

# **Brain Injury Recovery is a Process, Not a Destination**



**Sustaining a Brain Injury can be Likened  
to Emptying a Box of Jigsaw Pieces onto a Table.**

**Following a Brain injury We may Ask Ourselves  
several Questions  
such as the ones below:**



**Will I ever Feel Normal Again?**

**What is my Destiny?**

**When will I find my Destiny?**

**How will I find my Destiny?**

**So Where Do I Go from Here?**

**How will the Pieces Fall in  
Place?**

**For many years I tried to understand my life through each piece of the  
puzzle that made up my experience.**

# Understanding My Destiny Through Multiple Puzzle Pieces



WHO  
HOW  
WHAT  
WHEN  
WHY  
WHERE

In the process, I evaluated my life through the lens of disappointments, discouragements and setbacks.

You may also find yourself evaluating your life through disappointments, discouragements and setbacks.

During our time together I would like to share a little about my process and journey and what I discovered.

# **My Process and Journey Living with a Brain Injury**

- **My Brain Injury - 10 yrs old – Car Accident, August 1967, New Jersey. Open Skull Fracture, Right Frontal Lobe, Severe Brain Bruise and Brain Stem Involvement – Coma 3 weeks. Fractured Left Femur. Traction for 8 weeks, Spica full body cast 5 months.**
- **I had several EEG's – one with spikes and one with paste – and a battery of cognitive and behavioral testing. The results were shared with my parents, but they did not share the results with me. I did not find out about the test results, done when I was 10 years of age, until the day I obtained my graduate degree.**
- **Once my external wounds healed, the impact of my brain injury became invisible. The impact of my traumatic brain injury was never again discussed or considered as significant. I grew up being blamed for not being enough. I internalized feeling as though I did not just make mistakes, but that I was a mistake.**

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

- I graduated on time with my high school class and went on to obtain my undergraduate degree in 10 years – with 4 different majors, two universities and one college. I then obtained my graduate degree in 3 ½ years and 2 different graduate schools. I obtained my graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling.**
- While working as a vocational rehab counselor with the Florida Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, due to difficulties on the job, I disclosed that I experienced a TBI when I was 10 years old. As a result, I was made a client of DVR while still working as a counselor with DVR. 3 months later I was terminated.**
- Following an unsuccessful job placement I was terminated as a client of the DVR. After being terminated by DVR I was fired from several more jobs. Hearing that North Carolina was hiring Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, I sent resumes to North Carolina. After being recruited, I moved to NC in June 1996.**

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

- Four months after moving to North Carolina and beginning the job, I was terminated. After being terminated and an unsuccessful job search I reapplied for SSDI for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time and applied to begin receiving services through the North Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.**
- After the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation evaluation was completed the decision was made that I was unemployable. Not long after being deemed unemployable, my 3<sup>rd</sup> application was approved in late 1998 and I began receiving SSDI. Nevertheless, I had a difficult time letting go and accepting my reality.**
- When I reached a point in time when the pain of denying my reality exceeded my need to deny my reality a shift occurred. When this shift occurred I began a process of grieving. I moved from a place of denying to being angry for what I could not change, to trying to bargain my way out. But my efforts to bargain changed nothing.**

# My Journey Living with a Brain Injury



- When my efforts failed to change and control what could not be changed, I became depressed and despondent.
- When I became sick and tired of being sick and tired, I reached a place of acceptance and surrender.
- When I reached a place of surrender and acceptance, a whole new world opened up to me. I began to realize choice.

# My Journey Living with a Brain Injury



- As my eyes opened, I began to see my circumstances (puzzle pieces) in a new way and light.
- What I began to realize was that each puzzle piece provided an opportunity to grow stronger.
- Flight of the Butterfly – egg, pupa, lava (caterpillar), cocoon (to strengthen the butterfly’s wings)

**“One who gains strength by overcoming obstacles possesses the only strength which can overcome adversity.” *Albert Schweitzer***

# Experiencing a Second Chance to Live

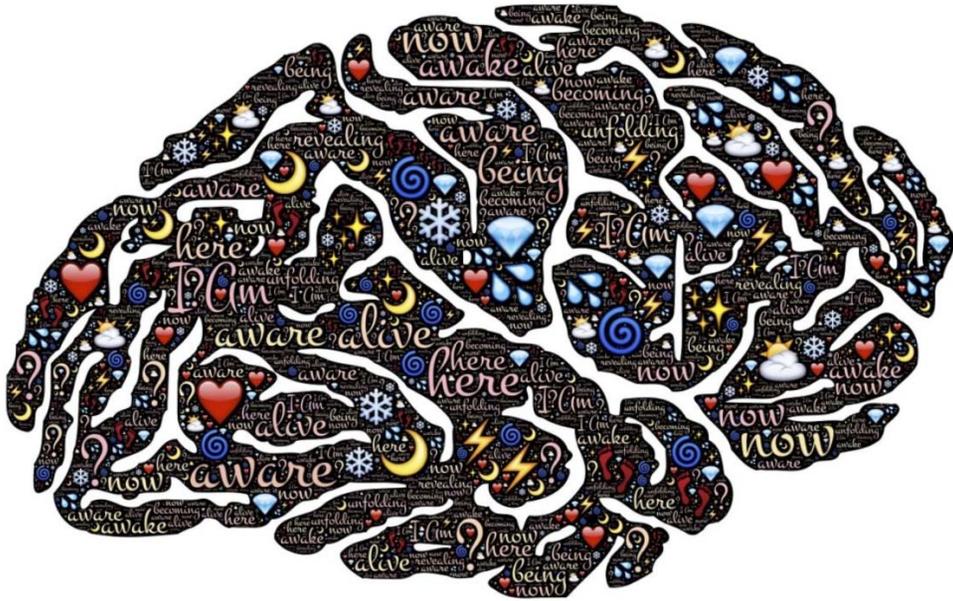


- “When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.” *Helen Keller*
- “Regardless of your lot in life, you can build something beautiful on it.” *Zig Ziglar*
- “It is not as important as what happened or happens to us, as how we respond to what happened or happens to us.” *Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA*

## Awareness, Acceptance and Action

- Through grieving my reality, I was able to stop beating up on myself for what I could not do and begin looking for ways to use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that would work for me: [Backstory of Second Chance to Live 1](#) and [Backstory of Second Chance to Live 2](#)
- On February 6, 2007 I created a blog Second Chance to Live. Over the course of the past 10 years I have written 1625 articles, created 325 video presentations and published 10 e Books. Below this presentation I have included a series of links to these various resources.
- In this keynote presentation I am going to share several of the concepts and principles that have helped me in my ongoing recovery process. As you listen to what I have learned through my ongoing recovery process, may you also be encouraged in your ongoing recovery process.

# Recovery / Journey Process



- **Brown Paper Bag; Grieving my Reality**
- **Denial; Awareness; Acceptance; Action**
- **Recovery a Process; Not a Destination**
- **Whose Shame are You Carrying?**
- **Excellence; Perfection; Learning Curves**

# Learning to Love and Accept Myself



- **Follow Your Bliss; Not Another Person's**
- **Not my Brain Injury; Not All about Me**
- **Diagnosis; Labels; Stereotypes; Stigmas**
- **Peace with Ourselves and with a Loving God**
- **Learning at our own rate and pace; Not giving Up**

# Creating New Neural Pathway and Brain Reorganization through Repetitive Mirrored Movements otherwise known as Neuroplasticity



- 18 years ago I began training in a program using different martial art disciplines. Little did I know that I was creating new neural pathways and brain reorganization.
- Through my program, I discovered that I had a difficult time learning new sequences of information. To compensate for my difficulties, I engaged in repetitive mirrored movements.
- In the process, I discovered that I was able to, over time, become proficient in my abilities through learning one skill at a time, to then combine those skills into many skill sets.

# Creating New Neural Pathway and Brain Reorganization through Repetitive Mirrored Movements otherwise known as Neuroplasticity



- Recently, a friend made a video presentation of my engaging in repetitive mirrored movement. I share this video with you to encourage you to engage in a program of neuroplasticity.
- A program to engage both sides of your brain and both sides of your body to create new neural pathways and brain reorganization to enhance both the dominant and non-dominant sides of your body.

**“Absorb what is useful, reject what is useless and add specifically your own.” *Bruce Lee***

# Lessons Learned Through My Process



- **Railroad; Switches; Caterpillar; Adversity**
- **Trust the Process; Loving God/Yourself**
- **Tapestries; Pieces Puzzle; More Reveal**
- **Triggers; Teachers; Perseverance**
- **What Works for Us; Not Giving Up**

# What is My Destiny and How to Follow my Dreams



- **Stop Fighting against Myself; Re-Frame**
- **Grow in Awareness; Acceptance; Action**
- **Build on my Lot, One Brick at a Time**
- **Grow Where You are Planted**
- **Circumstances; Lessons; Opportunities**

# When Will I Find My Destiny?

- **Ingredients; Elephant; Bites; Baking Cakes**
- **Seeds; Experiences; Little Things**
- **Footwork; Light Bulbs; Strike Outs**
- **Living in the Now; Seizing the Moment**
- **Creating Hope; Stepping Up to the Plate**



# How to Succeed in My Life?

- **No Such thing as Failure; Resilience**
- **Progress, not Perfection; Repetition**
- **Persistence, Tenacity, Commitment**
- **Learning to Use What Works for Us**
- **Tweaking; Adapting; Owning; Assimilate**



# Having a Relationship with Hope

- **Creating a Healthy Relationship with Hope**
- **Opening the Door to Hope**
- **Moving through the Door of Hope**
- **Creating Hope One Ingredient at a Time**
- **How to Keep from Falling Back into the Victim Role**



# Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network

## Lists of Articles within each Topic Category

- **Peer Support after Brain Injury — We Are Not Alone -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-peer-support-brain-injury-not-alone-list-articles/>

- **Fulfilling Dreams after Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-fulfilling-dreams-after-brain-injury-list-articles/>

- **Overcoming Bullying after Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-overcoming-bullying-brain-injury-list-articles/>



# **Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network**

## **Lists of Articles within each Topic Category**

- **Building Self-Esteem after Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/building-self-esteem-after-brain-injury-list-articles%20/>

- **Celebrating Success following a Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-celebrating-success-following-brain-injury-list-articles/>

- **Creating Hope following Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-creating-hope-brain-injury-larticles/>

# **Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network**

## **Lists of Articles within each Topic Category**

- **Brain Injury Recovery -- An Ongoing Process -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-brain-injury-recovery-ongoing-process-list-articles/>

- **Self-Acceptance after Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-self-acceptance-brain-injury-list-articles/>

- **Relationships following a Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-relationships-following-brain-injury-list-articles/>

# **Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network**

## **Lists of Articles within each Topic Category**

- **Finding and Knowing Peace after Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-finding-knowing-peace-brain-injury-list-articles/>

- **My Journey Living with Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-journey-living-brain-injury-list-articles/>

- **Finding Purpose following a Brain Injury -**

<http://secondchancetolive.org/category-finding-purpose-brain-injury-article-list/>

# Second Chance to Live Resources



- Created a way to Translate Second Chance to Live  
<http://secondchancetolive.org/translate-into-your-language/>
- Written and published 10 e Books that are free for download  
<http://secondchancetolive.org/healing-10-free-ebooks-traumatic-life-events-major-physical-injuries/>
- Created and uploaded 300 + Video presentations to YouTube  
<http://secondchancetolive.org/a-list-of-300-video-presentations-created-to-empower-the-individual-not-the-brain-injury/>

# Second Chance to Live Resources



## Global Brain Injury Peer Support Network

<http://secondchancetolive.org/2016/06/05/global-brain-injury-peer-support-network-empowering-the-individual-not-the-brain-injury/>

I am available to be of service

<http://secondchancetolive.org/i-am-available-to-be-of-service/>

# Some Quotes that Empower my Process Pieces

- “Don't judge your day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.” *Robert Louis Stevenson*
- “Our circumstances are not meant to keep us down, but they are meant to build us up.” *Craig J. Phillips*
- “Things turn out best for people who make the best out of the way things turn out.” *Anonymous*
- “You don't have to be a person of influence to be influential. In fact the most influential people in my life are probably not even aware of the things that they have taught me.” *Scott Adams – American Cartoonist*
- “Absorb what is useful, reject what is useless and add specifically your own.” *Bruce Lee*
- “It is not as important as what happened or happens to us as how we respond to what happened or happens to us.” *Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA*

# Some Quotes that Empower my Process Pieces

- “Insist on yourself, never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you only have an extemporaneous half possession...Do that which is assigned to you and you can not hope too much or dare too much.” *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- “History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.” *B.C. Forbes*
- “When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.”
- “One who gains strength by overcoming obstacles possesses the only strength which can overcome adversity.” *Albert Schweitzer*

# Some Quotes that Empower my Process Pieces

- **“I will prepare and someday my chance will come.” *Abraham Lincoln***
- **“Regardless of your lot in life, you can build something beautiful on it.” *Zig Ziglar***
- **“Dreams do not vanish, as long as people do not abandon them.” *Phantom F. Harlock***
- **“If you advance confidently in the direction of your dreams and endeavor to live the life that you imagined, you will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.” *Henry David Thoreau***
- **“Seek out that particular mental attribute which makes you feel most deeply and vitally alive, along which comes the inner voice which says, 'This is the real me' and when you have found that attitude, follow it.” *James Trusdale Adams***

# How to Get In Touch with Me



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