advocacy grows as I grow in Awareness, Acceptance and take Action one Day at a Time.

**“We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned so as to have the one that is waiting for us.” Guy Finley**

Practicing self-advocacy involves owning the power in every facet of my life. If I do not own my power (over what is in my power to control) I will give my power away to other people. People who may not know how to or want to advocate for what I need to develop in life, well-being and relationships.

**“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” Alice Walker**

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

### **To Be Able to Advocate for Myself**

Practicing self-advocacy means that I need to take responsibility for every facet of my being: my mind, body, soul, spirit, and emotions.

If I do not take personal responsibility for these facets of my life, I give other people the ability to take away that power. The power to develop as an individual through my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions.

### **What I Need to Remember**

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

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

## **Developing a Learned Helplessness**

If I do not own my power (in my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions) I will develop a learned helplessness. I will live my life in quiet desperation.

## **Strength through Struggle**

If I do not take responsibility in my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions, I like the caterpillar that becomes a butterfly, my wings will not be strengthened to fly. And if my “wings” (body, soul, spirit, mind and emotions) are not strengthened, I like the butterfly will not possess the strength to fulfill my purpose through my life, well-being and relationships.

**“The struggle you’re in today is developing the strength that you need for tomorrow.” Robert Tew**

**“Purpose is about a process and a journey, not a destination. I cannot know until I know and knowing just takes what it takes. There are no “silver bullets” or “magic potions”. By accepting that reality I am given the gift of knowing by not giving up. I am given the gift of knowing by trusting the process, a loving God and myself.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

## **Very Important to Know how You Learn**

Are you a Visual, Auditory or Kinesthetic Learner or a Combination?

Get tested to discover how you best learn. How you learn after your brain injury may be different than before your brain injury.

**“It is not that I am so smart, it is just that I stay with problems longer.” Albert Einstein**

## **How Can I Advocate for Myself to Empower My Body, My Soul, My Spirit, My Mind and My Emotions?**

### **First and Foremost**

First and foremost, in the process of self-advocacy is to realize and embrace that I am not a diagnosis or a prognosis. I am not my brain injury, my invisible disability, my deficits or limitations. I am not what other people may want me to believe about myself. I am not what other people want me to believe that I can or cannot do.

## **Do Not Let Anyone Tell You Otherwise**

**“Dreams do not vanish, so long as people do not abandon them.”**  
**Phantom F. Harlock**

Although I am living with the impact of a brain injury I still can advocate for my mind, body, soul, spirit and emotions.

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

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

**“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

## **Overview**

**Body** – Gives me the ability to engage physically in my life and relations.

**Soul** – How I relate to myself and the people in my world.

**Spirit** – How I communicate with the God of my understanding and with myself.

**Mind** -- How I gather information that gives me the ability to make decisions and choices.

**Emotions** – How I interpret what goes on in my world.

## **More Specifically and in Reflection**

**Body** – working out using both sides of my brain and both sides of my body through repetitive mirrored movements. Using the principles of neuroplasticity to improve hand-eye coordination, balance, body awareness, coordination, focus, body awareness and agility. Create new neural pathways and brain reorganization through repetitive mirrored movements using the right / left sides, affected / non-affected side of our brain and body.

**Soul** – Growing in knowledge, wisdom and effectiveness through the application of that knowledge and wisdom. The soul is the expression of who the individual is as a unique being. The soul gives the individual the ability to experience and express their belief, desire and intention(s) to

make choices and take action. The soul ‘births’ and drives the individual’s purpose. The soul is the energy the individual uses to create.

**Spirit** – The connection to God. The connection to myself. The importance of making peace with God so that I can learn to trust Him and His guidance. The importance of making peace with my past is so that my past does not spoil my present. Not relying on my own limited understanding/ Trusting a loving God to guide and direct my steps each day, one day at a time. The spirit gives guidance to the soul in the process of creating.

**Mind** – Gives the individual the ability to think, to imagine, to remember, to formulate the process of our lives. To exercise the intention and motivation. Powers the individuals “will” and “intention” through reason, perception, attitudes, suspicions, and fears. Examines how we look at and see both ourselves, our relationships, and the world at large.

**Emotions** – Being aware of how I am interpreting my experience and my relationships. Being aware of how I react or respond to my experience. Learning how to talk, trust and feel with safe people. The power of identification. Coming out of the shadows of isolation and breaking free from feelings of alienation. Finding hope through healthy expression.

**“Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.” Mark Twain**

### **To Progress We Must Begin**

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

In my experience, I see the process of self-advocacy in brain injury recovery as a building block process. Building on my own lot in life a little at a time. Building through awareness, acceptance and then by taking action.

### **What Works and Does not Work for Me**

Taking action in and through by involving my body, soul, spirit, mind, and emotions in the process. In the process of owning my power, I create.

**“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 “Inventor of the Fosbury flop, Olympic Gold Medalist**

But to create I must begin. I must begin and then continue by involving all of what makes me who I am. All of who I am in my life and my interactions.

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

**“Research your own experience, absorb what is useful, reject what is useless and add specifically your own creation.” Bruce Lee**

**“So often we become so focused on the finish line that we fail to enjoy the journey.” Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Important for Me to Understand – After my Brain Injury

**How my Body, Soul, Spirit, Mind and Emotions affects (after a brain injury) My Self-Esteem, Self-Acceptance, Sense of Achievement, Hope, Serenity, Purpose, Dreams, Sticking up for Ourselves and Relationships with Ourselves and with other People**

### **I Am Responsible**

**“Don’t quit. Never give up trying to build the world you can see, even if others can’t see it. Listen to your drum and your drum only. It’s the one that makes the sweetest sound.” Simon Sinek**

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

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

### **So that I can Advocate for Myself**

Building Self-Esteem – Defining for Myself

Understanding We are Not Alone – To Figure “it” Out

Self-Acceptance – It is as it Is – What to Do Now?

Defining and Celebrating Success – Changing the Way

Understanding and Creating Hope in Our Lives

Having Peace in Our Lives – What Does this Mean?

Finding and Living Our Purpose – Increasing Clarity

Fulfilling Dreams – Where Do We Go from Here

Recognizing and Overcoming Bullying

Having a Relationship with Ourselves and other People

**Questions that helped me to identify if I was owning or giving away my power. Questions that helped me to learn how to advocate for myself.**

**Answering these questions for yourself may help you to both own your power and advocate for yourself.**

What is limiting me?

What can I do about what I perceive is limiting me?

What am I telling myself?

Am I being bullied?

What am I doing for improve the quality of my life?

Whose shame am I carrying?

Am I at peace with my past?

Am I focusing on symptoms or solutions?

How am I cultivating hope?

Why do I react?

What is defining my worth and value?

Am I judging my insides with other people's outsides?

What critical attitudes do I have toward myself and other people?

What am I doing to move from being a survivor to a thriver in my life?

What am I doing to accomplish my goals?

Am I identifying with people or comparing myself to them?

    What is keeping me stuck?

Is the group that I am in helping or hurting me?

    What is keeping me in a ‘box’ of limitation?

    What do I do when I face adversity?

Am I waiting for someone to accept me before I can accept myself?

    What am I doing to create hope in my life?

    Is my anger hurting or helping me?

    Am I lying to myself?

    Is my brain injury making me bitter or better?

    Am I living with helplessness or hopefulness?

What am I doing to replace negative thinking with positive messages?

What am I doing to empower the relationship that I have with myself?

    Has drama replaced living and why?

    How am I looking at adversity?

    Am I living with limitations or opportunities?

    Is my brain injury awareness making me bitter or better?

    Am I moving from being bitter to becoming better?

    Where do I “fit” after my brain injury?

Am I OK with being a “square peg” in a world of “round holes”?

    Have I given up too soon?

    Why do I feel misunderstood and shunned?

    Am I at peace with God and myself?

    Whose truth am I living?

    Am I dependent or independent?

What can I do to become more independent?

Am I living in a “box” given to me or in a “box” that I created for myself?

Am I / do I challenge my brain injury awareness?

Am I asking “Why Me” or “Why not Me”?

Am I looking at “what isn’t” instead of “what is”?

How can I stop fighting against myself?

What is holding me back?

When will I find my destiny?

How do I keep from being pulled back into a “victim mentality”?

What is my destiny beyond the “box” of traditional employment?

How am I going to accel in my life?

What am I doing to create dreams in my life after my brain injury?

How am I looking at success?

How do I now learn after my brain injury?

What can I do when circumstances change my plans?

## **I Do Not Have to Figure this Out on my Own**

In my experience and through my process I discovered a set of ways. A set of ways that have helped me to be my advocate in my ongoing brain injury recovery process. These set of ways may also help you to be your advocate 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.” John Bytheway**

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 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**

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

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

## 11 Categories to Empower Self-Advocacy

Several years ago, I created topic categories. In these categories I assigned my articles and video presentations. Below is a link to each of these categories.

### Category Building Self-Esteem after Brain Injury

Self-esteem is slowly stripped away following a brain injury. The individual often finds that their relationships have changed. The relationships they had with people and the relationship that they had with themselves. What was once familiar, may now seem foreign. What was once a way to build a sense of self may no longer work. As a result, the individual living with a brain injury may have a difficult time relating to themselves and to other people. Articles in this category are written to help individuals living with a brain injury to re-build a relationship with themselves and their self-esteem.

In the process of rebuilding a relationship with ourselves we gain a sense of self. In the process, we create our new sense of what it means to esteem ourselves. As we build a relationship with ourselves and gain a sense of self, we gain the power to follow our dreams.

Follow our dreams in ways that work for us. In the process we learn how to relate to other people in healthy ways that work for us. In the process, we build self-esteem. Although our relationships may have changed, we discover the value of having a relationship with ourselves and having healthy relationships.

### Category Self-Acceptance after a Brain Injury

Self-acceptance may be difficult for an individual living with a brain injury.

As a result, individuals living with brain injuries may begin to doubt themselves. This doubt can undermine their ability to trust or believe in themselves. Societal labels and stereotypes may lead them to believe that they are their brain injuries. In this belief, individuals living with brain injuries may find themselves angry at themselves. Angry at the “world”. After coming out of my own denial concerning my brain injury, I was angry. I was angry at the impact of my brain injury. I was angry at the labels, stereotypes that society placed on me. But as I worked through my anger surrounding my expectations, my self-acceptance grew.

## Category Celebrating Success Following a Brain Injury

Following a brain injury, an individual's abilities and capabilities may have changed. What once came naturally to them, may now be a struggle. As a result, celebrating the success once gained through those abilities and capabilities may seem to be out of reach. As a consequence, we may be led to believe that our efforts are not worth celebrating. But that is simply not the case. Although we may not be able to do what we used to, we can learn to excel in ways that work for us. We can learn to celebrate our success' despite our deficits and limitations because of our brain injury.

## Category Creating Hope after Brain Injury

Having hope or believing we can have a part in the process can be very difficult for individuals living with the impact of a brain injury or stroke.

Through my recovery process I discovered that my definition and expectations of hope were clouded by my ability to experience hope. My concept of hope held me hostage when things did not change. Hostage to the belief that hope was for naught. But I am glad that I discovered that hope is not limited by my definition or expectations. I am glad that I discovered that I could have a part in creating hope in my life. I am glad that I discovered that by creating hope in my life I could learn to thrive. Learn how to thrive, not merely survive, with my life because of my injury.

## Category Finding and Knowing Peace after Brain Injury

Finding peace after a brain injury can be very difficult. Questions arise, often too many that cannot be answered. With a lack of answers comes a host of emotions, but not peace. Accepting what cannot be understood seems out of the question. How can we accept what has changed our lives forever? And so, we find ourselves stuck and arguing at life. Arguing at life that gets us nowhere. But there is peace in the process. In this category I share what I discovered about and how to have peace in my life.

## Category Finding Purpose after a Brain Injury

Following a brain injury finding one's purpose can be a challenge. What was once understood and clear to us may now be unclear. In my experience, I sought for clarity for many years. What I thought was my calling and the way I was to live my destiny did not work out. I struggled in

this process for many years. In my experience the answers did not come over night. Increasing clarity came to me as when I stopped trying to prove that I was not impacted by a brain injury and find ways that worked for me.

### **Category Fulfilling Dreams after Brain Injury**

Before our brain injuries, dreams for the future may have seemed bright. Following our brain injuries, those dreams may now seem out of reach.

What once seemed attainable, may no longer appear to be realistic.

Through my recovery process I discovered that although life may have changed forever, I do not have to give up on my dreams. Although the way in which I once followed my dreams has changed, I do not have to give up on following my dreams. Fulfilling my dreams can be a way of life for me.

### **Category My Journey Living with a Brain Injury**

My Journey Living with a Brain Injury offers insight into my process and journey. My process and journey living with the impact of a brain injury and an invisible disability during the past 56 years. What helped me to move forward with my life and stop trying to not be impacted by my brain injury.

### **Category Overcoming Bullying after Brain Injury**

Bullying can be a challenge for anyone. Individuals living with brain injuries may have a difficult time recognizing bullies. Individuals living with brain injuries may question their own judgment. Individuals living with brain injuries may have a difficult time trusting themselves and their judgment.

Individuals living with brain injuries may, as a result, become more vulnerable to being bullied. In my experience, I bought into the notion that I deserved to be bullied for many years. I bought into this belief because I believed that I did not just make mistakes, but that I was a mistake. But thank God that I found a freedom to trust myself and my judgement. To learn to trust myself and my judgement despite what bullies may want.

## **Category Peer Support after Brain Injury — We are Not Alone**

Without peer support living with a brain injury can leave the individual feeling very alone and isolated. Individuals who previously were our friends seem to slip away. As they slip away, we may feel increasingly alienated from both other people and ourselves. In feeling alienated from other people and ourselves we may feel as though no one understands us. We may feel abandoned. We may abandon ourselves. In our feelings of abandonment, we may crave for family members to understand. But sometimes the support and understanding that we long for in family members is not available. Not available because of a lack of acceptance.

This lack of acceptance and support can leave us feeling angry and frustrated at life. I experienced the above for many years until I began to realize that people cannot give to me what they themselves do not possess. Not being able to give to me what I wanted did not mean that they didn't love me. They just have a difficult time accepting what they could not see or understand. Although I tried to explain "it" to them in a thousand different ways, they could not identify with me. Instead at times they would tell me that they thought I was just making excuses. Their suggestion continued to frustrate me until I realized what they could not accept was not my fault. But peer support offered what family and friends could not give.

## **Category Relationships Following a Brain Injury**

Relationships create challenges. Relationships after brain injury create different challenges. Each individual brings with them their history. History in terms of what was learned and experienced growing up. History also in terms of what they experienced in past relationships. Brain Injuries complicate relationships and our ability to understand where we end and other people begin and where we begin and other people end.

If there was dysfunction in those relationships, dysfunction will be brought into each relationship. Such dysfunction can continue to undermine and sabotage relationships. Continue to undermine and get in the way of existing relationships and other relationships... unless new boundaries and behaviors are learned and used in relationships. Articles in this category give ways to recognize, address and change behaviors that no longer work.

## Owning the Power in my Brain and Body

I discovered that I could own the power in my brain and body through repetitive mirror movements. I could have an impact on advocating for my mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions through neuroplasticity.

I discovered that by using the principle of neuroplasticity I could create new neural pathways and brain reorganization on both sides of my brain and body. In the process, I could enhance, my life, well-being and relationships.

### Neuroplasticity, Setting Goals and Creating Hope after Brain Injury and Stroke Power Point Presentation

#### Nine Habits to Benefit from Using the Principle of Neuroplasticity

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

I began my process of using repetitive mirrored movements through different martial art disciplines in 1997. In August 2013 a friend made a video presentation of the progress that I had made up to that point in time.

Since that time other friends have recorded video presentations of the progress, I made using repetitive mirrored movements. Made in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, (due to a shoulder injury and Covid no recordings in 2019 and 2020) and in 2021.

Through the years I have developed gross and fine motor skills, as well as hand-eye coordination, coordination, focus, body awareness, agility, balance and muscle memory through centerline movements

**To watch the progress made using the principle of neuroplasticity over the past 12 years, click on Start > for each of the presentations.**

I share these presentations with you to encourage you to develop your own program of repetitive mirrored movements to develop new neural pathways and brain reorganization to enhance your wellbeing and quality of life.

#### **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](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>

**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](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>

**Brain-Body Connection -- Craig J Phillips MRC, BA, Second Chance to Live March 16, 2024**

<https://youtu.be/9fWG-wPssY8>

**For a full list of Resources found on Second Chance to Live**

[Self-Advocacy Resources Empowering Self-Advocacy](#)

**For Insight into my Process and Journey, click on this link.**

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

