

**Living with a Brain Injury**

**Making Sense of Why**

**What is My Destiny?**

**e Book**

**Second Chance to Live**

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## Introduction

For you who do not know me, through Second Chance to Live; my name is Craig J. Phillips. I sustained an open skull fracture and traumatic brain injury in 1967 when I was 10 years old. My right frontal lobe was damaged, a severe brain bruise with brain stem involvement. I remained in a coma for 3 weeks and after completing 6-7 weeks of traction to set my left femur (which was fractured in the accident) and being placed in a spica (full body cast) I underwent brain and skull surgery. In follow-up to the surgery, I underwent a 2 EEGS and a battery of other tests.

In follow-up to the 2 EEGS and testing, my parents were told that the tests revealed that I probably would not be able to succeed academically beyond high school. Once my external wounds healed and I learned how to talk, walk, read, write and speak in complete sentences, the impact of my traumatic brain injury remained hidden to me for many years.

Although I was not expected to succeed beyond high school, I went on to obtain my undergraduate degree (4 different majors and 10 years in the making) and my graduate degree (2 different graduate schools and in 3 ½ years). Because my parents decided not to share the findings of the testing done in 1968, I internalized the difficulties that I encountered. Although I was able to obtain my undergraduate and graduate degrees and worked in both non-professional and professional jobs, I had a long history of getting and losing those jobs; which left me puzzled.

For many years, I subsequently felt like some one all dressed up with no where to go, despite my hard work, determination and best efforts. After 32 years of running into one wall after another, I knew some thing needed to change. To make a long story shorter, after completing 2 evaluation processes with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (one in Florida and one in North Carolina) I was deemed to be unemployable. After my 3rd application with the Social Security Administration, I was declared disabled, in late 1998. Although I was unemployable and disabled, I sought to...

**make sense of “Why?” and to answer the question, “What is my destiny?”.**

On February 6, 2007 I created Second Chance to Live to share some of the awareness's', lessons and discoveries that I made through my search to answer these two 2 questions “Why?” and “What is my Destiny?”. In this e Book, I offer a selection of articles, in which I share pieces of information; that have helped me to make sense of Why?” and to answer the question, “What is my Destiny?”. As you read through the articles in this e Book may the information also help you to make sense of “Why?” and in the process help you to answer the question, “What is my Destiny?”.

**What I share through the articles in this e Book has given me hope. May what I share in the articles throughout this e Book also give you hope.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Permission to Share**

As with all of my articles and video presentations on Second Chance to Live and on my You Tube channel, you have my permission to share my articles and or video presentations with anyone whom you believe could benefit. This e Book is free for download.

My only 2 requests are that you cite / attribute me as being the author / creator of the articles and video presentations and that you provide a link back to Second Chance to Live. Thank you. Copyright 2015

In the event that questions arise as you read the articles and or watch the video presentations, please send those questions to me. All questions are good questions.

To contact me, you may use this link: [Contact Information](#)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Craig

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## Traumatic Brain Injury — Making sense of “Why?”

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 5, 2009

In the last day or so I received several emails with a similar question. Why? I believe why is a very good question. I asked that question about God, myself and my situation for many years. As I look back on my recovery process, I believe “Why?” became an essential part of my healing process. Why gave me the capacity to move beyond my pain, my disillusionment, disappointment and discouragement.

**Why gave me the ability to move beyond what I could not understand. Why gave me the ability to make sense of my reality.**

Why became an essential part of my healing process because why helped me to grieve. Why helped me to question and challenge the messages that Denial gave to me. Why helped me to process the Anger that I had towards what I could not understand — but realized that I could not change — once I started to come out of my denial. Why helped me to sort through the process of Bargaining or the “what if” stage of my grieving process — as I attempted to change my reality.

Why then helped me to survive what I considered to be the dark night of the soul. Why allowed me to linger in depression until I was able and ready to surrender to / accept my reality. Why empowered my process as I reached a place of surrender and Acceptance. Why then empowered my process and gave me the motivation to look for solutions. Why helped me to realize that I was not helpless or hopeless because of what I could not change.

**Why helped me to move beyond my disillusionment, disappointment and discouragement. Why helped me to realize that I did not have to be alone in my process and that I could ask for help.**

Why then taught me that my circumstances were never meant to keep me down, but that they were instead designed to build me up. Why taught me that I was being led in the direction of my destiny. Why taught me how to empower my process. Why gave me the motivation to learn from the experiences of my reality. Why prepared me to take advantage of the opportunities that became available to me. Why taught me to do the footwork and let go of the outcomes.

Why taught me that I no longer needed to buy into the notion that I was a victim of my reality. Why gave me the emotional fortitude to execute tenacity and perseverance — when giving up and giving in would have been much easier to do. Why taught me that I have a future and a hope. Why reinforced the reality that I will fulfill the plan and purpose for my life. Why pointed and continues to point me in the direction of my destiny. Why gives me hope.

**Why uses my limitations and deficits — for my good. Why gives me faith because infinite possibilities exist. Why not, also gives me hope.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## What is my Destiny?

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on February 22, 2007

Several years ago the movie, *Forrest Gump* was applauded by those who watched Forrest's determination. Several lines from that movie stood out to me. "***Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get***". The second line that resonated with me was when Forrest asked his mother, along the lines of "*What is my destiny Mama?*" Both these lines rang true to me. I felt like I had been given a box full of dark chocolate, bitter to my taste and that my destiny was fading into a dark comedy of errors. I have since discovered that I was blind and could not see.

**Helen Keller summed up my plight so accurately, "When one door closes, another opens. But we often look so regretfully upon the closed door that we don't see the one that has opened for us."**

I was so focused on what I wanted and expected to happen, that I could not see what was happening. ***But it was not time.*** I still had to learn the lessons that my journey would reveal. One such lesson was a hard lesson to learn. My training in the martial arts opened my eyes. For many years I was focused on the next promotion and the color of my belt. When I was not promoted as quickly as my peers I asked my Instructor, "Why?". He told me that I was not ready.

"Why?" I was not ready mystified me because I trained hard. As I continued to train I struggled to understand. One day I had a spiritual awakening that changed my life. I began to realize — as with a new dawn — that the outcome of a promotion or a belt color change was not as important as what I was learning on my journey — towards being promoted and earning the next rank and color. With my awareness my martial arts training took on a new meaning which helped me to refocus my life. In the process, my motivation in life changed forever.

**The process took on a new meaning. The process became of far greater importance than obtaining a brown or black belt or for that matter any other outcome in life.**

I have learned that becoming fully present in the moment equips me to empty my mind of expectation. This discipline helps me to focus my energy and thus develop my own jeet kune do. I have learned that life does not have to look different than it does. My destiny is yet to be revealed. I do not need to build a legacy. My life paints, as it were with a brush each day and with each process — and that is good enough.

**Courage helps me to be willing to learn the next lesson and to keep painting. With each brush stroke — process — my destiny becomes apparent.**

**"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant." Robert Louis Stevenson**

More ways to experience your destiny, [The Measure of Destiny?](#)

"What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal." Zig Ziglar



## To Live Beyond Limitations Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 16, 2009

I have been thinking about a very powerful principle. I have found that this principle — when applied — helps me to step out of my limitations into the abundance of possibilities. Discouragement is disbanded as an illusion of lack. The conceivable becomes attainable while apprehension is traded for hope.

**Progress rather than perfection becomes a way of life. The bondage of needing to be perfect is replaced with the pursuit of excellence.**

The voice of inadequacy is replaced with the voice of enough. I no longer have to be right to feel secure. I am free to say, “I don’t know”. I am made strong when I am weak. I am free to take risks because I realize that I can not fail. I am able to laugh at myself because I know that I am learning. I am able to let go of outcomes because I know that I will get what I need. I can trust the process, a loving God and myself because I do not have to know the big picture.

**The principle that I am referring to is humility. Through my process, I have learned a very valuable lesson. Humility is not humiliation.**

Humility promotes and empowers the individual through meekness. Humility sets the individual free to accept themselves — because the individual knows that they do not have to prove their worth or value. Humility regales the individual with hope because the individual knows that possibilities exist. Humility encourages learning, because the individual realizes that they do not have to already know everything. Humility encourages sets the stage for learning curves.

Humility breeds brings security, because the individual knows that they can trust the process, a loving God and themselves. Humility encourages the individual to let go of that which is out of their control. Humility motivates the individual to ask for help because the individual realizes that they do not have to lean on their own understanding or resources. Humility empowers hope — through trust — because the individual knows that more will be revealed.

Humility seeks to set the individual free, because the individual knows that they can practice easy does it. Humility motivates the individual to take risks because there is no threat of reprisal. Humility encourages the individual to succeed, while at the same time cheer leading their efforts. Humility celebrates the individual as a work in progress. Humility teaches the individual to stay in the moment, to enjoy the process, to do the foot work and to let go of the outcomes.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## To Live Beyond Limitations Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 17, 2009

Humility reinforces self-esteem, self-respect and self-worth. Humility does not seek justification. Humility does not disparage, minimize or marginalize. Humility does not condescend. Humility is free of contempt. Humility is patient and kind. Humility champions and supports the individual. Humility readies the individual for service. Humility empowers with wisdom. Humility gently reveals power through change.

**Humility teaches the individual that they are on a journey. Humility teaches the individual that on that journey, the process is more important than the destination. Humility teaches the individual that — some times with seeming serendipity — they are being led in the direction of their destiny.**

Humiliation on the other hand scorns. Humiliation's motive is to control and limit. Humiliations by nature strips the individual of their uniqueness, self-esteem, self-respect and value. Humiliation demands justification. Humiliation seeks to disparage, minimize and marginalize the individual — at their very core. Humiliation promotes fear and insecurity. Humiliation undermines enthusiasm and motivation. Humiliation promotes fear. Humiliation cripples initiative. Humiliation quashes hope.

Prior to understanding the distinction between humility and humiliation I berated myself on a daily basis. I believed that I was the problem and thus deserved to be victimized and humiliated by life and the people in my world. Consequently, I felt trapped by the voice of criticism and the clamoring of shame. My efforts to be enough were constantly chided as inadequate. Consequently, I developed insecurity, low self-esteem and low self-worth. I did not believe that I made mistakes, but that I was a mistake.

**At the core of my being humiliation chided me as inadequate and unlovable. My attempts to quiet the voice of humiliation — shame and criticism — only seemed to reinforce the impact that humiliation had upon my life. Unrealistic expectations kept me anxious and depressed. Humiliation reinforced the belief that I could not do enough to be enough. Humiliation stymied my being through intimidation. Humiliation consequently demanded that I be perfect before I could hope to find peace — with other people, much less than with myself.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## To Live Beyond Limitations Part 3

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 18, 2009

**Humiliation, rather than humility subsequently reinforced my sense of shame and inadequacy. Humiliation distorted my perceptions and held me captive to the belief that who I was and what I had to contribute in life did not matter. Because of my distorted perceptions — prior to understanding the distinction between humility and humiliation — I could not take the risk to be humble. I had to keep hyper vigilant. I had to be on guard.**

With time and through my recovery process I came to understand that humility validates and heralds my best efforts as good enough for today. Because I have learned how to trust the process — rather than trying to control the process — humility has been able to encourage me to do the foot work and then let go of the outcomes.

**Through maintaining humility I am able to revel in what I am experiencing in the now — with out a fear of reprisal. As I let go of my need to justify, answer and defend who I am — I am able to be. As I am able to be I am free to create with out the threat of being criticized or shamed for my efforts. Consequently, I am able to focus on excellence — instead of striving to be perfect — with each new day.**

In the pursuit of excellence, I no longer need to listen to the voice of humiliation or be humiliated by my efforts. Consequently, I can rest through my efforts and live beyond my limitations because I do not have to focus on my limitations. Humility allows me to accept who I am, where I am at today. Humility allows me to learn from my experience — rather than judging my experiences. Humility empowers my perspective and motivates me to learn from my circumstances.

**Humility gives me the freedom to be who I am, where I am... Humility releases me to live beyond my limitations because I do not have to depend on my own resources. Humility teaches me to stay in the moment. Humility helps me to find my center. Humility teaches me to trust the process, a loving God and myself.**

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Not Judging Our Efforts

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 19, 2009

Over this past weekend, I attended a series of workshops. During one of the workshops the principle of “keeping it simple” was presented as a topic. As I listened to what people share on the principle of k.i.s.s.

Last night I attended a meeting where the topic of “keeping it simple” was also tabled as the topic to discuss during the meeting. Through attending the work shop and then the meeting on “keeping it simple” I heard several people refer to the principle of “keeping it simple” with an additional “s”. In this post I want to reflect on that fourth “s”.

**As I listened to the discussion I heard several people make reference to being stupid: k.i.s.s. — keep it simple stupid.**

When the time came for me to share my thoughts on the topic of “keeping it simple” I shared some of what I have learned through my experience. I told the group of individuals that I discovered that I do not like shaming words — such as stupid — because such words place judgments on my efforts.

**I continued to share that I discovered that when I place judgments on my efforts I set myself up to experience alienation and isolation.**

With my awareness, I discovered that I could change the way in which I looked at or “framed” my learning experience. By changing the way in which I view my learning experience I am able to stop judging my efforts. Consequently, instead of placing judgments on my efforts, I am able to enjoy my learning process and applaud my efforts.

**I am able to applaud my efforts because I know that with all my learning there is a learning curve. I am able to applaud my efforts because I can not know until I know. I am able to applaud my efforts because I know that it just takes what it takes for me to know — and I am learning as I go...**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Do Not Give up On Your Dreams or Your Destiny Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 22, 2008

During the past several days I have been thinking about trains and railroads. Where I live trains can be heard off in the distance as they roll through town. Their whistles announce the trains arrival and then in a matter of moments the train whisks its way down the track under the controls of the railroad engineer.

**As I thought about the the train, the railroad and the railroad engineer I had a spiritual awakening.**

For many years of my life I thought that I was the railroad engineer / conductor of my life. Although I attempted to drive my train in the direction of my dreams — with the help of the God of my understanding — I found myself detoured again and again by events that appeared to be out of my control. It was as if someone intentionally pulled a switch on my railroad each time that I made significant gains in my life and about to reach a milestone. It was as if someone or something purposely sought to dash my hopes and dreams.

**Consequently, I found myself frustrated and wondering why my hard work did not gain me access to the town of my dreams.** For specific insight please read my 3 part series, [My Journey thus Far](#).

Several years ago after praying and thinking about my conundrum, I had a spiritual awakening. My spiritual awakening helped me to understand why I had encountered so many switches as I traveled — with purpose — on the railroad of my life. My awareness helped me to realize that the switches were pulled to both protect me and to keep me moving in the direction of my destiny. I began to realize that apart from those switches being pulled I would probably have never been able to find, much less experience my dreams or my destiny.

**I began to realize that the switches I encountered— on my journey — were pulled to both protect and keep me from settling in a town that was not meant for me.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Do Not Give up On Your Dreams or Your Destiny Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 22, 2008

With my spiritual awakening and awareness I came to realize that the events that led to my becoming a traumatic brain injury — at the age of 10 — were an essential switch that prepared me to pursue my dreams and my destiny. With out that switch being pulled — at an early age — on the railroad of my life I would not be able to know what I do today. Although I did not grasp the significance of my traumatic brain injury — until about 5 – 6 years ago — I now realize that had it not been for my traumatic brain injury I would not be able to follow my dreams or pursue my destiny.

**With my spiritual awakening and awareness I came to realize that what I thought was meant for my harm was in reality designed for my good.**

### **Today's thought**

Although you may not believe that hope exists my friend, it does. You are being taken care of just for today. The clouds will lift and you will gain a new perspective. What you think makes no sense now will become clear. You will realize your dreams and you will find your destiny. Hope will become your constant companion. Your independence will become your liberation. You will learn to connect with yourself and with your fellows. Your frustration, disappointment and discouragement will be turned for your good.

Stay the course, do not give up on your process because more will be revealed right on time. You don't have to know the big picture and you can trust the process, a loving God and yourself. What you thought was meant for your harm, you will come to realize was brought about for your good. You will realize what you could not do for yourself was being done for you. You will be grateful for unanswered prayer.

**You will come to understand that the events and circumstances that led to the switches being pulled — on your journey — were created to protect you and not to harm you. You will come to realize that you were being led in the direction of your dreams and your destiny.**

If you have a hard time believing that good will come from your circumstances, discouragements and disappointments, believe because I believe. You will get what you need, one day at a time. You will come to recognize that what you have is enough, just for today.

Be encouraged my friend, you have a future and a hope. You are being prepared for greatness. Your star will arise. You will be glad that you stayed the course and you will be so glad that you did not give up on your process, a loving God or on yourself.

**Be encouraged my friend. You will live your dreams and you will experience your destiny.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Triggers

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 5, 2007

Throughout my life's experience, I have come to believe that many of my reactions to people, places and situations have been impacted by previous experience. These reactions may be the result of specific smells, sounds or situations that were associated with some event or person from my past. Consequently, I may find myself reacting in such a way that has little to do with my present circumstances. These imprinted memories can come flooding forward, sometimes without warning. Such memories can hinder my ability to grow and mature.

For sake of a better word, I will call these triggers. Triggers bring about specific responses sometimes consciously, but more often from the unconscious level. I have also found that many reactions to present day events can be traced to unfinished business from my past. This unfinished business can be linked to a variety of events, people, institutions and so on. The common thread that links me to those unsettled experiences is my resentment. I have heard that expectations are premeditated resentments. These resentments may be buried under a world of pain that has been hidden under a pile of disappointments. Having these resentments is likened to drinking poison and hoping that the person that I am resentful towards dies.

The reality is that resentments undermine my ability to make healthy decisions. Rather than being proactive for my own good, I become reactive. When I find myself reacting, I am usually trying to force a solution. I have also found that when I am trying to force a solution, I usually create more pain for myself. I have also seen how resentments can negatively alter the course of someone else's life. I only have to turn on the news to see the ramifications of holding resentments.

With this insight, I realize that it is in my best interest to be rigorously honest with myself. Practically speaking, this means that I need to make a list of the people that I have held resentments towards over the years. Work, school, institutions and church can be an excellent place to look for these resentments. I also need to place myself on this list. This exercise is not done to blame anyone, or to berate myself, but to look for patterns. Through becoming aware of those patterns, I am able understand why I react to events in my life. In so doing, I can be relieved from the debilitating effects that resentment has on my life.

Until I examine these patterns, I will continue to find myself reliving pain from my past expectations through current events. These triggers will remain set until I do the work to remove them from my conscious and unconscious mind. I also need to remember that I am ultimately responsible for how I chose to react or respond to any event. The way that I chose to respond or react will invariably produce outcomes. My choice will either promote my empowerment or will leave me believing I am a victim.

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## Teachers

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 4, 2007

Throughout my life, I have experienced many twists and turns. Many times, these twists and turns made little sense to me. Metaphorically speaking, I felt like a pinball ricocheting off a series of disappointments and resentments. This way of relating and reacting to my environment frequently left me feeling helpless. Although I spent much of my time and energy seeking to endure and survive my circumstances, I never felt secure. Consequently, I felt like I needed to defend, answer, or explain my existence.

When I got sick and tired of being sick and tired, I made some practical decisions. I no longer wanted to merely be a survivor, tossed about by my circumstances. I decided to embark in a new way of living. I began investing my time and energy into determining why I reacted to various people, places and things. I discovered that I was the common denominator in all these encounters.

Through my process, I came to accept my powerlessness over people, places, and things. Reality made something clear to me. Although I am powerless over people, places, and things I am not powerless over how I react to them. In addition to this awareness, I came to realize that my reactions to people, places and things were active choices. These active choices remained embedded in my unconscious, until I decided to stop blaming anyone or anything for my choices. And you know what, until I accepted this reality, I consciously choose to remain in denial.

**When I chose to learn from my teachers, I no longer need to minimize anyone, including myself.**

Although I may not like the people, places or things that I encounter, as I live my life, I need to remember that I am not helpless. I get to choose whether or not I learn from my reactions. If I chose to blame or shame someone for how I am reacting, I am only kidding myself. As I remain committed and open to learn from my reactions, I am empowered. A new freedom and vitality for living is found. The energy once used to survive my reactions is now being used to enhance my quality of living.

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## Attitude Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 7, 2007

Today is the beginning of the Easter Weekend. I hope you and your family are well during this season. I am happy to be alive and to have the opportunity to share this time with you. As you may know my Dad passed away on January 10 of this year (Read my post, **Hello World**). Although his passing provided sadness for our family, we were happy for Dad. Sad that he left this dimension, but happy that he began his new journey.

When I worked with in the funeral business, death was described as an individual moving out of his / her house. Our bodies are what houses' our soul and the spirit that God breathed into our being. So when my Dad passed away, he moved out of his house and passed into life eternal.

For those of us who believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Easter is a reminder of our faith. Faith in Christ's finished work on Calvary's cross-provided triumph over death and the power of the grave. As He triumphed over death and the power of the grave, He provided hope to those who would believe {Read the Gospel of John in the New Testament for more details}. Although we may die, like my Dad did on January 10, we can have hope in the resurrection of the dead. Because of our faith, my family knows that someday, we will see Dad again.

Easter can also be representative to some as the beginning of spring. Spring is a time of rebirth and abundance. Possibilities, like flowers are in abundance. As the flower blooms, it's sweet fragrance can be valued and appreciated. And so it is with our lives. Choice provides the potential and our willingness opens the door to enjoy and prosper. Our decision will provide the motivation that directs our attitude. Our attitude will in turn determine how we see and experience our world.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Attitude Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 7, 2007

### Attitude

I am learning that my limitations do not have to be reasons for sadness. Instead, they can lead me to a place of acceptance that can be used for my good. When I am sick or bedridden, taking **time** to rest may become a tremendous gift. So many things pass me by when I am **not** taking time to rest. I have also discovered another rich truth. Many matters that are out of my control, are really gifts in disguise. The beauty in this spiritual awakening provides a simple but a profound truth. How I chose to interpret my circumstances will significantly impact the quality of my life

If I decide to look for the hidden opportunity, a new zest for living will be found. The eyes of my heart, once darkened by negative perceptions, will be opened to see fresh possibilities. Rather than being angry at my circumstances, I will learn to use them to my advantage.

**I have come to appreciate the meaning of this quote, “If you do not like something, change it, if you can not change it, change the way you think about it.” Mary Englebreit**

I am not suggesting or inferring that we not be sad or frustrated by events that are out of our control. On the contrary, I believe that grieving is very healthy and an essential component to our healing process. There is no right or wrong way to grieve a loss, no specific time schedules. It just takes what it takes. So let yourself be sad and angry for a time and when you are ready, remember, changed attitudes can aid recovery — one day at a time.

**Happy Easter to All!**

## Traumatic Brain Injury and the Square Peg

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 12, 2008

I have been thinking about the topic of identity. For many years I allowed my identity to be defined out side of me. Status and monetary qualification was the measuring stick that I sought to measure up to so that I could establish my self-worth and self-value as an individual.

Because I focused on status and money – the status of an identity and the financial security that would attract a mate – my life stayed in turmoil. The turmoil arose from my inability to secure my status in the world, which was trumpeted and reinforced by my financial insecurity. My financial security forever seemed to be out of my reach because of my inability to maintain gainful employment.

Over time and through my struggle to fit into societal and family expectations I had a spiritual awakening. My spiritual awakening revealed to me that for many years I was trying to fit my life into a round hole when I was created to be a square peg. Through my spiritual awakening I began to realize that I could no longer base my value, worth or identify on my ability to fit into a round hole.

**I could no longer base my value, worth or identity on my ability to fit into a round hole because I was created to be a square peg. I could not create my own identity until I was able to accept that I was created to be a square peg.**

As a square peg I began to accept that my financial security could no longer be dependent upon a round peg system. I had to begin to think like a square peg. I had to think out side the box. With my awareness, the obvious became apparent. I could no longer find my security or my identity in a system that celebrated and rewarded round pegs. I had to find a system that worked for me.

Over time I have come to accept, but more so to celebrate the beauty of who I am — a square peg. I have come to not only celebrate who I am but to excel as a square peg through my gifts, talents and abilities. I am not suggesting that I have arrived – because I know that I have not – but I no longer fight against myself. I no longer attempt to be something that I am not – a round peg.

## Traumatic / Acquired Brain Injury – Meaning and Purpose

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 24, 2008

Over the past several days I have been thinking about the concept of an identity. As I have shared in [My Journey thus Far](#), for many years I felt like a man all dressed up with no where to go in life. Although I diligently applied myself to both academic and vocational pursuits I could not find my meaning and purpose.

In my attempt to define my meaning and purpose I sought to fulfill the requirements of specific identities. You see I bought into the notion that “if” I was able to secure an identity “what do you do for a living?” then I could find my place in the world. Due to the invisible nature of my disability, my attempts to secure an identity were frequently met with disappointment. My disappointment arose because I had bought into the notion that the identity would in some how save me — by defining my meaning and purpose.

Nevertheless, each of my attempts to find and secure my identity brought me face to face with yet one more disappointment. Although I applied diligence and persistence to secure my meaning and purpose — through an identity — I consistently found myself confused and bewildered. You see I had bought in to the notion that if I could secure an identity, then my life would matter. What made matters more frustrating for me was that I believed that my identity needed to be esteemed and rewarded by the society in which I lived.

**Not only did I need to have an identity to define my meaning and purpose but my identity needed to be esteemed and rewarded by the society in which I lived.**

Through my repeated frustration and disappointment — as I attempted to find my meaning and purpose through an identity— my eyes slowly opened to the illusion set for by an identity. I also discovered that as my traumatic / acquired brain injury, deficits and limitations are not meant to define who I am, neither is an identity meant to define who I am in this life. Through my process I discovered that my being was never meant to fulfill the requirements of an identity.

**My need to find my meaning and purpose through an identity has been replaced with the pursuit of my passion. My passion longs to direct my path and I am learning to follow my passion. Consequently, I am experiencing my meaning and purpose.**

As I experience my meaning and purpose I am released from the need to fulfill the role of an identity. Subsequently, I am learning to direct my passion through my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for me. In the process, I am finding that my doing no longer needs to be the driver in my being. Therefore, I no longer need to fulfill the requirements of an identity. Consequently I am being set free from the confines brought about by the pursuit of any identity.

**My mother said to me, “If you become a soldier, you’ll become a general; if you become a monk, you’ll end up as the Pope.” Instead, I became a painter and wound up as Picasso. Pablo Picasso**

Be your self.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## The Measure of Destiny?

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on February 15, 2009

Through my process I have grown in the awareness and acceptance to my reality. With my understanding, I have been able to embrace certain truths. My destiny becomes apparent through these truths.

**“I am only one; but still I am one. I can not do everything, but still I can do something.” Helen Keller**

This truth reminds me that I do not have to be more than I am — today. I am enough. In actuality, I am more than enough. Consequently, I can learn use my gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for me. In the process I fulfill the measure of my destiny.

**“Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time, and always start with the person nearest you.” Mother Teresa**

I do not have to be concerned with numbers, because I can be a blessing where I am — now! I do not have to concern myself with outcomes because I can trust the process. I can impact the person next to me in small but profound ways. In the process I measure my destiny.

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

Consequently, I do not have to wait to measure my destiny. I can measure my destiny by one act of kindness, one breath of hope, and by one word of encouragement to the person nearest me. Consequently, I don’t have to do everything, but I can do something. I can give out of that which I has been given to me. I can plant seeds. In that way I contribute to my destiny.

**“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.” Robert Louis Stevenson**

### Today’s Thought

Today you may be questioning the measure of your destiny and the value of your life. You may be discouraged because you have a disability, a traumatic brain injury or some other life challenging circumstance. My encouragement to you is to relax. You do not have to be more than who you are. You are enough.

Because you are enough, you do not have to prove anything to anyone, but you can freely give of who you are in ways that work for you. You do not have to do everything, but what you can give something magical. You don’t have to reach the masses, but you can start with the person nearest you.

We don’t have to do something big, but you and I can plant seeds of kindness, encouragement and hope. We don’t have to have all the answers, but can be part of the solution. We don’t have to know the big picture, but we can contribute to our destinies — by the choices we make.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## How to Remember what I Forgot

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 15, 2008

Recently, while speaking with a friend she suggested that I share some thing with you that I shared with her. Some times I lose my bearings, my focus and my center. When I find myself in this space I use this tool.

**At times I lose my bearings, my focus and my center and I feel as though I have lost my way.**

As we spoke I shared with my friend that I have a built in forgetter. Consequently, I need to be reminded of the principles that help me find my center, my bearings and my focus. I do not know if my built in “forgetter” is the result of getting older, being caught in the head lights [Are You Caught in the Headlights of Life?](#) or because of my traumatic brain injury.

**In the final analysis I do not know if the “why” really matters. What matter is that I am willing to remember.**

I have discovered that because I want to remember I am open to being reminded. In my experience I have found that these reminders come in different forms and through various venues. Simplicity some times speaks the loudest when I sit down with a piece of paper and a pen.

**Sometimes all I need to do is to sit down with a piece of paper and a pen and begin to write.**

The clarity that once seemed to allude me manifests itself before my very eyes. Slowly I am able to see my experience in a different light. What was once skewed takes on new meaning. My heart speaks to my head and my head to my heart and I am revived.

**Through the process I hear the voice of hope — as she calls to me — and I am able remember what I forgot.**

### Today's thought

My friend, in the event that you are going through a difficult time in your life or if you are merely searching for clarity may I encourage you to be present for yourself.

Sit down with a pen and a piece of paper and begin to write.

Let your heart speak to your head and your head to your heart.

What was forgotten will come into focus.

Consequently, you will gain your bearings and you will find your center.

You will be ushered into the light of hope and you will remember what was forgotten.

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Activities of Daily Living

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 11, 2007

Following a brain injury individuals may experience changes in their personality and in their ability to learn. Consequently, both the traumatic brain injury survivor as well as their family and friends may experience an unfamiliar frustration. Frustration may be compounded because the brain-injured person may look “normal” i.e. as though nothing has happened to them. Recently I heard someone say, “She was in a car accident several months ago, but she is fine. She just had a head injury.”

People who have experienced brain-injuries may have changes in their ability to learn, remember and grasp new tasks or remember old ones. Activities of daily living may subsequently become laborious and even daunting for the individual impacted by a brain-injury. Once simple tasks take huge amounts of effort and energy. Executing and practicing once familiar tasks become a struggle. The individual may consequently experience increasing anxiety and fatigue.

Through my experience I have found that there are different learning styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Some people learn best through a combination of these three learning styles, while others learn predominantly through the use of one or two of these styles. Through testing, I discovered that I learn best through two of the three styles. When auditory (listening to instructions) and kinesthetic (show me and let me do) are combined my learning aptitude increases and I am better able to learn the new material.

My learning disability, created by my brain injury necessitates that I learn through repetition and persistence. I have also discovered that my ability to learn tasks is hampered when sequences of information are presented to me. I am unable to remember those sequences even though they are given to me auditorily. My learning as a result comes at a slower pace. Because I have difficulty learning new sequences of information, I need to have a list of the steps in the sequence to follow while I learn the task. I also need to have more time to process new information. Through my ongoing process as a traumatic brain injury survivor I have developed other strategies to enhance my learning process.

**Your learning style may have changed following your brain injury my friend. Consequently, the manner in which you learn may have changed; resulting in you being frustrated with life.**

My encouragement to you my friend would be to discover how you best learn. Are you a visual learner, an auditory learner or a kinesthetic learner? In the event that you have experienced a traumatic brain injury, your learning style may have changed for you. As a result, you may be attempting to learn in ways that no longer work for you. Consequently you may need to ask your counselor or caseworker to test your learning style so that you can maximize your rehabilitation process. Once you have explored and discovered how you now learn best, you can develop strategies to enhance your recovery process.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Resolution to Succeed — Awareness, Acceptance and Action**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 29, 2012

Recently, I had a gracious reader of Second Chance to Live leave a comment. The comment generated some thoughts that I would like to share with you. I believe that we are uniquely different, which qualifies us to leave a set of foot prints on the sand of time.

As a different and unique individual, I have come to realize that I was never meant to be anyone but myself. My specific set of circumstances, have equipped me to excel and flourish in life. To excel and flourish in my life, I have needed to become comfortable in my own skin. To be comfortable in my own skin, I have needed to grow in both self-awareness and self-acceptance.

Being a different and unique individual — living with a traumatic brain injury and an invisible disability — has and does equip me to do things uniquely and outside of the box. To learn to excel and flourish outside of the box, I have had to learn to accept what I was powerless over, so that I could identify and develop what I do have power over as I live my life.

By accepting what I am powerless over, I have been able to excel and flourish beyond the box of anyone's expectation. By accepting what I have not been able to overcome, I have been able to use my time and energy to discover how to excel and flourish. By growing in the awareness and acceptance of this distinction, I have been able to stop fighting against myself.

What I discovered through my process, was that I fought against myself by struggling to justify the denial that kept me believing and striving to prove that I had power over what I had no power. What I discovered through my process, was that I stopped fighting against myself when I started to use my time and energy in ways that worked for me.

### **Epilogue**

With my awareness and acceptance, I came to realize what works for other people does not have to work for me and what works for me, may not work for other people. With my awareness, acceptance and as I have gotten into action — by using what works for me — I have been able to get out of the “rat race” of competing and comparing myself to and with other people.

In my experience – as I have grown in my awareness, acceptance and taken action – I have become a much happier person. In my experience – as I have grown in my awareness, acceptance and taken action – I have been able to focus on what I do best. In my experience – as I have grown in my awareness, acceptance and taken action – I have been able to use what works for me.

**“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.”  
Abraham Lincoln**

**“Footprints on the sands of time are not made by sitting down.” – Unknown**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## Neuroplasticity, Small Successes and Learning / Relearning Skill Sets Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 11, 2014

During the past 17 or so years I have trained pretty consistently in various martial arts. I have engaged in countless repetitions and drills in muay Thai Kickboxing, Western Boxing, components of Wing Chun, Kali and Jeet Kune Do. During the past 22 months I have trained with endless repetitions in modern arnis using single and double rattan sticks. In each of these martial arts I have worked diligently to mirror both my dominant side of my body with my non dominant side of my body. By doing so, I have developed new motor and fine motor skills.

**What I discovered in the past year or so was that I had been engaging in the process of neuroplasticity — creating new neural pathways and engaging in brain reorganization — through my training in various martial arts over the past 16 or 17 years.**

As explained in MedicineNet.com, I had been using the principle of concept of neuroplasticity:

“Neuroplasticity allows the neurons (nerve cells) in the brain to compensate for injury and disease and to adjust their activities in response to new situations or to changes in their environment. Brain reorganization takes place by mechanisms such as “axonal sprouting” in which undamaged axons grow new nerve endings to reconnect neurons whose links were injured or severed. Undamaged axons can also sprout nerve endings and connect with other undamaged nerve cells, forming new neural pathways to accomplish a needed function.”

Recently I wrote and published an article, [Living Life on Life’s Terms and Small Successes](#) in which I spoke to life as a process and a journey, not a destination. As I embrace life — as a process and a journey — I am able to live life on life’s terms. As I live life on life’s terms, I am able to celebrate the progress that I make through small successes. These small successes have been gained through working on each part of a desired skill. These small successes have been gained through a endless repetitions.

By breaking the skill down into individual parts, I have been able to enjoy the process, instead of judging my individual efforts. By working on individual parts of the skill, I have been able to celebrate the small successes, instead of focusing on the destination (having the skill). As I combine individual parts (small successes) I learn the desired skill. As I combine learned skills, I am able to combine skills into a series of learned skill sets. As I combine these skill sets, I create new neural pathways and in the process, I reorganize my brain.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Neuroplasticity, Small Successes and Learning / Relearning Skill Sets Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 11, 2014

As I have been able to combine a series of small successes — becoming proficient in specific drills — I have been able to learn how to execute a series of skill sets in each martial art. These small successes (parts) of my drilling and training, have not only improved my abilities as a martial artist, but have also given me the ability to apply the hand-eye coordination, agility, motor and fine motor skills, speed, precision and focus to other areas of my life.

What I discovered is that my drilling, training and mirroring of skills and skill sets — on the non-dominant side of my body — has improved the quality of my life that I experience in other areas of my life. My encouragement to you my friend would be, start slow, but start. Learn a new skill and skill set through a series of small successes. By doing so you will improve the quality of your life. By doing so you can move beyond a diagnosis or prognosis. By doing so you will move beyond the confines of any “box”.

I share the above information with you for this reason. Applying the principle and concept of neuroplasticity may help to improve the quality of life of the individuals whom you serve. Through persistence and tenacity those individuals may find, as I have, that they are able to accomplish learn / relearn skills. Skills and abilities that may have previously seemed out of reach to them. Skills and abilities that they may have lost due to a stroke or other cognitive changes. Skills and abilities that may have seemed to be out of their grasp. Skills and abilities that may help them to have experience “awakenings”.

### Exercise:

What ever you are able to do with your dominant side of your body, start doing – mirroring – the same ability with your non dominant side of your body. Start out slowly, but be persistent in your commitment. Work on one part (drill) of the skill at a time. As you become comfortable with that particular part of the skill, move onto the next part of the skill. By combining parts of the skill (small successes) you will find that you have learned or relearned a new skill. As you master that skill, begin working on parts of another skill.

Combine those parts (small successes) into learning that skill. As you continue in that process, you will be able to combine each skills into a skill set. As I have found, by doing so you will be able to learn or relearn new skills sets. In the process, you will create new neural pathways and brain reorganization. In the process you will improve your quality of l your life through small successes.

### Riddle:

“How do you eat an elephant?”, one man said to the other. The man asked, “Tell me the answer”. One bite at a time. What you see as an elephant (skill or ability) may seem overwhelming. My encouragement to you my friend — as I need to remember too — would be that you work on consuming the elephant, one part at a time. By doing so, your elephant will be reduced (through small successes) to a new or relearned skill., because you kept “chewing”.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Dispelling the Notion of Dis-ability — I Just Do Things in Ways that Work For Me

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 26, 2015

Recently a friend wrote an article and I responded to him in the following comment. I thought I would share what I shared with my friend.

Here is the comment.

I can definitely identify with you on this front. I attempted to prove that I was “not” disabled for many years. I did so in an attempt to prove that I was not “defective”, that there was not something “wrong” with me and as a result, I was worth loving and given respect. In my experience, I had to reach a point when the pain of denying my reality had to supersede my need to deny my reality — in my attempt to prove that there was nothing “defective” or “wrong” with me. In my experience, I had to confront my denial — despite feeling defective and as though there was some thing wrong with me. In my experience, I had to confront my denial before I could begin to love and accept myself as an individual.

In my experience, I discovered that I needed to move through the 5 stages of grieving, as posited by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in her book; **On Death and Denying**. The five stages: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance.

**In my experience, I discovered that I needed to confront both my denial and the denial systems set about me before I could dispel the notion of dis-ability. In my experience, I discovered that I needed to work through these stages before I could begin to see the possibilities of my ability.**

In my experience, I had to work through the 1st 4 stages, to be able to get to a place of acceptance; before I could stop defending myself for having experienced a brain injury. In my experience, I needed to get to a place of acceptance before I could begin to see that I was not defective or that there was some thing wrong with me because I experienced a brain injury. In my experience, I needed to work on learning how to accept that I am powerless over the injury to my brain, while at the same time understanding that I am not not helpless. In my experience, as I began to realize that I was and am not helpless, I saw a “light” at the end of the proverbial “tunnel”. The light helped me to realize that I could get into action. The light helped me to realize that I could create a life for myself, within my reality; that would empower my life and in turn encourage people to see the light at the end of their “proverbial tunnels”.

The light at the end of the proverbial tunnel helped me to realize that although I may have a disability, I am not dis-abled.

**“I am not disabled. I just do things in ways that work for me.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

### Today’s Thought

In the event that you are living with a disability, my encouragement to you my friend is to not focus on the dis, but focus on the ability. Look for ways to use the ability that you possess — your passion, skills, talents and abilities — in ways that will work for you. Learn some thing new, try some thing different and see yourself flourish.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Living Life on Life's Terms and Small Successes Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 7, 2014

In the past several articles, I have spoken to [Is the Medical Model of Treatment Defining and Keeping You in a “Box”?](#), [How I Found Freedom from the “Box” and Societal Stigmatization](#), [How are We Teaching People to Treat Us?](#) and [Getting Comfortable in Our Own Skin Being Outside of the “Box”](#). The awareness I gained and share in these articles came over a period of time and as a result of my own pain. As I shared in my most recent article, **Getting Comfortable in Our Own Skin Being Outside the Box** I discovered that through grieving the loss of how I thought my life should be, I was empowered see life and my circumstances in a new way. I was also able to begin seeing life as being done for me, instead of being done to me.

**Pain, once seen as my nemesis, became an ally in my healing process. Instead of seeing myself as a victim, I began to see myself as an empowered being who has choices.**

Through grieving the way that I thought life should be, I was able to begin to accept the way that life was because... By accepting the way that my life was because of... I was able to start living life on life's terms. By living life on life's terms, I discovered that I could get into action. By learning how to live life on life's term, I discovered that I could see life as a journey, not a destination. By living life on life's terms, I discovered that I could explore beyond the “box” of the way that I thought life should look. By living life on life's terms, I discovered that I could stop fighting against myself. By living life on life's terms I discovered that I could see my circumstances in a different way. By learning to live life on life's terms I discovered that although there were people in my life who wanted me to remain in the “box” — for various reasons — I could learn how to live and thrive outside of the “box”.

In February 2007, I wrote an article to share what helped me to learn how to live and thrive outside of the “box”, apart from an “all or none”, “black and white” filter or perception. I would like to share that article with you.

### Small Successes

Posted by Second Chance to Live on February 13, 2007

This simple but profound concept alluded me for a large part of my life. You see, I thought that perfection was the benchmark of success. The demand of perfection clouded my eyes and I was unable to celebrate the progress I was making in my pursuits. Perfectionism kept raising the bar of expectation. The fear of failure coupled with a pervasive sense of shame seemed to be my constant companion, dissuading me from trying new projects, activities or goals. I was stuck in an abyss of fear and anxiety.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Living Life on Life's Terms and Small Successes Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 7, 2014

In my attempt to silence the voice of shame and inadequacy, I found myself tenaciously pursuing the illusion of perfection. As I continued to overcompensate, I found myself in a dilemma. Because the good that I did rarely seemed to be good enough, I found myself in an endless cycle of striving to be more and do more. As I began to realize the futility of my efforts to do enough to be enough, the clouds that once kept me under a yoke of oppression began to part and my spiritual eyes were opened.

Through my pursuit to be free from this faulty belief system, I had spiritual awakenings. I began to realize that life is a process, not to be defined by outcomes. I also discovered that when I attempt to define my life by potential outcomes, I set myself up to be irritable, restless and discontent. In my process of growth, I have discovered that I could be satisfied with small successes brought about by the footwork that I set forth in all my endeavors. I have also discovered that it is in my best interest to trust the God of my understanding with any and all outcomes.

My belief system has changed. I no longer feel the need to overcompensate, in order to prove my worth and value. I now know that I am enough. Trusting God with the outcomes frees me to enjoy the footwork. I now find myself encouraging people I meet along the path of life with this statement, "Take one step at a time, keep going at what you are doing and before long you will look back and see how far you have come".

**This philosophy has inspired me to enjoy the process of living, which in turn keeps me from judging my efforts, one day at a time.**

## Pieces of the Puzzle

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 27, 2007

As each person grows and develops they learn patterns. These patterns for living and relating help the individual to interpret and adjust to their specific environment. In environments where unresolved conflicts persist, these learned patterns can have a debilitating affect. Additionally, the person often integrates the patterns that are accepted as norms early in life, as they age. These patterns may consequently set the individual up to be used, manipulated and controlled by other people later in life.

In families where the threat of emotional abandonment is covertly used to both control and temper its members, a trigger pattern is set. With repeated reinforcement the individual becomes conditioned to a specific response. When compliance becomes the expectation, shame can be used to manipulate the individual. Such subtle conditioning often occurs gradually over a period of time. The individual slowly begins to unconsciously connect associating with people to painful outcomes. Consequently, the individual may consciously believe that apart from maintaining rigid control and compliance to those expectations, they will experience some type of emotional duress.

Until pieces of the puzzle started coming together, I found myself baffled in my attempt to understand and anticipate what was expected of me. In my experience this produced both stress and anxiety, because I was afraid of being rejected and minimized. Over time, I have come to recognize the debilitating impact produced by this type of conditioning. It gradually depletes the individual and drains them of any ambition to explore and use their unique creative expression.

More over, when individuals seek to integrate socially, similar contingencies can be seen deployed. If the individual does not comply with the group's covert or overt expectations, the previously set trigger is tripped. The individual — again — is led to believe that they must discard parts of themselves, in order to embrace what is expected of them. In the event that such expectations are used to control and manipulate the individual — with the threat of being ostracized — it is probably not a healthy group. The leaders of the group, as well as the members of the group may collectively be acting out toxic patterns in relating to other people.

When I recognize that rigid control and overt / covert compliance is being used to herd the members of a group I cease to be apart of that group. I am all too familiar with this type of social interaction. Today I chose to practice live and let live. Nevertheless, I have come to realize this as a slippery slope that needs to be avoided.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Overcoming Self-Sabotage

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 31, 2011

Yesterday I started a new chapter in my journey with Second Chance to Live. I created and published my first video on YouTube. Click [here](#) to view the presentation. Through my recovery process I have learned a life changing lesson: **With everything there is a learning curve.**

**In my experience, I have learned that life is about a process, not a destination. What I learn on my journey is more important than any destination. Consequently, as I allow myself to progress through my “learning curves” I give myself the permission to celebrate because of my process, instead of judging my efforts because I am not moving more quickly through my process.**

In the process of making the YouTube Video, I took approximately 7 “takes” before I decided to upload the one I did to YouTube. Although – at the time – I realized that the “take” to be uploaded to YouTube was not perfect, I was satisfied that the “take” was good enough. With my realization and though remembering the lesson of “learning curves” I accepted the reality that –with time – I will undoubtedly grow in my ability to produce better videos for the Second Chance to Live channel.

**By celebrating the lesson of the “learning curve”, I am able to celebrate the gains that I make – in my process — instead of fighting against myself. By celebrating the gains that I make through my learning curve, I am able to stop sabotaging myself.**

### Today’s Thought

My friend, I would encourage you to start on a new chapter of your journey – today. And as you start of that journey remember, you don’t have to do “it” perfectly. Instead, you can use the principle of the “learning curve”. By doing so you can give yourself the permission to explore, grow and mature in your process. By doing so, you can celebrate your gains. By doing so, you can stop judging your efforts. By doing so, you can stop fighting against yourself. By doing so, you can stop sabotaging yourself.

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Relationships

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 25, 2008

Today is December 24 — Christmas eve. First let me say, Merry Christmas to you and your family. Over the past several days I have been experiencing some sadness. My sadness has been because I would like somethings to be different than they are in a few of my relationships.

**“If you do not like some thing, change it, if you can not change it, change the way you think about it.” Mary Engelbreit**

After years of struggling in my attempt (s) to change these individuals point of view — concerning how my tbi has impacts my life and my relationships — I am learning to let go. Although I would like to change people’s perceptions concerning how my traumatic brain injury impacts my relationships, I realize that such an awareness may never occur.

**“When you are in a state of non-acceptance, it is difficult to learn. A clenched fist can not receive a gift, and a clenched psyche — grasped tightly against the reality of what must not be accepted — can not easily receive a lesson.” Roger John**

Through my process, I am coming to accept a reality — **it is as it is**. With my growing acceptance I realize that I too have choices. Consequently, I am choosing to change my perspective. By doing so I validate my reality while learning to let go of my sadness and disappointment. By doing so I am learning to practice live and let live.

**By doing so I am able to move forward with my life. By doing so I am able to learn the next lesson.**

### Today’s thought

A friend of mine reminds me when I look to specific people — to give me what they do not have to give — I set myself up to be hurt and disappointed. My friend reminds me that when I look to people to give to me what they do not possess I am essentially going to a hardware store looking to find bread, where no bread exists.

As a traumatic brain injury survivor you may want to have better relationships with specific people, however their lack of acceptance impedes that from occurring. As a result, you may find yourself both sad and disappointed. Although those relationships may never go back to the way they were before our tbi, we can have peace.

We can live in peace with ourselves. We can live in peace because we know that we are doing our best. We can be at peace because we no longer need to live in denial. We can live in peace because we own our reality. We can be at peace with ourselves because we can let go.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## EEG's, Neuro Psychological Evaluations and Brain Injury Recovery Outcomes Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 24, 2014

**For your information, the blue links with in this article are links to previous articles that I have written. The articles will give further insight into what I discuss in the below article. Click on the blue links to open and read the article. Any questions, please ask.**

Over the weekend I engaged myself in a discussion that opened a door that I had kept closed. As the door opened, I realized that I needed to further engage myself in the discussion. As with each article that I write and publish on Second Chance to Live, my motivation is to share my experience, strength and hope from the [power of identification](#). I believe that identification empowers each individual to come out of shadows of isolation, by realizing that they are not alone in the struggle to understand and live their lives as an individual who experienced an injury to their brain.

A question was posited concerning the experience of individuals regarding neuropsychological evaluations. In **1968** I underwent **2 EEG's** and a neuropsychological exam. The results were shared with my parent, who decided not disclose the results with me. Some **29 years** later I found out the results, which showed that I would probably not be able to succeed beyond high school academically. In **1993** I underwent another **EEG** and a **neuropsychological evaluation**. The results were shared with me that showed that I had succeeded far beyond all reasonable expectations through sheer persistence and motivation. I was later deemed to be unemployable by a DVR evaluation.

For those individuals who are not familiar with my process and journey, I obtained my undergraduate degree in 10 years and my graduate degree in 3 1/2 years. I have a masters degree in rehabilitation counseling.

In preparation for a keynote presentation, I wrote an article to share some back ground information with individuals attending the presentation, being that I would only have 25 – 30 minutes to present. In this article, I share what I experienced since the **1st 2 EEG's**, a neuropsychological evaluation, through my **3rd EEG**, **2nd** neuropsychological evaluation and up to the date of writing the article in preparation to the keynote presentation that I gave at the [2013 Southwest Conference on Disability](#). I would invite you to read the article that I wrote in preparation by clicking on this link: [Article](#).

## EEG's, Neuro Psychological Evaluations and Brain Injury Recovery Outcomes Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 24, 2014

**The reason why I share the above information with you is encourage you to live your life to the full, regardless of what the results / findings may show from an EEG (s) or a neuropsychological evaluation (s) that you may undergo as a result of your traumatic brain injury.**

### **Lessons Learned from my undergoing 3 EEG's and 2 Neuropsychological Evaluations**

An EEG (s) and a neuropsychological exam (s) can give us insight into how our brain and personality have been affected by the brain injury, but they do not have to define who we are my friend. We can live outside and beyond of the **box** that an EEG (s), neuropsychological evaluation (s) and reports may communication to us. We can succeed far beyond all reasonable expectations, through sheer persistence and motivation; by not giving up on our process, a loving God or ourselves. Move will be revealed to us in time. We can learn to use our **passions** — through our gifts, talents and abilities — in ways that will work for us, for people who want what we have to give. Consequently my friend:

We can run our own race, at our own **pace**. We can **celebrate** our efforts. We can map our own **course**, and be **ourselves**. We can live in **hope** and we can live our **dreams**.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Making Sense of Life through Jeet Kune Do Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 11, 2013

Yesterday morning my Mom sent something to me that brought about some reflection. I would like to share my reflection with you. For many years of my life I felt confused by what I could not put my finger upon, because of what I experienced – frustration, disappointment and discouragement.

I believe that my confusion gained clarity and my frustration, disappointment and discouragement took on new meaning through my training and study of Jeet Kune Do. Bruce Lee founded what he called Jeet Kune Do (JKD) in 1967. The principles Bruce Lee taught and the lessons that I learned from my martial arts instructor (Sensei) helped me to make sense of what I had a hard time understanding or accepting for much of my life.

### **Bruce Lee's philosophy surrounding Jeet Kune Do (JKD)**

“I have not invented a “new style,” composite, modified or otherwise that is set within distinct form as apart from “this” method or “that” method. On the contrary, I hope to free my followers from clinging to styles, patterns, or molds. Remember that Jeet Kune Do is merely a name used, a mirror in which to see “ourselves”. . . Jeet Kune Do is not an organized institution that one can be a member of. Either you understand or you don't, and that is that. There is no mystery about my style. My movements are simple, direct and non-classical. The extraordinary part of it lies in its simplicity. Every movement in Jeet Kune Do is being so of itself. There is nothing artificial about it. I always believe that the easy way is the right way. Jeet Kune Do is simply the direct expression of one's feelings with the minimum of movements and energy. The closer to the true way of Kung Fu, the less wastage of expression there is. Finally, a Jeet Kune Do man who says Jeet Kune Do is exclusively Jeet Kune Do is simply not with it. He is still hung up on his self-closing resistance, in this case anchored down to reactionary pattern, and naturally is still bound by another modified pattern and can move within its limits. He has not digested the simple fact that truth exists outside all molds; pattern and awareness is never exclusive. Again let me remind you Jeet Kune Do is just a name used, a boat to get one across, and once across it is to be discarded and not to be carried on one's back.” Bruce Lee

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Making Sense of Life through Jeet Kune Do Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 11, 2013

What Bruce Lee's JKD philosophy helped me to recognize is that what had occurred over much of my life prepared me to be effective in what I am doing today. By drawing from my experiences, circumstances, lessons and opportunities I have been able to discover how to use what works best for me. In the process of discovering what works best for me, I have been given the freedom to stop judging myself for what does not work for me.

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

The principles that Bruce Lee taught inspires me to celebrate my process and to focus on what is useful, as I look to creatively express myself in every area of my life. The principle of absorbing what is useful and adding what is specifically my own has encouraged me to follow my own path, progress in my own capabilities, find my own way, know myself, bend with adversity, use economy of motion, be open to learn and not give up on myself.

**“Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man. But sooner or later to the man who thinks he can win.” Bruce Lee**

**“Freedom lies in understanding yourself from moment to moment.” Bruce Lee**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## When I Find Myself Practicing Old and Limiting Behaviors

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on February 18, 2013

Yesterday I finished and published an article Living with a Traumatic Brain Injury, Isolation and Connecting with Other People. In that article I shared with you that I had been struggling with some thing. This has been going on for the past several weeks. Last night I was able to speak with my mentor and I gained some clarity.

Late last night and early this morning I did a lot of journaling, reflecting and reading. In the process I gained further clarity as to what and why I had been struggling with what I spoke about in yesterday's article. As I encouraged you to read, I re-read the articles as provided by the links. What dawned on me was that my struggle entangled me in an old and limiting behavior and ensnared me in fear.

The clarity helped me to realize that I had been unconsciously comparing myself with and to other people – in my attempt to connect with other people so that I would not feel isolated. In the process I internalized what I perceived other people thought about me and in the process experienced what I sought to avoid – feelings of isolation. In my feelings of isolation, I lost sight of my reality.

I lost sight of the reality that I am a unique individual who is called to live my destiny, not the destiny of anyone else. I lost sight of the reality that I am enough by being who I am, not by being who other people may think that I should or should not be in this life. I lost sight of the reality that my mission and vision calls me to do, to be of service, not to seek to gain the approval of other people.

### Today's thought

When I find myself practicing old and limiting behaviors. I give my power away to other people. I trade my judgment for the judgment of other people. I practice behaviors that lead me to believe that I do not have choices. I forget to remember that I can trust the process, a loving God and myself.

I forget to realize that I have opportunities to learn from my circumstances. I forget to remember that I am not stuck. I forget to remember that God is my source, not people. I forget to remember that I am to be led by peace, not by fear. I forget to remember to stay in today and to not project into the future.

With my awareness, I need to remember that I have choices, that I am not limited and that a loving God – not people – is my source. I need to remember to stay in the day and be led by peace, not by fear. I need to remember that I can trust the process and the big picture to a loving God.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Having a Disability and Learning New Skills — Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 30, 2008

Over the weekend I decided to purchase my first deluxe food processor. Per my experience, over the years I have used smaller vegetable choppers to make preparations to cook the meals that I enjoy. These smaller vegetable choppers were adequate at the time, however I grew weary of having to use these choppers 2-3 times each time I wanted to cook a big meal. By the way, I cook large portions so that I have left overs to eat through out the week so that I do not have to stop to make meals. Consequently, I am able to devote more of my time to working on Second Chance to Live.

Well after 2 hard workouts at the martial arts school (cardio fitness training and then grappling), I decided to do some grocery shopping at one store and then purchase my deluxe food processor at another store. As you might imagine, after my two hard workouts and my shopping I was tired. Nevertheless, I wanted to use my new food processor when I got home to do some cooking. After lugging my groceries, a large martial arts bag and the food processor up the stairs and into my apartment I was excited to cook my lunch using my new food processor. Once I opened the box containing the food processor and began examining the contents I saw all the assorted parts that came with the food processor. In my attempt to figure out how to use the processor I felt my self becoming anxious and then frustrated.

**Through my recovery process, I have come to realize that when I am hungry, tired or fatigued I am more susceptible to becoming anxious and frustrated. With my awareness I made the decision to place the food processor — with the assorted parts — back into the box.**

When I noticed that my level of frustration was increasing, I made a conscious decision to use my smaller vegetable chopper to prepare my meal and wait until another day to use my new food processor. Once I was able to relax — while I cooked — I made another conscious decision. I decided to — over the next several days — read the food processor's manual / instructions in order to slowly absorb the material — in small doses. Consequently, I made the process of learning how to use and operate my new food processor into manageable parts.

## Having a Disability and Learning New Skills — Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 30, 2008

Please read [Part 1](#) for context. Thank you.

You may say to yourself, “What’s the big deal, it is just a food processor?” As a traumatic brain injury survivor who has a learning disability, I have discovered how I best learn, absorb and grasp new information. By slowly absorbing the information I am able to apply the material — at my own rate. Through my awareness I have been able to learn new skills — such as how to use the food processor — while at the same time minimizing the amount of anxiety and frustration that comes with the learning of new skills.

Subsequently, I have come to accept that when I am presented with new information, rather than being demanding of myself I need step back and breath. Through being gentle rather than demanding of myself, I empower my ability to learn the new skill. Also, by accepting that I am susceptible to anxiety and frustration — when I am hungry, angry, tired or fatigued — I am able to make better choices. Consequently, I know that I need to take care of those needs, before I attempt to learn a new skill. Therefore, instead of continuing to be frustrated with myself and the skill I am attempting to learn I take care of first things first.

### Today’s Thought

As a person with an invisible disability, I needed to teach myself how to compensate for my difficulty processing and learning new information and sequences. As a recovering perfectionist —out of the fear of being shamed, abandoned and rejected—I had to learn how to lighten up on myself. With time, I have conditioned myself to remember that with everything, there is a learning curve. I have also learned — through my process — that I need to be gentle with myself as I learn. I need to celebrate the progress that I make while I learn. Although I may be anxious and frustrated when presented with new information, thank God I no longer have to be paralyzed by that anxiety and frustration. I can instead decide to learn at my own pace.

As a person with or without a disability, learning and remembering new information may overwhelm you. My encouragement to you — my friend — would be to make your learning manageable. Your learning style and disability may be different from mine and that is fine. What works for me may not necessarily work best for you. You can have the freedom to find out how you learn best. My encouragement to you — as I need to encourage myself — is to be gentle with yourself as you learn. Take small steps – if needed– and celebrate the progress that you are making. One day at a time.

**If we take the first step in our learning process, and decide to keep walking, before long we will be able to look back and see how far we have come in our learning process.**

**Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## How are you Framing your Life?

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on October 4, 2008

Through my experience I have come to value how I choose to “frame” my experience. What I mean by “frame” has to do with the way that I choose to perceive and define my experience. My experience has taught me that when I frame or assign negativity, defeat or a belief of victimization to my circumstances I internalize a sense of hopelessness and helplessness.

**Consequently, I have found that what happens to me is not as important as what I do with what has been given to me.**

On the other hand, when I frame or assign a position of empowerment — to each of my circumstances regardless of how they may look — I am emboldened to believe that my circumstances are designed to work together for my good. When I choose to see that my circumstances are designed to work together for my good, my process takes on a different meaning. A feeling of hopelessness and helplessness is replaced by encouragement, motivation and empowerment because I am free to trust the process, a loving God and myself.

**Consequently, I become solution focused — instead of focusing on what I may not understand or value at the present time — because I know that my circumstances are not meant to keep me down, but to build me up!**



## Traumatic Brain Injury and Letting Go of Control Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 24, 2009

For the past several days I have been experiencing some unrest. In my unrest I found myself becoming anxious and fearful. In my state of mind I opened the door to feeling less than, inadequate and unlovable. As the door stayed open I allowed the recipe of fear and doubt to delude me into believing that my good was simply not good enough.

You see I allowed myself to slip back into believing that because I was not experiencing specific outcomes there was something wrong with me. Like a knee jerk reaction from of old, I experienced debilitating shame. Shame for not being “good” enough. In my attempt to invalidate my sense shame — that who I am and what I do is enough — I found myself comparing myself to other people. In my comparing I found myself experiencing a series of reactions.

None of these reactions provided a reprieve or alleviated my sense of inadequacy. Instead these reactions perpetuated the notion that I needed to answer, defend, and explain who I am to my sense of shame. Because I felt inadequate I experienced some jealousy toward some of my peers, who I perceive are receiving more opportunities than I am in life. I then experienced some frustration because I felt powerless.

In my powerlessness I bought into the notion that I needed to do more to be more in order to be given more. In my delusion I lost sight of my being. As I lost sight of my being, I found myself becoming competitive in an attempt to overcompensate for my insecurities.

**In my powerlessness I bought into the notion that I needed to do more to be more in order to be given more. In my delusion I lost sight of my being. As I lost sight of my being, I found myself becoming competitive in an attempt to overcompensate for my insecurities.**

When I realized that I had lathered myself into a frenzy of anxiety, I made a wise decision. I decided to call a trusted friend. I realized that I needed to find a solution. From past experience, I knew that I did not have to be alone in my struggle. During our conversation my friend helped me to see that my unrest stemmed from self-centered fear. You see, my self-centered fear was connected to specific outcomes. My self-will frustrated me because I was not getting what I expected / wanted in the time frame that I expected / wanted.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Letting Go of Control Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 25, 2009

From a place of fear I let pride enter into my process while I unconsciously eased God out of my process — EGO. Not a good decision. When I eased God out of my process I adopted the notion that I alone was responsible to / for whether I could achieve specific outcomes in a prescribed amount of time. In the process I found myself needing to defend, answer and explain my worth to my insecurities / pride / EGO. Because I was unable to achieve those specific outcomes my self-centered fear continued to delude me.

**In the process I became anxious because I was unable to achieve specific outcomes. You see, my self-centered fear was connected to my self-will. Consequently, my self-will perpetuated my fear and anxiety because I had connected my worth and value to those specific outcomes.**

As my friend and I spoke I regained my spiritual bearings. In the process, I recalled my truth. I don't have to be more than I am. I am enough. I can let go of outcomes. I can let go of the timing. My footwork is enough and I don't have to be more than. I don't have to force solutions. I can surrender my process to a power greater than myself. I can let things happen at the right time. I can trust the process, a loving God and my ability to learn. I can make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of the God of my understanding.

I don't have to strive to make anything happen. I don't have to rely on my own understanding. I don't have to produce to be enough. I don't have to compete to be enough. Instead, I can relax and run in my own race. I don't have to be critical of my process. I don't have to judge my efforts. I don't have to compare myself to anyone. I don't have to be controlled by self-centered fear. Instead I am free to trust the process because I know that more will be revealed. I can let go of control.

**Consequently, I am free to be in the moment. I am free to trust the process. I am free to enjoy the journey.**

## Hope, Encouragement and the Parable of the Cracked Pot Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 16, 2009

Earlier this evening I felt led to share the parable of the cracked pot with a group of my friends. The message of the cracked pot appeared to have a profound impact on several of my friends.

**I am not sure who is the author of the parable of the cracked pot, however to the author I would like to say thank you. You are a very wise person.**

Because the message of the parable is so very powerful I decided to share the parable of the Cracked Pot with you.

May you be encouraged to just be ... yourself.

### The Parable of the Cracked Pot

A Water Bearer in India had two large pots; each hung on each end of a pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pot's full of water in his masters house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water-bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

**"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your masters house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts." The pot said.**

The Water Bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the masters house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

"What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal." Zig Ziglar

## Hope, Encouragement and the Parable of the Cracked Pot Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 16, 2009

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the Pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, “Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot’s side? That’s because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you’ve watered them.

For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my masters table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.”

### Today’s Thought

We may have bought into the notion that our lives are too are cracked to be of use. We may find ourselves comparing our vessels to other vessels. We may be experiencing shame and sadness because we see ourselves as failures. In the process we may have developed a fear of failure. Consequently, we may be thinking about giving up.

**We may want to give up trying to make a difference. We may be saying to ourselves, “What’s the use in me trying anyway and anymore?”. To that I would say, please continue to read.**

With out you and I being just the way we are, hope would remain only a concept. With out you and I being the way we are — to some — hope would be lost. Because of who you and I are vision (s) becomes reality. Because of you and I people’s prayers are being answered.

Because of you and I, people are being set free. Because of you and I people are blooming and blossoming into creation. Because you and I those individuals will ultimately feed the masses. Because of you and I people believe in miracles. Because of you and I destinies are being birthed and dreams realized.

Because of you and I people have an advocate. Because of you and I people choose to get up...one more time. Because of you and I people learn to trust...again. Because of you and I people learn to love and be loved...again. Because of you and I people are inspired to pursue new opportunities and fresh possibilities.

**Because of you and I people take risks. Because of you and I people are be drawn to the light of God’s love.**

So when you remember or some one else reminds you of your crack (s) in your pot be encouraged my friend. Rejoice that cracks exist in your pot, for with out your cracks the flowers — people — along your path may never be watered.

**And remember, “You are a Gift to Your World!”**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Freedom, Courage and the Flight of the Butterfly — Revisited — Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 21, 2009

Several years ago I wrote an article that was widely read at the time. Over the past several days I have felt impressed to revisit that article.

**I will revisit that article below and add to its original content.**

Isn't it great to be alive today! Springtime is in the air. The days are lengthening and the temperature is rising. With spring, comes the rebirth of life itself. New generations of creatures will greet the morning sun. I too, find myself longing to greet the morning sun and be warmed.

As a young man, I enjoyed this time of the year. I remember finding delight as I watched each butterfly — monarch, swallow tail, whites, sulfers and skippers — hover and flutter above the cornstalks in the fields behind our home.

**In the process of watching the butterflies I noticed how effortlessly their wings allowed them to move from one flower to another flower.**

**During elementary school I remember learning about the stages in the butterflies' development. First the egg is laid, that later becomes a larva, which then develops into a caterpillar. As a pupa, the caterpillar attaches itself to a leaf and proceeds to spin a cocoon around it's body.**

**From within that cocoon the caterpillar develops into a form that becomes the butterfly. But that was not the end of the story.**

Years later — after I began my recovery process — the final stage in the butterflies development took on a whole new meaning. What was once seen as a biology lesson, became a life changing awareness. The natural had become supernatural as my eyes were opened to a life changing metaphor.

**Once fully formed in the cocoon, the butterfly is faced with a struggle and a challenge — To move beyond the confines of the cocoon.**

{To the observer, the butterfly's struggle to break free from the confines of the cocoon may seem unfair. Consequently, the observer may find themselves saying, "Why must the butterfly struggle so? Why not have an easier or softer way for the butterfly to escape the cocoon? The butterfly's predicament just does not seem fair."}

"What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal." Zig Ziglar

## Freedom, Courage and the Flight of the Butterfly — Revisited — Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 21, 2009

To break free from the cocoon the butterfly needs to undergo a struggle. To fly the butterfly has to free itself from the confines of the cocoon. To free itself from the cocoon the butterfly has to expand its wings. To find freedom the butterfly needs to expand it's wings with enough force to break through the walls of the cocoon.

**To be able to fly, the butterfly has to undergo a process of struggle — to both break free from the confines of the cocoon and to strengthen it' wings.**

And so the lesson was learned. Apart from struggle the butterfly would be constrained by the cocoon. Apart from struggle the butterfly would be unable to fly. Apart from the struggle, the butterfly would be unable to meet the possibilities of the day. Apart from the struggle, the butterfly would never experience freedom.

Apart from the struggle of breaking free from the cocoon the butterfly never be able to fly. Apart from the struggle the butterfly would not have the strength or fortitude to move beyond the cocoon. Apart from the butterfly's struggle possibilities would not exist for the butterfly.

**And so the flight of the butterfly provides wonderful insight. Life presents challenges that often come disguised as change in the form of struggle. Change provides the motivation to strengthen the wings of our flight to our destiny.**

Change through struggle prepares you and I to move beyond the constrains of our perceived limitations — in ways that work for us. Change through struggle prepare you and I for opportunities that would otherwise not be available to us. Change through struggle opens our eyes to the possibilities that exist.

**Change through struggle prepares you and I for something far greater than we could have otherwise imagine.**

So rejoice when you encounter change through struggle. Your destiny is being formed within you. You are not walking in darkness. The eyes of your understanding are being opened. You are beholding what is being formed in you. You are realizing that the process is meant for your good and not for your harm — and you are encouraged.

**You are experiencing life in ways that you never dreamed to be possible. You are realizing that you are a beneficiary hope.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Freedom, Courage and the Flight of the Butterfly — Revisited — Part 3

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 21, 2009

In the process you are gaining new finding strength to mount up as with wings like an eagle. You are being prepared to walk in your destiny. Be strong and of good courage my friend, for what is being formed in you is majestic and divine. What is being formed in you is beyond your wildest imagination. Be encouraged my friend.

You are being changed from one glory to another and your light is shining brightly. Although you may feel as though you are in the valley of the shadow of death, you shall not be harmed. Your experience and struggle is preparing you to soar beyond your understanding. Your lessons are teaching you hope.

**So I would say to you, “Trust the process, a living and loving God and yourself...for you will get what you need my friend”.**

Rest assured in that reality. And if you have a hard time believing that you will make it through, believe because I believe. My experience has proven that reality. You will not be left behind. You will arrive on time.

**Trust the process — for what is being formed in you. Trust the God of your understanding — because you do not have to know the big picture. Trust yourself — because you are learning the lessons to strengthen and empower your process. Trust that you will get what you need.**

Trust that you will learn how to use what you have to give — to those individuals who want what you have to give — in ways that work for you. Trust that you are being led in the direction of your destiny.

**Consequently, when you encounter struggle my friend be of good courage. Your wings are being strengthened.**

## Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery Predictions — What May be Limiting Your Recovery Process? Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 18, 2014

In this article I will share **3 contributing factors** that I believe influence recovery predictions for individuals who sustain and are living with traumatic brain injuries. In my experience, these 3 contributing factors, in effect; kept me focused on what I could not change. These 3 contributing factors, in effect; kept me fighting against myself, instead teaching me how to champion the gains that I was and am making as an individual who is living with the impact of a traumatic brain injury.

As your read, watch / listen to this article, may you be encouraged to change your focus from what you can not change to what you can accomplish with in your set of circumstances. As you read, watch / listen to this article, may you be encouraged to stop fighting against yourself and start championing the gains that you make my friend. As you read, watch / listen to this article, may you grasp hope and move forward in your recovery process as an individual who is living with the impact of a traumatic brain injury. As you read, watch / listen to this article, may you be encouraged to run your own race.

### My Observations of the 3 Contributing Factors

In my experience, I believe that no 2 traumatic brain injuries are the same, as no 2 individuals are the same. To give predictions concerning the recovery process of each individual is to place limits on each individual's recovery process. I recently wrote 2 articles in which I spoke to 2 contributing factors that I believe, in effect; undermine and limit the recovery process' of traumatic brain injury survivors. These 2 contributing factors — **“struggling to accept myself when other people can't or won't”** and **“its all up in your head”**– imply and assign blame to traumatic brain injury survivors. Blame for some thing that they are powerless over being able to change.

Let me explain. Both messages communicate to brain injury survivors that there is some thing wrong with us, that it is our fault and that is the reason why people do not accept us. The implications of these messages can lead brain injury survivors to believe that “if” they do not recover in specified ways that there is something inherently wrong with them. The implications of these messages also serve to set brain injury survivors up to fail. What I mean by setting up brain injury survivors to fail is that the brain injury survivor can be led to believe that if they do not meet specific “criteria” that demonstrate recovery gains, then they are not “recovering”. Brain injury survivors may subsequently become frustrated and disheartened in their recovery process because of these messages. For many years, I remained frustrated and disheartened.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery Predictions — What May be Limiting Your Recovery Process? Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 18, 2014

**For many years I found myself frustrated and disheartened because I bought into the 2 message that set me up to believe there was some thing wrong with me, that it was my fault and that I was the reason why people did not accept me. These messages undermined my capacity to recover, because I didn't know any better.**

In my recovery process, I discovered a **3rd contributing factor** that can limit and undermine the recovery process of traumatic brain injury survivors. Let me explain. During this past weekend, I spent some time with a friend. During our time together I asked him to show me how to back up a browser profile. He showed me and then wanted me to duplicate what he showed me. As I attempted to recreate what he showed me, he became frustrated with me. I then proceeded to sit down and write down each step of the process of backing up a browser profile, that he explained; through a list of 9 steps. I share the interaction with my friend to illustrate the **3rd contributing factor**. The way that people may be trying to teach you as a traumatic brain injury survivor may not be the way in which you learn, which may be leaving you frustrated and disheartened.

**In a later conversation, during our visit; my friend said that he does not know how to teach me. His statement reinforced the significance of the 3rd contributing factor.**

### **Solution**

What the experience, with my friend over the weekend; reinforced was that the recovery process of traumatic brain injury survivors may be limited, not because of our inability to learn, but because of the way in which people have been trying to teach us. With this consideration, I would encourage you to challenge the prediction of your recovery, as a traumatic brain injury survivor. **Maybe** you have not been making the recovery gains that you would like as a traumatic brain injury survivor because of the ways that people have expected you to learn. Some thing else that you may like to consider is that **maybe** your learning style has changed after you sustained your traumatic brain injury. Consequently, the recovery predictions that have been given to you may have nothing to do with you, but with the way you now learn.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery Predictions — What May be Limiting Your Recovery Process? Part 3

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 18, 2014

With the **3rd consideration** you may want to have your learning style tested to determine how you best learn. In September of 2007 I wrote an article to share some information that has benefited me: **Traumatic Brain Injury and Activities of Daily Living**. Here is a link to the article [Traumatic Brain Injury and Activities of Daily Living](#) and a link to the video presentation of the article [Traumatic Brain Injury and Activities of Daily Living Video Presentation](#). I would encourage you to read, watch or listen to the article and then ask your counselor to test your current learning style (s). By understanding and incorporating your true learning style, you may find that recovery process will take on new life. By doing so, you may find yourself surpassing the predictions that were made; concerning your recovery process.

### Article and Video Presentation Links

Below are links to the **2 articles** that I spoke to at the beginning of this article, along with links to the video presentations of these article: [Living with an Invisible Disability — Accepting Ourselves when Other People Can't](#) and [Living with a Brain Injury — “it's all up in your head” — Lest I be lulled back into Denial](#), as well as the **video presentations** of these 2 articles: [Living with an Invisible Disability — Accepting Ourselves when Other People Can't Video Presentation](#) and [Living with a Brain Injury — “it's all up in your head” — Lest I be lulled back into Denial Video Presentation](#)

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## The Measure of a Champion

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on May 16, 2007

I have been thinking about what makes a champion — a champion — and then who certifies the individual as a champion. Society as a whole seems to promote several notions that, by nature disqualify most of us from believing we are champions. Some of these notions include the following scenarios. Being a star athlete or a professional athlete who makes millions of dollars. Being an Olympian who has achieved a bronze, silver or gold medal in the Olympic Games. Being a race car driver who wins a certain amount of races or someone who has won the Nobel Peace Prize. I am sure you could think of other instances where society deems a person worthy of being a champion. Each of the scenarios stress achievement and recognition.

From an early age, many of us get duped into believing that being a champion is the goal to strive for in life. Consequently, we set off on personal crusade to win the prize and become a champion. I spent many years of my life attempting to qualify to be some ones champion. I was convinced that if I could just win the prize (education, athletic superiority and a high paying job) then I could, too be a champion. Through my process, I learned a valuable lesson. If I am waiting for some one to certify that my efforts are in league with other champions, I may find myself chasing after the wind. Subsequently, I may find myself frustrated and despondent.

As a person with a disability, I need to remind myself that I do indeed have a disability. I need to remember lest I fall into someone's denial system (read my post, [Traumatic Brain Injury and Denial —My Perspective as a TBI Survivor](#)). Although I am not my disability, I do have specific deficits and limitations. Although I have limitations and deficits, I am not those limitations or deficits. You may have a disability, but you are not your disability. You may have limitations, but you are not those limitations. You are a champion because you pursue excellence on a daily basis. You are a champion because you do not give up on yourself. You are a champion because you get up more times than you fall down. You are a champion because you chose to live as an empowered being. You are a champion because you learn from all of your experiences. You are a champion because you refuse to believe that you are a victim of your circumstances. You are a champion because you are doing your best.

We are champions because we live life on life's terms. We are champions because we trust the process. We are champions because we know that we are not alone. We are champions because we celebrate small successes. We are champions when we take advantage of the opportunities that become available to us each day. We are champions when we follow our passions. We are champions when we refuse to be ignorant or arrogant. We are champions when we are accountable to other people and for ourselves. We are champions when we look for solutions. We are champions when we think outside the box. We are champions when we are honest with ourselves. We are champions when we trust the God of our understanding.

**We are champions because we are... You are a champion, because you are... I am a champion, because I am... not because I have been approved by...**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Taking Care of First Things First

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 10, 2009

Over the past several days I have been thinking about the practical nature of the principle of “First things First”. In conjunction with that principle I have been thinking about the principle of **H.A.L.T.** — Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired.

Night before last I did not get enough rest. When I awoke I thought I slept well, however as the day evolved I realized that my outlook turned negative. Stinking thinking slowly crept into my perspective. Although I attempted to change my perspective I lost my focus. My attitude took a nose dive.

**Although I attempted to regain my focus by reading positive and uplifting material I felt stuck.**

When I realized that my thinking had turned negative I decided to apply both principles. Through applying the principle of “First things First” and “H.A.L.T.” I realized that I needed to stop what I was doing and take a nap. Upon waking from my nap I found that my perspective had changed. My outlook rejuvenated.

**After waking from my nap, I realized that my negativity and stinking thinking had dissipated. Because I had taken the time to rest I found that I regained my focus.**

Today, in my focus to work on my computer I put off getting something to eat. When I found that my perspective was turning bleak, I decided to take care of first things first. I decided to get something healthy to eat. I fixed myself a protein shake with banana’s, blueberries, strawberries and natural peanut butter in soy milk.

**By taking the time get something healthy to eat I found that my perspective changed for the better and I regained my focus.**

### Today’s Thought

My encouragement to you my friend would be to consider the principles of “First things First” and “H.A.L.T.”. When you find yourself hungry, angry, lonely, tired or sick please take care your needs.

As my perspective and focus changed — through taking care of my need to rest and be nourished — I believe your perspective and outlook will change for the better by taking care of first things first.

## **Living with a brain injury — Not letting your Past spoil your Present Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 27, 2013

In April of 2007 I wrote an article to share some thing that I learned through my process: If you do not make peace with your past, it will spoil your present. In today's article I would like to share some of what I have learned through my process that has helped me to be able to make peace with my past.

### **If you do not make peace with your past, your past will spoil your present**

Throughout my life's experience, I have come to realize that many of my reactions to people, places and situations have been impacted by previous experience. These reactions may be connected to and as a result of specific smells, sounds or situations that were associated with some event or person from my past. Consequently, I may find myself reacting to present day events, people or circumstances that are connected to past events, people or circumstances.

These imprinted memories can come flooding forward, sometimes without warning. Such memories can hinder my ability to grow and excel in my present because they keep me tied to unresolved pain in my past. In my experience, I have come to realize that these reactions and triggers that remind me of what I have not made peace with in my past. Triggers bring about responses and patterns of behavior — sometimes consciously, but more often unconsciously.

Through my process, I discovered that my triggers had a common thread that linked me to the pain of my unfinished business. Through my process, I discovered that the common thread that linked me to the pain of unfinished business were my resentments. Resentments seeded in what had been done to me. Resentments seeded in the unrealistic expectations that I had for other people and myself. Resentments that; regardless of their justification, were spoiling my present.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Living with a brain injury — Not letting your Past spoil your Present Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 27, 2013

What I have found is that resentment undermines my ability to make healthy and empowering choices. Instead of looking for solutions, resentments unconsciously keep me stuck in patterns of reacting to the pain of my past. Resentments amplify and exacerbate my reactions to present day triggers. Resentments can come out sideways — in the form of over reacting to present day people, places and things that have little or nothing to do with those unresolved resentments.

What I have found is that when I find myself reacting to present triggers; because of pain from my past – I am attempting to force a solutions to avoid having to deal with the pain from my past. What I have found is that in my attempt to avoid the pain, I perpetuate the pain. I have also seen how resentments can negatively impact and alter the course of peoples lives. One only needs to turn on the local news to see how resentments have changed the course of many lives.

With this awareness, I am motivated to make peace with my past.

**“Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.” Confucius**

### **Today’s Thought**

With this awareness, I realized that it was in my best interest to be rigorously honest with myself.

Practically speaking, this means that I needed to make a list of the people that I have held resentments towards over the years. Work, school, institutions and churches were places from my past that I needed to examine. I also needed to place myself on this list. I was told that this examination was not done to blame anyone, or to berate myself, but to look for patterns. Through examining patterns, I was able to understand why I reacted to events in my life. By examining these patterns, I was able to find freedom from the effects of those resentments.

### **By examining patterns I was able to make peace with my past**

Until I examine these patterns, I will continue to find myself reliving pain from my past expectations through current events. Triggers will remain set until I do the work to remove them from my conscious and unconscious mind. If triggers exist, I need to address the “why”. With this awareness, I need to remember that I am ultimately responsible for how I choose to react or respond to people, places and things in my present. By being accountable to myself, I am empowered in my present. By being accountable to myself, my past will not spoil my present.

For a method to address triggers and resentments, please see my article, [Second Chance to Live — Action Steps Revisited — A Synopsis Part 2](#)

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## As a Matter of Faith

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 2, 2015

I have been thinking about some thing that I would like to share with you. I have been thinking about faith. I have heard a definition of faith, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Hebrews 11 verse 1. What I do with my faith is up to me. In my experience, I have found that I don’t have the big picture.

I have been thinking about another application of faith, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8 verse 28. Thinking about this thought, I realize that I have several choices. I can either believe that ALL things are being worked together for my good or ALL things are not being worked together for my good, regardless of how they may look to me now.

Also, what I think needs to occur, for me to realize what I am hoping for; may not be ready to take place. The timing may be wrong, or some thing else may first need to take place for me to “grasp” the things that I hope for in my life. Through accepting these premises, that I do not have the big picture and that I do not know when things need to fall in place; I am able to step back and ask myself several questions.

**By asking myself these questions, I renew my faith. By asking these questions, I renew my hope.**

1. What is the lesson?
2. How can I benefit from what is occurring?
3. How can I use what I am learning, from what is occurring; to be of service to others?

**By asking these questions, I grow in faith. By asking these questions, I grow in hope. By asking these questions, I realize that more will be revealed to me in time.**

## **Stay Committed to Your Course — Run Your Own Race Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 22, 2013

During my morning meditation, I thought about an article that I wrote in June of 2010. In my life I have found the subject matter in this fable to be true for me. The fable encourages me to not compare myself with other people or to be distracted by them – as I run my race.

Here is the article:

### **Living with a brain injury and the Fable of the Tortoise and the Hare**

Posted by Second Chance to Live on June 11, 2010

Over the past several days I have been writing a series Living with a brain injury and Having Options. Last night I began thinking about the story of the Tortoise and the Hare. Although I have not finished the series, I feel led to speak to the fable of The Tortoise and the Hare.

In the fable, the tortoise challenges the hare to a race. The story goes on to share how the hare scoffs at the tortoise's challenge. The hare, because his "superior speed" thought he would surely beat the tortoise. In the hare's arrogance — by what he said and did — he minimized, marginalized and discounted the possibility that the tortoise could run and even win the race.

As the fable comes to a close, we find that the tortoise is actually waiting for the hare at the finish line. The line written at the base of the fable denotes the meaning of the story. Slow and steady wins the race. Although the hare was much quicker than the tortoise, because the tortoise stayed committed to running his race, the tortoise went on to finish and even win the race.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## Stay Committed to Your Course — Run Your Own Race Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 22, 2013

### Today's Thought

In life, you may feel like the tortoise in the fable. Like the tortoise, you may have people in your life who behave like the hare. You — like the tortoise — may find there are hares, who by what they say and do discount you and your ability to participate in any race. You — like the tortoise — may find that there are hare (s) in your life, who by what they say and do dismiss your ability to run in, much less win your race.

**Like the tortoise, you may have hares in your life — who by what they say and do — seek to discourage you from running in your race.**

To that I would say. No worries. Be like the tortoise and determine to run your race. Be like the tortoise and be who you are my friend. Be like the tortoise and go about your business. Stay committed to your mission and vision. And as the tortoise found, you will finish and win your race — because you did not pay attention to what the hare (s) said or did — as you ran your race. And as you run your race, remember — Slow and steady wins the race.

“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 a extemporaneous half-possession...Do that which is assigned to you and you can not hope too much or dare too much.”  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Living with a Disability and Accomplishing Greatness

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 19, 2010

I have been doing some research on celebrities living with brain injuries and other kinds of “disabilities. During the course of my research I read about the lives of other famous people who – while living with various disabilities – achieved great success in their chosen field and passion.

**“People of mediocre ability sometimes achieve outstanding success, because they don’t know when to quit. Most men (and women) succeed because they are determined to.” George Allen (and women) my addition.**

Each of these individuals – who are considered famous – all had various hurdles to overcome to reach the heights that made them famous. Each individual achieved what made them famous — in their chosen field – because they made the decision to get started. These individuals did not allow their disability to keep them from using their gifts, talents and abilities in ways that worked for them.

**“The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret to getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.” Mark Twain**

Each of these individuals did not allow their disabilities to define who they were or are as individuals. As I reflected upon what each of these individuals had achieved with their lives – while living with their disability – I found myself empowered by their example. As I read, I was reminded that I too could accomplish great things with my life – while living with my disability – by getting started.

**“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” Helen Keller**

In life, we may be living with a disability, but our disability does not have to limit our ability in life. Instead, we can be inspired by the lives of people who have come before us, who have achieved great things while living with a disability. We can accomplish greatness – at our own pace. We can give of who we are by using our gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for us.

**“If you go to work on your goals, your goals will work on you. If you go to work on your plan, your plan will go to work on you. Whatever good things we build end up building us.” Jim Rohn**

**“I am a slow walker, but I never walk back wards.” “I will prepare and some day my chance will come.” Abraham Lincoln**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Evaluating Life and Thriving

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 7, 2013

In life I have found that I see things as they are interpreted by my experience. Consequently, I am challenged to examine my interpretation of my experiences. Below are several quotes that encourage me to consider my interpretation (s) of my experience (s). By doing so I am empowered by my experiences.

**“We don’t see things as they are, we see things as we are.” Anais Nin**

What this quote helps me to consider is that things may not be as they are, but how I perceive them to be, but how I interpret these things. Consequently, I can re-evaluate what is happening in my life.

**“If you do not like some thing, change it. If you can not change it, change the way you think about it.” Mary Engelbreit**

With my understanding, I can change the way in which I think about those things. By doing so I can consider the possibilities that exist in my choice to look at things in a different way.

**“It does not matter where you’ve been, it only matters where you’re going.” Brian Tracey**

In life, I have found that it is not as important as what happened to me, as what what I do with what happened to me. With my realization, I can seek to be empowered by what happens (end) to me.

**“It’s never too late to be who you might have been.” George Eliot**

I am thankful that I no longer need to see myself as a victim of my circumstances. I am thankful that I can instead view my circumstances as a way to build me up, not to keep me down.

**“Imperfect action is better than perfect inaction.” Henry Truman**

My experience has taught me to change the way that I see my efforts. By doing so, I have been able to stop fighting against myself. By doing so, I have been able to see that there is no such thing as failure.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Do Not Give Up on Your Dreams or Your Destinies — Quotes that Inspire**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 19, 2013

Today I would like to share a list of quotes that have encouraged and inspired me to pursue and not give up on my dreams or my destiny. As you read the below quotes, may you also be encouraged and inspired to pursue and not give up on your dreams or your destiny. Please let me know which quote or quotes inspire you my friend.

**“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**

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

**“Don’t judge your day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.” Robert Louis Stevenson**

**“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” Theodore Roosevelt**

**“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**

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

**“I will prepare and some day my chance will come.” Abraham Lincoln**

**“What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.” Zig Ziglar**

**“Insist on yourself, never imitate. Your own gift you can present 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 your can not hope to much or dare too much.” Ralph Waldo Emerson**

**“Decision is the spark that ignites action. Until a decision is made, nothing happens.” Wilfred A. Peterson**

**Our circumstances are not meant to keep us down, but they are meant to build us up.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

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

**“In my experience I have found that adversity is what has made me successful, because I refused to give up because of adversity.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Why Dark Clouds appear in Life**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 6, 2008

Circumstances may not always look as we would want them to in our lives. Consequently we may find ourselves discouraged by the course of events that seem to have spun our lives out of our control.

**We may look up to find that storms are brewing on the horizon and watch as dark clouds drift into our lives.**

At those times we may find ourselves overwhelmed and intimidated because of what we can not understand or value. We may also find ourselves struggling to make sense of our lives and our circumstances. In our discouragement we may want to retreat and isolate because of the unknown. Consequently, in our desperation we may want to give up on ourselves and our journeys.

**“I have found that dark clouds only appear to remind me that silver linings exist.” Craig J. Phillips**

My friend I want to share something you that I have learned through my experience. Dark clouds and gloomy skies were never meant to dictate the quality of our lives. My experiences has taught me that dark clouds only appear to remind me that silver linings exist. Consequently, I have found that my willingness to look for the silver linings among the dark clouds — when I don't understand the “whys” in my life — invariably determines how I experience my life.

### **Today's Thought**

I determine to look for the silver linings in my present circumstances, regardless of how my circumstances may look or how I may feel. Consequently, I will trust that I am being taught what I need to know in order to lead me in the direction of my destiny. Therefore, I will not be discouraged by any dark clouds or gloomy skies, because I know that silver linings exist.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## The Power to Change a Life – Perseverance Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 22, 2010

Recently, I have been thinking about the topic of perseverance. Let me share those thoughts with you. Perseverance is a decision that I make to stay committed to my vision and mission – the task at hand – regardless of what comes against me. Perseverance is not being stubborn to prove a point or to stand my ground. Perseverance consequently teaches me to keep the focus on myself, as I go about my business.

**“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” Theodore Roosevelt**

Perseverance does not mean that I have to do anything perfectly. Perseverance reminds me that with all learning, there is a learning curve — and my learning curve is mine. Perseverance reminds me that success lies in what I learn on the way to any destination. Perseverance defines success as the willingness to get back up and keep moving – regardless of how many times I may stumble. Perseverance expands my capacity for creativity – when I recognize what I have been doing is no longer working for me.

**“I have not failed 700 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 700 ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work.” Thomas Edison**

Perseverance empowers my ability to look for alternative solutions. Perseverance reflects my being, not my doing. Perseverance helps me to put off the old to take on the new. Perseverance encourages me to move beyond choices that are not good for me. Perseverance empowers my ability to see my circumstances in a different light. Perseverance grants me the determination to not give up on myself, when giving up would be much easier. Perseverance reminds me to celebrate my small gains.

**“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles, which he has overcome while trying to succeed.” Booker T. Washington**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **The Power to Change a Life – Perseverance Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 22, 2010

Perseverance does not judge my efforts, my worth or my value. Perseverance empowers my ability to see my obstacle (s) as an opportunity (ies) to succeed through the lessons that I learn. Perseverance encourages me to move forward at my own pace. Perseverance allows me to stay in moment, as I work toward my goals. Perseverance reminds me that I am a work in process. Perseverance gives me the ability to stop fighting against myself. Perseverance encourages me to pursue excellence, instead of perfection.

**“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.” Robert Louis Stevenson**

Perseverance empowers our ability to relish in small gains. Perseverance allows you and I to stay in the moment, as we work toward our goals. Perseverance motivates you and I to pursue excellence, instead of perfection. Perseverance gives us permission to let go of the big picture through staying in the moment. Perseverance teaches you and I to trust the process – as more will be revealed to us. Perseverance encourages you and I to keep the focus on ourselves. Perseverance empowers your and my ability to change directions.

**“You cannot change your destination overnight, but you can change your direction overnight.” Jim Rohn**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Creating a Destiny with Puzzle Pieces and Threads Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on February 16, 2014

In my keynote presentations and the workshops that I lead I speak to the principle, the visual of a puzzle. Living life can be likened to a puzzle. The puzzle is made up of individual pieces, that by themselves may make little sense, but collectively they create a beautiful story. Each individual puzzle piece created by a different set of circumstances, lessons, opportunities and possibilities.

Living life can be likened to the creation of a tapestry. One side only showing jumbled threads, while on the other side something of great worth and value is being designed. Each thread woven together intricately. Each thread given to empower. Each thread birthing hope. Each thread providing grace. Each thread preparing a destiny. Each thread providing a legacy. Even the threads containing apparent discouragement, disappointment and disillusionment; even the threads that contain confusion and make little or no sense.

Below are several quotes that help me to see the value of each puzzle piece and every thread in place.

The first quote help me to realize that I do not have to do many things to be effective. Instead, I can be effective and efficient on my journey by developing and becoming proficient in one skill at a time.

**“I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who had practiced one kick 10,000 times.” Bruce Lee**

The second quote reminds me that life is made up of little things. By remembering this reality I can celebrate small successes without trying to prove anything to anyone. I am on my own journey.

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

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## Creating a Destiny with Puzzle Pieces and Threads Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on February 16, 2014

The next quote encourage me to not compare myself to anyone. Instead, I can learn how to use what I have been given – my gifts, talents and abilities — in ways that will work for me with out judging my efforts.

**“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” Helen Keller**

The next quote empowers me to pursue my passion, despite the expectation (s) that other people may have for me and my life. By letting go, I am able to honor the gift of my life and the One who gave me my passion.

**“My mother said to me, ‘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**

The next quote reminds me that I do not have to wait for specific outcomes to be able to enjoy my journey. Instead, I can find satisfaction in doing the footwork while trusting the process and the outcomes to a loving God.

**“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.” Robert Louis Stevenson**

And the last quote motivates me to keep moving, because I know that more will be revealed in time. The pieces of the puzzle will come together in the right order at the right time. Each thread will be weaved by design.

**“The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. Through committing myself to the process, before long I will be able to look back and see how far I have come, because I did not give up.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Accomplishing Goals and Baking Cakes Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on February 22, 2011

In my last several articles I have shared with you that we can achieve huge milestones with our lives, despite societal stigma and our apparent limitations. In today's article, I want to share some thing with you that I have learned through my process. The visual analogy has helped me with the experience of achieving milestones in my life.

Approximately 10 years ago, when I started training at a martial arts school I had a conversation with my Sensei – instructor. What he shared with me during that 5 minute conversation has stuck with me over the years. He said, “Becoming a black belt is like baking a cake.” He said, “What I do is give you the ingredients to bake that cake. Your job is to bake the cake.”

Although my Sensei was referring to the process of becoming a black belt, the principle of baking a cake can be used whenever I set out to accomplish a goal or achieve a milestone in my life.

Consequently, I realize that whenever I want to accomplish a goal or achieve a milestone – in my life – I need to gather the right ingredients (have specific objectives). Once I have the ingredients, I need to devise a plan that will enable my ability to mix the ingredients together. I then need to apply time and energy into the process of mixing the ingredients together before I am able to bake my cake and...

### **accomplish a goal or achieve a milestone in my life.**

I then need to apply time, effort, energy and commitment into the process of mixing those ingredients together — before I can bake (accomplish my goal or achieve my milestone) my cake.

I once heard a man share a riddle. He said, “How do you eat an elephant?” At his question my mind was at first boggled. And then he gave the answer and the riddle became clear. He said, “One bite at a time my friend”. With his answer, I realized that I no longer needed to be overwhelmed by the size of any elephant – no matter how large those elephants may appear to be in life.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Accomplishing Goals and Baking Cakes Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on February 22, 2011

So when I start a new goal, I can follow the advice that is found with in this riddle. I can approach my goal, not as an over-whelming elephant but as some thing that can be approached and accomplished one bite at a time. By applying time, effort and commitment to the process — of accomplishing each goal — I am able to consume each “elephant” simply by making the decision to keep taking bites.

### **Today’s Thought**

In life, you may be staring at your own elephant. You may want to bake a cake, but do not know where to begin. My encouragement to you my friend is that you sit down with a pen and piece of paper. Write down what you would like to accomplish and how you could go about accomplishing that goal.

Determine what ingredients you need to have and how you can best mix those ingredients together. And then start your process — one ingredient and one bite at a time. And in the event that I can help you, please let me know. I will do my best to be there for you, as you bake your cake and eat your elephant.

**“Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goals.” Henry Ford**

## Acceptance — A Portal to Unseen Possibilities

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on April 20, 2012

Several days ago I wrote an article **Finding Serenity in the Midst of Frustration and Fear** in which I spoke about coming to the place of acceptance. In May of 2007 I wrote an article to share some thoughts on acceptance. I would like to share that article with you below.

In my experience, I have found that acceptance provides the portal to unseen possibilities.

### Acceptance

Posted by Second Chance to Live on May 1, 2007

Hello and welcome back to Second Chance to Live. I am happy to see that you decided to stop by to visit with me. On my journey — as I have walked down the various corridors that life has revealed — I have found that life is best understood backwards. With this in mind, acceptance can appear to be a lofty goal. In the approach to living life on life's terms, many circumstances may seem to be less than palatable.

Nevertheless, when I encounter and experience these circumstances — that may grate upon my soul — I am given a choice. How I address and respond to each circumstance will impact the quality of my life. When I view life's circumstances as an opportunity to learn and grow, I will see them for my good.

Conversely, if I view my circumstance in a critical manner, I will see them as an obstacle course set up to frustrate my life. Consequently, I may then feel victimized by those circumstances. In response, I may not consider the possibilities / solutions. Subsequently, if I am not looking for solutions, my attitude can easily default to negative thinking and pessimism.

### Today's thought:

Each day I am given choices. I may not think or believe that I have choices at times, but I do. Acceptance does not mean that I give up. Acceptance means that I surrender to what is and learn to grow where I am planted. My circumstances no longer need to dictate to the quality my of life.

Just for today, I will determine to look for solutions. I will not allow my circumstances to dictate to me. Instead, I will choose to learn from what is. Through my learning, I will be encouraged and empowered. I will therefore be motivated to live life on life's terms because I am a winner.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Live your Dreams in the Now!**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 15, 2008

In my 3 part series, [Traumatic / Acquired Brain Injury — Do Not Give Up on Your Dreams!](#) I shared with you a milestone that I accomplished — on November 8 — on my way to realizing a dream that I have had for myself for many years.

**Over the years — on my journey towards accomplishing that dream — I have encountered times of disappointment, discouragement and even despondency when I experienced set backs.**

Subsequently, over the years in my pursuit of the dream I have had many times when I wanted to give up and abandon the dream. During those times I found myself asking why I was continuing to pursue the dream in the face of my discouragement, disappointment and set backs — when giving up and giving in would have been much easier.

**In the midst of my struggle to understand I learned an extremely valuable lesson. I did not have to wait to experience my dream. I could live my dream in the now.**

Although I may have not yet experienced the fulfillment of that dream — the dream of obtaining my black belt in the mixed martial arts — I have discovered that I can savor the experience of my dream in the now. Rather than waiting — until the end of the 2 day black belt test to be awarded the fruit of my labor — my black belt — I can celebrate the fulfillment of that dream each step along my journey.

**Through my awareness I discovered that I no longer need to have the fulfillment of my dream before I can celebrate my dream.**

You may also have a dream that you have been working towards or one that you would like to accomplish. My encouragement to you, my friend would be that you make every part of your process a part of your dream. By doing so you will be able to celebrate your dream in the midst of your discouragement, disappointment and set backs — if and when that occurs — because they are every much a part of your dream as your dream.

**By doing so you will be able to live your dream in the now.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## When Will I Find My Destiny?

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 23, 2008

I have been thinking about the matter of find one's destiny. Through considering the quest, I arrived at some definite conclusions.

**A person's destiny is in the now. A person's destiny is something that evolves with each experience. Consequently, a person's destiny is not to be found, but experienced.**

During many years of my life I focused on the "when's" of life. When I get the degree, when I get the job or when I get the relationship. Consequently, I spent huge amounts of time and energy in my attempt to secure the when's of life. You see, I bought into the notion that these when's were going to complete me and in the process secure my destiny. In essence, I attached my being to the outcomes and became a human doing. In my obsession to secure my destiny, I lost sight of my journey and my being.

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

Living essentially became a means to an end, rather than something to be cherished and valued. The when's of life consequently became more important than life itself. Living became a chore as I sought to prove my worth and value through the obtaining of these "when's". For many years I was unaware of how my invisible disability — traumatic brain injury — impacted my life. Consequently, I found myself frustrated again and again because I repeatedly fell short of obtaining the when's that I had for my life.

**Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.**

**Robert Louis Stevenson**

Over time I became aware of how the "when's" — that I had for my life — distracted me from the "now's" of my life. The "when's" of life were a distraction because they were like the proverbial golden carrot that remained just out of reach. In my awareness, the obvious became apparent. My "now's" are always present. Because my "nows" are always present I am given the opportunity to learn from my present moment. As I learn from my "nows" I am provided with the knowledge to experience my destiny in the present moment.

Consequently, I no longer need to pursue my destiny. Instead, as I stay in my present, I am able to participate in my destiny because I choose to create in the now. Through creating in the present I am able to take advantage of the circumstances that my now's offer to me, because my circumstances are not meant to keep me down, but they are meant to build me up. Through staying in the now, I am freed from the belief that I need to find my destiny. Therefore, I am free to be in my destiny without needing to prove my worth or value in the when.

"What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal." Zig Ziglar

## Achieving Goals in Small Bites

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 22, 2013

In May of this year I had the opportunity and privilege of presenting during a work shop at a conference, the Embracing Life and Living Well after Traumatic Brain Injury Conference. During the workshop I demonstrated some of the hand eye coordination skills that I have been developing and honing as a martial artist – on both my dominant and non-dominant sides of my body. Skills in western boxing, muay Thai, wing chun, jeet kune do, modern arnis and kali drills. The reason why I demonstrated these skills was to illustrate a point and share a principle.

Recently I received a tally of the evaluations and the comments that were made by the individuals who attended my work shop at the conference. Among the comments that I received concerning my inclusion and demonstration of my western boxing, muay Thai, wing chun, jeet kune do, modern arnis and kali skills were: “I loved the martial arts stuff & quotes” and “The martial arts elements were very effectively illustrated in the use of life and the goals. An explanation of ‘correlation’ extremely valuable to the points touched upon.”

Shortly after beginning my training at the martial school my Sensei shared with me his philosophy. He shared with me that his job – as my instructor – is to give me ingredients through my training. He told me that I will grow and develop as a martial artist as I learn how to combine those ingredients together. The process has been slow at times, but the journey has been very worth while. By staying committed to the process of learning and combining various skills, I have been able to accomplish what I never dreamed possible.

**One man presented a riddle to another man, “How do you eat an elephant?” The other man replied, “One bite at a time.”**

In life you may want to accomplish some thing that may seem too big to you. May seem to daunting to you. I have had those thoughts too, but then I remember the above answer to the riddle, “One bite at a time”. Through staying committed to the process, working on and learning how to combine each ingredient, the elephant is consumed and the goal reached.

So when you face your elephant (s) remember the answer to the riddle, “One bite at a time”. By staying committed to the process, working on each skill and learning how to combine each ingredient, the elephant will be consumed and the goal will be reached. In the process, you will be able to accomplish what you never dreamed possible.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Not Judging my Insides with Other People's Outsides

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 31, 2014

Last week I shared that I had been struggling and frustrated. I also found myself angry as a result. I knew that the problem existed with me and not because of some one else. I was the one who was restless, irritable and discontent. I knew that I needed to examine the root. I wrote in a journal and spoke with a mentor of mine. Nevertheless, I still had a difficult time putting my finger on what what was at the root of my funk.

Yesterday in my morning meditation I began to receive some clarity. I realized that I needed to get back to basics. You see I had fallen into the trap of comparing my lot in life with other peoples lot's in life. By doing so I had allowed the expectations surrounding other people's lots to be the expectations for my lot in life. In my awareness, I found that I had been judging my insides with other people's outsides. In my awareness, I found that I had been experiencing a sense of shame for not being enough on my lot. In my awareness, I found that I had judged my being.

What began to be clear to me was that I needed to stop judging what I was doing with my lot. What began to be clear to me was that I needed to focus on what I am doing with my lot. What became clear to me was that I needed to celebrate what I am building on my lot. What became clear to me was that I needed to stop judging my efforts by the expectations of what I perceived other people were building on their lot. What became clear to me was that I needed to see the value of what I am building on my lot, apart from what I perceived other people were building on their lots.

With this renewed awareness, I refocused my attention to my mission and vision. With this renewed awareness, I began to see the value of what I am creating on my lot. With this awareness, I saw the reality of my strengths. With this renewed awareness, I reminded myself of my being and my great value. With this renewed awareness, I was able to stop judging my insides, with the values that other people place on their lots. With this renewed awareness, I found the freedom to once again build on my lot. With this renewed awareness, I was able to root out of my funk.

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

### Today's thought

What other people build on their lot in life is none of our business. What we are building on our lot in life is none of their business. If I find myself judging my lot to another person's lot, I need to re-focus. I need to re-focus my commitment to my mission and vision. I need to stay committed to building on my lot. By keeping the focus on my lot, I am able to keep from falling into the trap that occurs when I judge my insides with / to other people's outsides.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## Traumatic Brain Injury – Living Beyond our Limitations

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 23, 2011

I have been thinking about some thing that Mother Teresa stated during her life time. What she said encourages me to realize that I do not have to be limited by my limitations.

**“I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world.”  
Mother Teresa**

The quote reminds me that I can actively offer who I am as an individual to a living and loving God. The quote gives me hope, because I realize that I do not rely on my own efforts. Instead, I can open myself up to the care of a loving God to guide and use my life, beyond the scope of my imagination.

I can surrender my hopes and my dreams to a loving God — to live my life beyond my hopes and dreams. I can offer my will and my life – as a child offered his 2 small fishes and 5 loaves of bread to a loving God who fed the 5000– and see Him multiply my perceived lack and limitations to feed the individuals that He brings into my life.

I can be used — as an instrument — in the hands of a loving God to live beyond my understanding. I can offer my life — as a vessel — to live my life beyond my life. I can seek to be — an instrument — of His peace. I can seek to instill faith, hope and love. I can seek to console. I can seek to understand, instead of seeking to be understood. I can seek to pardon and forgive.

I can seek to live my life — as part of the solution — and I will live my life beyond my years.

**“People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.**

**If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.**

**If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.**

**If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.**

**What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.**

**If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.**

**The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.**

**Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.**

**In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.”**

**Mother Teresa**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## A Word of Encouragement – Keep Swinging at the Fences

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 26, 2011

Several months ago I started using a phrase when I am asked how I am doing. I say, “I am swinging at the fences.” Although I may not hit the ball out of the park with every swing, I know that as I keep swinging my chances of hitting the ball out of the park increases.

As you may have heard, Babe Ruth held the home run record for many years. Although he held the home run record, he also held the record for strike outs. He hit 714 home runs, but also struck out a total of 1330 times in his career. Many people focus on the # of home runs he hit during his career, while not realizing how many times he struck out in the process. Babe Ruth had an empowering attitude.

**When confronted by the # of times that he struck out Babe Ruth said, “Every strike brings me closer to the next home run.”**

Thomas Edison – creator of the light bulb and many other inventions – was asked a question by a news reporter about his failures in his attempts with the light bulb. Mr. Edison’s reply to the reporter was, “**I have Not Failed I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work**” – **Thomas Edison** Because he did not focus on the 10,000 ways that didn’t work, he found a way to make the light bulb work.

On the web page “[But They Did Not Give Up](#)” there are many other examples of people who kept swinging at the fences, despite what other people may have thought about their efforts. Babe Ruth’s and Thomas Edison’s attitude and seeing what they accomplished during their lifetimes – in addition to the other individuals listed on “**But They Did Not Give Up**” — encourage me to keep swinging at the fences.

May you also be encouraged to keep swinging at the fences, despite what other people may be saying about your efforts. May you also be encouraged to keep searching for a way to make your “light bulb” work. May you also be encouraged to keep moving in the direction of your dreams, as you endeavor to live the life you have imagined. May you also be encouraged to keep trusting the process, a loving God — with your will and your life — and yourself.

**“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**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Life may not be the party we had hoped for, but...**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on July 10, 2014

**“Life may not be the party we had hoped for, but while we are here we should dance.” Author Unknown**

In February 2008 I wrote the article, Traumatic Brain Injury and Life. The article would later be published in **Synapse — The Official Journal of the Brain Injury Associations of Australia — Winter 2008 Quarterly Edition ISSN 1448-9856.**

**Living with a traumatic / acquired brain injury or some other disability that leaves us feeling powerless can leave us questioning hope. The good news is that we can “dance” and live in hope while we are here.**

I would like to share what I learned through my process, what I shared in my article and what was published in the official journal of the brain injury associations of Australia. As you read my article may you gain a desire to “dance” and a renewed sense of hope as you live your life.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury and Life**

Hi, and welcome back to Second Chance to Live. You are always welcome around my table. I have been thinking about the nature of life. We may not have chosen to be brought into this world. We may not like the way life looks today. We may be a traumatic or an acquired brain injury survivor. But what of that...

**“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” Theodore Roosevelt**

We may think that life is not fair. We may believe that our life no longer matters. We may want to give up on ourselves. We may want to blame our circumstances. We may feel stuck in the ashes of our disappointment. We may find ourselves arguing with God. We may be angry at the world, just because...

**“Success is not final, failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts.” Winston Churchill**

What is important is that we do not give up. More will be revealed in time. The pieces of the puzzle will come together at the right time and in the right order. What may not make sense to us now, will make perfect sense to you and to me my friend. That has been made clear to me.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## How to Not Take On Other People's Insecurities Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 13, 2014

In my experience, I have come to realize that perspective has a lot to do with how I experience my life. If I allow other people's perspectives of me to be my perspective of myself then I am putting myself in a box. Consequently, I need to be aware of how I may be allowing people's perspectives of me to influence my perspective of – how I see — myself.

**Therefore, I do not have to take on other people's insecurities.**

Last night I was around some individuals who responded to me – I believe – out of their insecurities. Initially, I found myself internalizing their insecurities as there being some thing wrong with me. After reflecting upon this awareness, I regained my perspective. As I realized what had transpired, I began positive self-talk. I reminded myself of the realities of my strengths in the midst of the way I experienced their insecurity “transfer”.

What I tell myself – about myself – is more important than what other people may communicate to me – overtly or covertly. Consequently, I need to be aware of what I am telling myself as I interact with people who seek to — consciously or unconsciously — pass their insecurity onto me. In May 2007 I wrote an article to share what I discovered concerning these transfers. To read the article — to gain further insight — please click here: [link](#)

Through being aware of when the “transfer” is occurring, I am able to take steps to take care of myself. I take care of myself by detaching myself from the individual and their “transfer”. By detaching myself from the individual, I am able to examine how the “transfer” is affecting me. By examining how the transfer is affecting me, I am able to detach myself from the “transfer” with out placing a judgment on the individual or the insecurity.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## How to Not Take On Other People's Insecurities Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 13, 2014

By detaching myself from the individual and the “transfer”, I am able to practice the principle of live and let live. By practicing the principle of live and let live, I am able to decide upon the amount of time I am willing to spend with that individual in the future. By taking care of myself in this way, I am able to re-focus my attention on my mission, vision and goals.

Here are several quotes from Thomas Edison that encourage me to keep at my goals regardless of what anyone may say or do:

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

**“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try one more time.”**

**“The reason a lot of people do not recognize opportunity is because it usually goes around wearing overalls looking like work.”**

**“Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were when they gave up.”**

**“Just because some thing doesn’t do what you planned it to do doesn’t me that it’s useless.”**

**“There is far more opportunity than there is ability.”**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Inch by Inch

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 30, 2007

Recently I have been asked how I overcame specific challenges after the car accident, when I was 10 years old. Please read my post, [My Journey thus Far](#)). In many cases I applied persistence to the task at hand. Perseverance coupled with persistence helped me to overcome many obstacles.

Dogged determination has helped me to keep going despite disappointments and set backs throughout my life. For many years, my will to endure was driven by perfectionism and shame. I functioned to survive emotionally and spiritually. Perfectionism and shame motivated me, however they never let me celebrate my success. The bar of achievement seemed to be raised on a regular basis. I was driven to defend my being through achieving.

**As I have shared in another post, I became what Terry Kellogg first posited, a human doing.**

I would recommend — from what I have learned through my struggle – that you make excellence and progress your motto's, as you heal and recover. My healing and recovery process continues to this day, although my brain injury happened nearly 40 years ago. I have to overcome on a daily basis from the affects of interacting with non-disabled individuals.

It is as though I have to defend myself because I have an invisible disability. I am frustrated by the indolence of those individuals who choose not to understand. They seem to want to blame me for their lack of tolerance. I am sure you can identify with me on some level, even if you do not have a disability. For those in the disabled community who are reading this post... I hear you shouting, "Amen Brother!"

**For some, ignorance seems to be a terminal disease. Thank God that I do not have to buy into their unwillingness to understand that I have a disability. I am not the problem.**

In my personal life, I learn best through repeated repetition. Physically speaking, as I train in the martial arts, muscle memory is essential for me to learn and retain new information. As I train, I drill, and then drill again and then drill some more. Repetition is the mother of all that I learn. I believe that tenacity played a big role in my learning how to walk, talk and speak in complete sentences after waking from the 3-week long coma nearly 40 years ago.

**For those who have to re-learn, keep marching. Read my post, [Small Successes](#). Before long you will look back and see how much progress you have made.**

I continue to learn through repetition in all of the dimensions that make me who I am in this life, i.e. my soul life, my physical endeavors and my spiritual life. The difference these days is that I am motivated to succeed by my desire to pursue excellence. I have given myself permission to fall and get back up again. Progress not perfection has become my creed.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Living with a Disability through Commitment

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on October 11, 2007

Life is an amazing process. Many twists and turns along the road. My experience has taught me to stay committed to my process. I have found that the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. Having a goal helps to keep me focused when I encounter steep slopes and switch-backs on my journey. Commitment then becomes the essential component when to turn back would be much easier.

I have heard a definition of insanity that you may have also heard. Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. As a traumatic brain injury survivor as well as the recipient of an invisible disability, I spent too many years of my life attempting to be someone without a brain injury. I bought into the assumption that because I had no physical signs of a disability, I should not have a disability. You may also find yourself motivated to deny that you have an invisible disability.

**When I made the decision to embrace my “reality” I gave myself permission to have my limitations and deficits without becoming a prisoner to those limitations and deficits. Craig J. Phillips**

My commitment to my process grew stronger when I was able to accept that I am a traumatic brain injury survivor. Rather than attempting to be something I am not, I began to embrace my invisible disability. As I have grown in my awareness I have learned to empower my process through my limitations and deficits. I am not my limitations or my deficits. I am not a victim of my circumstances. I am not my traumatic brain injury. I am a traumatic brain injury survivor who is learning how to thrive with in my set of circumstances.

Earlier this evening I was able to spend some time with a friend of mine who is a 7th degree black belt. As we spoke the topic of commitment was discussed. He shared that people succeed in the martial arts because they determine to commit themselves to the goal. The goal is to learn to adapt to any given situation. I believe my commitment and progress in my martial arts training mirrors my commitment to living my life with an invisible disability. As I accept my invisible disability and stay committed to my process I am learning to adapt to any given situation and succeed.

You may have circumstances or situations in your world that may seem overwhelming. You may have an invisible disability that you have a hard time accepting my friend. You may have been misdiagnosed by “professional” staff that have in turn minimized your set of circumstances. You may also have people in your world that have a need to deny your reality. My encouragement to you my friend would be to accept your reality. There is no shame in having and invisible disability. Please read my 2 part series, [Having an Invisible Disability – The Consequence of Denying Reality—Part 1](#).

**Denying your circumstances will not change them. As you embrace your invisible disability, you will find courage to commit yourself to adapting and then thriving because of your acquired deficits and limitations — one day at a time.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury and the Pinball Machine

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on January 22, 2008

I have been meditating on a topic that I believe is at the foundation of being able to live life on life's terms — my anger towards God. In my experience, I had to resolve the matter in my own mind and heart before I could grow beyond my grief. For many years, I felt like one of the balls inside a pinball machine. Life seemed to be a gauntlet of circumstances that bumped me from one set of circumstances to another set of circumstances.

As I ricocheted among the paddles, flippers, kickers and slingshots of life, I became resentful. I became resentful towards the God of my understanding. I bought into the notion that the paddles, flippers, kickers and slingshots of life occurred because I did not measure up to the expectations that God had for me. Over time my resentments turned to anger, however I did not believe that I could be angry at God. The love hate relationship I had with my Dad became clear as I related to God. As with my Dad, I internalized my anger towards God.

My anger towards the God of my understanding hindered my ability to trust. Because I had a love hate relationship with God I did not believe that I could trust Him. Consequently, for many years I believed that I was on my own. Through a series of events a friend shared a life changing truth with me. He told me that God could handle my anger because He was not mad at me. With time I began to believe what my friend shared with me. As a result, I came to believe that I could be honest with Him — without a fear of reprisal.

**I have been able to tell God why I had been angry with Him and He has loved me through the process.**

### Today's Thought

My friend if you are angry with God — for whatever reason — He has ears big enough to listen. God is not mad at you. He is madly in love with you. You are the apple of His eye and He rejoices over you with shouts of joy. His love toward you is immense and He has a future and a hope for you. You can trust in the process, in a loving God and in your ability to learn from the paddles, flippers, kickers and slingshots of life.

Through the process of being honest with God I have learned that circumstances — set in motion by the activity of paddles, flippers, kickers and slingshots — are meant for my good. They are not meant for my harm. They are not punitive. Instead, as I learn from those circumstances, I grow in my experience. My experiences prepare me to take advantage of opportunities that become available and those opportunities point me in the direction of my destiny. Consequently, I know that I have a future and a hope.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## Traumatic Brain Injury and Vines – Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 11, 2007

Over the last week, I received several comments from a visitor that spawned an interest to revisit previous posts from **Second Chance to Live**. The goal is to identify hot spots and provide practical solutions to living life on life's terms. I believe the topics spoken about in this 2 part series can be especially helpful during this time of the year. The holiday season – Thanksgiving until after New Years – invariably creates a unique set of stress. In addition to the hustle and bustle that comes with the season, so comes anticipated and expected family re-unions. The combination of stress and the mingling of family members can produce anxiety and apprehension.

When families re-engage during the holiday season, so do the family dynamics. The family dynamic intensifies as the once familiar family system re-emerges. Previously assigned or assumed roles within the family system re-emerge and become the manner in which family members relate to on another. Found with in these roles often lies a history of unresolved family conflict. Please read my article, [What is Keeping you Stuck?](#) Family interactions subsequently become laced with arguments, as the roles trigger past resentments fueled by unmet expectations. Consequently, the anticipation and expectation that “this” year will be different may be met with a “familiar” unrest. Walking on “eggshells” to avoid conflict becomes the standard operating procedure as family members interact. Nevertheless, unresolved hurt, pain and resentment slowly boil to the surface and the once anticipated happy re-union becomes a gauntlet of restlessness, irritability and discontent. Angry words are shared and the mountain called “Resentment” grows still higher. When all is done and said the family members disengage and another holiday season finds itself cast upon the heap of denial, disillusionment and disappointment.

Another reason for the visitation is fundamental. I will use a metaphor to explain my understanding. A tree bears fruit because of its root, its trunk and its branches. The root draws from the substance that the tree thrives upon in order to bear fruit. By nature, the tree wants to grow and thrive to bear much fruit. Vines have their own agendas. Some vines grow on the trunks of the tree with immense density. These vines are composed of 80% water. The presence of this particular type of vine causes the trunk of the tree to rot. Unbeknownst to any observer, the vine's growth and presence undermines the stability of the tree. Other vines choke the tree by slowly circling the trunk of the tree. Another vine's mission is to grow toward the canopy. In the process of seeking to reach the canopy, the vine weighs down the tree. Subsequently, the sheer weight of the vine can cause the trees branches to break. Broken branches leave the tree susceptible to pathogens and insects.

Unlike a tree, which can not move to avoid the vine, we as humans can make choices. Our choice will radically impact the effectiveness of any vine. For many years I was oblivious to the impact vines had upon my life. When I reached an emotional bottom several years ago, I woke up to the reality of the vines. In my process, I became aware of how different vines had attached themselves to the trunk of my being. Although I had been in my own denial for many years, my eyes began to open and I became aware of how the vines had harmed some of my branches. As my eyes began to open I found myself becoming angry. As my denial was lifted I began the healing process. In my experience, I had to grieve the impact of the vines, as they had attached themselves to my being. Essentially, to be free from the vines of life, I needed to grieve the impact of the vines.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Vines – Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 12, 2007

Through my recovery process, I have found freedom in a progressive manner. No one is to blame. As I have been able to own my sadness, the vines have slowly lost their hold upon my life. Please read my post, [Displaced Sadness](#). Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in her book, **On Death and Dying** talks about the five stages of grief. Grieving is not limited to the death of a loved one. Grieving can be experienced with any loss. I speak about the five stages in my post, [Hello World](#). In my post, [Don't Talk, Don't Trust and Don't Feel](#) I discuss the 3 family rules that are used to maintain the unresolved pain or secret. In my post, [The Three Rules Revisited – Consequences](#) I speak to the nature of these three rules.

Many of my posts speak specifically to traits and characteristics that are developed to survive emotionally and spiritually within a family system that chooses to not talk, not trust and not feel — for whatever reason. In my article, [Whose Shame are you Carrying](#), I speak to the nature of shame and the shame transfer that occurs when people do not know how to or do not want to deal with their unresolved loss and pain. In one modality of understanding, the behavior of a shame transfer is called, passing the “hot potato”. Projection or transference occurs as the individual seeks to make someone other than themselves responsible for their discomfort, irritability, restlessness or discontent.

When I reached an emotional bottom, I became willing to look for answers. Please read my post, [How fast are you running?](#) Through my journey I have learned to own and take responsibility for my feelings needs and wants, however I do not have to be alone in my process. Please read my post, [The Power of Identification](#), The disease of “ism”, whatever the “ism” may be is a disease of isolation. Through being involved with a support group we can come out of hiding and begin to heal little by little. In my experience, I had to stop shaming the child within before I could begin to accept myself.

Through attending various support group meetings I have been able to break free from the **Don't talk, Don't Trust and Don't Feel** rules. My experience has been enhanced through working with my sponsor and by working through the 12 Steps. Over the years my sponsor has been a very valuable resource. In my experience, I began to thaw emotionally and spiritually once I started attending support group meetings and when I began working through the 12 Steps.

Through my process, I have learned that my unrealistic expectations of God, other people and myself set me up to be frustrated with God, other people and myself...especially when they did not do what I expected. I have heard that expectations are premeditated resentments. Because of my experiences, I have learned an extremely valuable lesson. I am responsible to other people, but not for them or their choices. As I keep the focus on myself, I am able to let go of unrealistic expectations. Please read my post, [Small Successes](#).

[My Journey thus Far](#) has taught me that I do not have to be restricted because of the vines. Life is a magical experience that can be relished when we choose to look for the YES in our circumstances. We can learn to thrive because of our circumstances. Our experiences come through our circumstances and those circumstances prepare you and I to take advantage of our opportunities. Our opportunities point us in the direction of our destinies. Please read my post, [Thriving with a Disability](#).

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Goals

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on February 9, 2008

Today I want to share something that will infuse confidence and empower your process. Life can be a daunting experience when we look at the mountains that seem to be in the way of reaching our goals.

As we look at the mountain, we may begin to experience some anxiety that is followed by depression. We may feel overwhelmed by the mountain. We may allow the seeming enormity of the mountain to discourage and dissuade our focus. We may find ourselves stuck in a place of fear. We may say to ourselves, "The mountain is just too big, so what is the point of ever trying to reach the goal?"

Well, I have good news for you. You don't have to move or deal with the mountain all at once. Say you have a goal to clean your whole house or apartment. Breathe! You don't have to clean the whole house in one day. By managing the goal of cleaning your house you can decide to clean one of the rooms today. Once you have cleaned that room, you can celebrate the progress you have made toward the goal of cleaning the entire house. Tomorrow you can clean another room of your house or apartment.

**Through making the achievement of our goals manageable, we can experience a sense of satisfaction for the gains that we made today.**

Remember you don't have to reach your end goal today. You may have some thing very personal that you would like to achieve. My encouragement to you would be to manage the achievement of that goal. Set down with a piece of paper and pencil and write out what you would like to achieve. Through writing the goal down, you will be able to own what you want to accomplish. When you make the goal personal you can relax because you no longer have to live up to anyone's expectation.

**If you advance confidently in the direction of your dreams and endeavor to live the life that you have imagined...you will meet with success unexpected in common hours. Henry David Thoreau**

Be bold, pursue your dreams.

"What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal." Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury and the Learning Curve

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 14, 2008

I have been thinking about the topic of progress. Sometimes the ominous nature of change can overwhelm. The fear of failure can debilitate and discourage us from venturing into the unknown. Although we may want to or realize that we need to do something different the fear of making those changes keeps us frozen in the familiar.

We may believe that we are terminally unique and that our situation is hopeless. We may have been led to believe that we can not do anything right or that we do things “in a half-assed way”. We may believe that the struggle to make empowering choices is just not worth the risk. We may be confined by an all or none belief system. Our black and white thinking may block our willingness to grow beyond that, which has become familiar to us.

My friend, I have good news. You are not terminally unique. You are wonderfully you. You and I are a work in progress. We don't have to apologize for our inherent greatness. Our inherent greatness is waiting to be expressed beyond the shores of our imagination. We no longer need to be stymied by the expectations of the past. Instead we are free to push off from the shore of our apprehension and sail in the direction of our dreams. Our hope hoisted to sail on the sea of possibilities.

We don't have to do “things” perfectly. We no longer have to be held hostage by an “all or none” or “black and white” way of relating to life. We no longer need to be confined by a daunting sense of self-doubt. We can instead choose to live life in a different way. We can take courage in our process. We can celebrate the progress to be experienced because with everything there is a learning curve. We can choose to grow beyond what no longer works for us.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Following our Destiny through Footwork

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on October 7, 2007

I have re-learned a valuable lesson this week. In the process of learning I found a renewed sense of serenity. The lesson encouraged me to re-focus my attention on my footwork and to check my motives. As I heeded what I was being taught, I was able to let go and trust the process, once again.

You see I had allowed myself to become emotionally invested in specific outcomes. When the outcomes did not occur I experienced some sadness and then discouragement. Through owning my discouragement I was able to identify why I was sad. My awareness encouraged me to take some action. I made the decision to let go of any specific outcome.

In essence, my discouragement proved to be a gift because my discomfort motivated me to find a solution. After I realized why I was discouraged I allowed myself to be sad. Through accepting and owning my feelings I embraced my humanity. As I embraced my humanity I was able to let go of the notion that I know what is best for me. Consequently, I was able to let go of the timing and the harvest.

When I accept my finite human limitations I am able to rest. As I rest in the process, I am able to trust that I will get what I need. I do not have to know the big picture. I do not need to force solutions. I do not have to get the cart before the horse. I do not have to figure “it” all out. Instead I can enjoy the journey. I can revel in the footwork while trusting the God of my understanding. I can relish in the lessons that I am learning without judgment and I can trust the process.

You too may have been discouraged because specific outcomes did not come to pass. You may have lost trust in the process, in a loving God and in yourself. You are not alone in your struggle my friend. My encouragement to you, as I encourage myself, trust the process. Do your footwork and then let go of specific outcomes. You and I do not have to figure “it” out. You and I can let go of our need to control the process. You and I can let the pieces of our destinies fall into place at the right time.

And in the event that you can't see the forest for the trees, please slow down my friend. More will be revealed.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury — Following your bliss...regardless

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 12, 2008

In life, events, circumstances and disappointments may redirect our experience. In an instant, like a switch on a railroad, life events can set us in the opposite direction of our hopes and dreams. In the process our hopes, dreams, and aspirations may be dashed. We may have lost the use of our limbs or suffered permanent brain damage. Our damaged brain or body may subsequently limit our abilities. As a result, we may be sad, angry or even bitter with life. But that does not have to be the end of the story.

**Through my process I have learned a valuable lesson. I am not my traumatic brain injury, my deficits or my limitations.**

I have discovered that who I am on the inside matters more than who I am on the outside. My body may be broken and battered by my injuries. I may not be as smart as I used to be before my disability. And I may be discouraged at times, but that does not change my passion. I am not my disability, my limitations or my deficits. My passion resides within the core of my being. My passion provides the mechanism that empowers my gifts, talents and abilities.

Because my passions lie at the core of my being I can learn how to channel my creative energy even thou I may have a disability, deficits or limitations. As I follow, develop and learn to channel my passions, the fruit of my purpose becomes apparent. My passions are channeled through my gifts, talents and abilities. My gifts, talents and abilities echo my passion. My passions subsequently point me in the direction of my destiny and in the process I fulfill God's will for my life one day at a time.

Although I have limitations because I am a traumatic brain injury survivor I am not limited. Although you may have limitations because of your disability, you are not limited. Regardless, of how you or I came to be disabled we do not have to give up on our passions. We can learn how to channel those passions in ways that work for us. We can learn to experience life more abundantly. Our circumstances no longer have to define or dictate who we are in this life. We can learn to use those circumstances to enhance both our lives and the lives of those people in our world.

Be encouraged my friend. Your disability is not meant for your harm. You and I have been given a gift. What we thought was meant for our harm is to be used for our good. As I mentioned earlier, I believe that my traumatic brain injury was a switch on the railroad of my life. Although I could not see how my traumatic brain injury was to be used for my good some 42 years ago, I now know that my traumatic brain injury was preparing me to fulfill my destiny. Through my process I have come to trust the process, because I know that more will be revealed in time.

Be encouraged my friend. Follow your passions. Follow your bliss. Give yourself the time to learn to use your passions in ways that work for you. And please do not give up on yourself or on your process because more will be revealed to you with each new day. You will find your way and you will be empowered.

**Only believe. And if you have a hard time believing, believe because I believe. You will learn to use your passions.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Second Chance to Live and Letting Go of Unrealistic Expectations

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on June 14, 2008

Over the past several weeks I have been speaking to topics that have been crucial to my recovery and in my healing process. Through my process I found that I had to address my denial, anger and resentment to move beyond that which was blocking my relationships: my relationships with the God of my understanding, with other people and with myself.

Through my process I discovered that one of my biggest hindrances — in life — involved my critical nature. I discovered that my need to be perfect was driven by my attempt to avoid criticism, ridicule, rejection and self-loathing. Because I was unable to meet the demands of perfection I internalized ongoing frustration and anger. My frustration perpetuated my need to overcompensate and over achieve in order to maintain my perceived relationship with God, with other people and with myself.

**Before I addressed and confronted my denial, anger and resentments through my grieving process I treated other people with the same contempt that I showed myself. My contempt was manifested through the unrealistic expectations that I placed on God, other people and myself.**

Through my experience and by addressing and confronting my denial, anger and resentments I grew in my awareness. First of all I realized that NONE of the relationships that I sought to sustain were healthy. I discovered that I either took hostages or was made to be a hostage in my relationships. I found that my feelings of inferiority alienated me from the very relationships that I sought to cultivate. I also discovered that I unconsciously projected my shame into my relationships through my unrealistic expectations.

My shame subsequently sought to control my relationships because I believed that I needed to do a dance to maintain those relationships. My denial, anger and resentments — through my shame — led me to believe that my relationships could only be sustained through a specific set of dance steps. Essentially, I believed that I needed to make the person — that I sought to be in a relationship — OK with me, so that we could be OK, so that I could be OK with me.

**Through my process, I discovered that my unrealistic expectations served to perpetuate the dance.**

Through my process I have grown in my awareness. In my awareness I have come to recognize that I no longer need to participate in any dance to be OK with me. Consequently, I have been able to let go of my need to be perfect. I have traded the notion of perfection for the pursuit of excellence. My drive to fulfill unrealistic expectations has faded away as I am learning how to trust the process, a loving God and myself. In the process, I am learning to have a relationship with myself.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **A Very Powerful Principle — Keeping my Acceptance High and my Expectations Low Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 15, 2008

Today, I would like to share a principle that has been of tremendous benefit to me. As I have shared in my 3 part series, **Second Chance to Live — My Presence has been my Absence** I spent 16 days in the hospital recently due to a sinus infection that developed into a pre-orbital cellulitis that became an orbital cellulitis. One of the principles that I sought to practice during the time that I spent in the hospital involved keeping my acceptance high and my expectations low.

Through practicing the principle of keeping my expectations low and my acceptance high, I was able to let go of my need to control that which I was powerless over during my stay in the hospital. Consequently, I was able to accept the myriad of changes and the influx of people coming into my hospital room through out the day and night while maintaining serenity — amidst the constant invasion of my privacy. For an in depth understanding please read my 3 part series, [Second Chance to Live — My Presence has been my Absence](#).

**By keeping my expectation low and my acceptance high I was able to be grateful for what I received rather than being disappointed by what I did not receive.**

By keeping my acceptance high and my expectations low I was able to be grateful for the people who visited and called me while I was in the hospital, instead of developing resentments toward the people who did not call or visit. Through keeping my acceptance high and my expectations low I was able to contact the necessary people — through the use of my phone in my hospital room — while letting go of the outcomes. As a result, I was able to trust the process rather than being on an emotional roller coaster amidst the 2 different times that I was told that I would be operated upon and then having those operations postponed and then ultimately canceled.

**By keeping my acceptance high and my expectations low I was able to stay in the day.**

Through my experience in the hospital, I found that as I kept my expectations low and my acceptance high, I was able to multitask as multiple people came into my room amidst my phone ringing — at the same time — wanting different things of me, with out becoming / with out being irritable, restless and discontent. Consequently, I found that I was able to multitask in ways that I previously did not know I was capable of accomplishing.

**By practicing the principle of keeping my acceptance high and my expectations low I was able to ask for what I needed with out being demanding.**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## **A Very Powerful Principle — Keeping my Acceptance High and my Expectations Low Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 15, 2008

By keeping my expectations low and my acceptance high, I was able to ask for what I needed when I did not get what I needed from the dietary staff. By keeping my expectations low and my acceptance high I was able to say what I needed to say to the dietary management, without being mean when I asked for what I needed. Through keeping my acceptance high I was able to develop a rapport with the dietary management to the end that I received tasty and nutritious meals during the last several days that I was in the hospital.

**By keeping my expectations low and my acceptance low I was able to establish an amicable solution to having my dietary needs met through being assertive while creating a win / win relationship with the dietary management.**

Through keeping my expectations low and my acceptance high, upon my second discharge I received a compliment from the Charge nurse. She told me that I was one of the most pleasant patients they have served. By maintain the principle of keeping my acceptance high and my expectations low I was able to share — with credibility — the message that I share through out **Second Chance to Live** with the Doctors, Nurses, Nursing Assistants and the other staff members that provided me with care during my hospital stay during those 16 days.

**Through keeping my expectations low and my acceptance low I was able to adjust my attitude when I found myself becoming critical of people when things did not occur according to my expectations.**

I know that my experience of being in the hospital during those 16 days is part of the master plan for my life. I know that I do not have to know the big picture. Consequently, I am convinced that I can trust the process, a loving God and myself because I am capable of learning because of my experiences. I know that my circumstances are teaching me the lessons that I will need to know to be able to take advantage of the opportunities that become available to me. I know that the compilation of my circumstances and my opportunities are leading me in the direction of my destiny.

**I know that I can trust the process, a loving God and myself because I am capable of learning through the circumstances that my experiences provide — even when I do not understand why. I know that I can trust the process, a loving God and myself because I know that my circumstances are not meant to keep me down, but they are meant to build me up!**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury and the Elephant Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on October 27, 2007

While training at the martial arts school earlier today, Sensei (Instructor) had the brown and black belts drill round kicks, followed by tornado kicks. We drilled these kicks with a partner and a focus pad. Which each series of kicks I was encouraged by my ability to execute the tornado kick with accuracy and height. A tornado kick is likened to a spinning crescent kick, which requires coordination, agility and timing. I was particularly encouraged by the progress I made because I have not always been able to execute a round kick followed by a tornado kick.

I use the above illustration, not to draw attention to my ability, but to convey a principle. The principle may seem obvious to some and being able to execute a tornado kick may not be a big deal to other people. When I first began training at the martial arts school I had limited coordination which limited my ability to perform any kicks, much less a tornado kick. When I watched more advanced students demonstrate tornado kicks I was amazed by their grace and agility. When I attempted to mimic the ability of the advanced students I looked and felt extremely clumsy. What became apparent was that my leg strength did not support my ability to perform tornado kicks. I had not yet developed the necessary muscle memory to perform tornado kicks.

Rather than becoming discouraged and despondent I made a decision to develop my leg strength and muscle memory. Through my decision I decided to drill and drill again and then drill some more. Because of my limitations and deficits I knew I needed to spend additional time and attention to drilling. In my process as a martial artist I had to spend more time at the Y developing my leg strength to improve and enhance my balance. The combination of drilling my kicks and increasing my leg strength significantly improved my ability to execute tornado kicks. I am not suggesting that my tornado kicks are stellar in appearance or delivery, but I have determined to deal with my elephant. I may never be able to execute a tornado kick flawlessly, but I know that my tornado kicks are looking and feeling better with each new day.

You may have a desire to improve in your physical rehabilitation or in some other area of your recovery process. I have found that the journey of a thousand mile begins with the first step. Unless we decide to take the first step and then keep moving we may never see our desires and dreams come to fruition. I have heard the question asked, "How do you eat an elephant?" The immensity of the elephant can appear to be overwhelming. Rather than being discouraged I can choose to look for a solution. The impossible becomes attainable when I follow the principle in the answer to that question, "One bite at a time."

"What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal." Zig Ziglar

## Traumatic Brain Injury and the Elephant Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on October 27, 2007

When I view my elephant, such as improving a tornado kick as manageable through bites, I find encouragement to keep chewing. You may have seen your elephant as overwhelming and daunting. You may have asked yourself the question, “What is the point?” The elephant is just too big. My encouragement to you my friend is to work with your therapist and do the drills to improve your skill. As you stay committed to your process the immensity of your elephant will be reduced to bones and you will grow stronger with each bite. Before long you will look back in your recovery and rehabilitation process and see how far you have come. We grow because we respect the elephant, but refuse to give up on our process, on a loving God or on ourselves, because we know that our circumstances are not meant to keep us down, but to build us up!

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Working Toward a Goal – Staying Focused Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 12, 2008

**Note:** For the past 7 1/2 years I have been training and growing as a martial artist under a Sensei — instructor — in mixed martial arts. My Sensei's instructor — Sifu — original instructor was Bruce Lee. I have been a brown belt for over 2 years.

Several months ago I wrote an article, [Second Chance to Live — My Presence has been My Absence](#) in which I explained why I had been in the hospital from August 17 – September 1 and unable to answer email and contribute to Second Chance to Live during that time period. My hospitalization had been a result of a sinus infection that developed into an orbital cellulitis.

**When I got out of the hospital I was too weak to work out at the YMCA, much less train at the martial arts school. As I gained strength I decided to visit the martial arts school to see my Sensei and my fellow students.**

On that trip to the martial arts school I found out that there was going to be the once a year progress check for the brown belt students on November 8. The progress check occurs – once a year -- to determine which of the brown belt students are ready to enter a 10 month long black belt preparation period to potentially qualify those students for a two day black belt exam the following October. The two day test would then determine whether the student would be awarded their probationary black belt.

When I found out that the qualifying progress check was going to be on November 8 I was both sad and a frustrated. I was sad because I did not think there would be any way that I could or would be ready physically to meet the demands of the test, being that my body had been depleted by the infection and hospital stay. I was frustrated because I knew how much hard work I had put into my training — in preparation of the possibility of entering the black belt cycle — prior to being admitted to the hospital. I was also disappointed because all my hard work had been done in vain.

After being released from the hospital September 1st I was too weak to work out for the next 4 weeks. I slowly started back training at the YMCA in the first week of October. In the 3rd week of October I thought I was ready to resume my training at the martial arts school.

In the next several weeks I upped the number of days that I trained at the YMCA and the martial arts school. Several days before the November 8 progress check test I approached my Sensei to ask him if he would let me make up the progress check test, being that I had been in the hospital in August with a serious infection for the 16 days. My Sensei told me that there would be no way for me to make up the test and that I would have to wait another year.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## Working Toward a Goal – Staying Focused Part 2

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 12, 2008

His response disappointed me as I thought he would be more empathetic given the circumstances. After leaving the martial arts school on Wednesday evening I struggled with my conundrum — not do the test on November 8 and have to wait for another year or participate in the test and run the possibility of getting sick again. I struggled with the two options that evening and into the next day on November 6. After calling and speaking with my brother and a trusted friend, I made the decision to participate in the exam on Saturday November 8 from 9 am to 5 pm.

**The test lasted from 9 am until a little after 5 pm. Although there were several times during the progress check that I wanted to give up — with the encouragement of my teammates and staff at the martial arts school — I so glad that I did not give up on the process or on myself.**

During the progress check I learned a tremendous amount about myself, mainly that I was able to do more physically, emotionally and spiritually than I thought was possible. I am glad so glad that my Sensei did not cut me any slack when I asked to be able to make up the test. At the end of the test I thanked my Sensei for the opportunity and that he did not cut me any slack. When I mentioned that to my Sensei he told me that I did great.

**What I thought had been in vain — all my rigorous training prior to going into the hospital — prepared me spiritually, physically and emotionally to be able to meet the demands of the test.**

I share the above with you to encourage you to not give up on your dreams. Our journey together is not about comparison, but about identification. Our dreams may be different, but our determination to succeed in the face of disappointment and discouragement can be the same. Our hard work, determination and tenacity is not in vain. What might appear to be a set back, may in reality prove to show you something about yourself that you would not otherwise comprehend. You may also find — as I did — that you have more in you than you thought you did. Be encouraged my friend!

**When you reach for the stars you may not quite get one, but you won't come up with a handful of mud either. Leo Burnett**

I hope my Sensei decides that I am ready to begin the black belt cycle in January to be able to test for my black belt in October 2009, but I know if he does not I have accomplished something I previously did not know was possible at 51 years of age.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Working Toward a Goal – Staying Focused Part 3**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on November 12, 2008

**Per your information I will include below what we had to accomplish the day of the progress check on November 8 from 9 am – 5 pm.**

### **Black Belt Cycle Qualifying Progress Check — November 8, 2008 Saturday**

The test began at Freedom Park at 9 am. This is how the test evolved. We had to first run three laps around the park — lake — 2 miles. The next phase of the test was to do 500 jumping jacks and then run 3 more laps around the park — 2 more miles — followed by another 500 jumping jacks all with in 30 minutes. The next phase involved 4 different stations — to rotate through— 5 minutes at each station. One station was to do 100 push ups in five minutes, the next station was to do wind sprints — 75 feet — over and over again every 30 seconds for 5 minutes, the next station was to do 500 crunches in 5 minutes, the final station involved doing 10 froggie jumps followed by 5 push ups over and over again for 5 minutes. The 1st phase of the project test lasted 1 hr and 40 minutes.

When we completed this part of the test we drove back to the martial arts school. When we got there we got dressed in our gees — martial arts gear — and then the 2nd phase of the progress check began. The 2nd phase lasted for 2 hours. During the 2nd phase we did a tremendous amount of jump roping, demonstrating various types of punches, kicks combinations, Kata's and grappling skills — chokes, arm bars and other skills. We then did focus mit drills — with a team mate — jabs and crosses for 10 minutes each — with a team mate at various speeds and degrees of power in our punches. Following the jab and cross drills on the focus mits we switched to doing alternating hook punches on the focus pads — with a team mate — at various speeds and degrees of power in our punches. We then had to do 250 hard round kicks on a heavy bags. Once we were done with this gauntlet of physical activity Sensei dismissed us for our lunch break which lasted from 1-2:30. After speaking with a marathoner at a local running shoe company on Friday concerning what would be good to have for lunch the day of the test I brought a few protein bars — a MOJO bar and a Cliff Bar Friday afternoon at Wal-mart. I had these 2 bars along with 2 containers of Propel a vitamin drink.

At 2:30 we began the 3rd phase of the project test. The 3rd phase consisted of 80 minutes of grappling — 3 minute rounds — with about 15 or so different students and instructors. Right after grappling ended Sensei had us pad up to begin the next activity — free sparring. Free sparring lasted for 60 minutes — 3 minute rounds — with about 15 different students and instructors. At the end of sparring Sensei gave us our last assignment — to be done with a 3 man team. The assignment consisted of 2 rounds. Each round consisted of each member doing 100 gut busters with the second team member pushing the legs of the first team member to the ground and counting to 100. The 3rd team member held a left leg side kick out above the ground until the person doing gut busters completed their 100 gut busters. Once each person had done their 1st 100 gut busters, we repeated the process with the 3rd member of the team holding their right leg side kick above the ground. The team rotated through once and then repeated the cycle as the one team member held their right leg side kick out until the 1st team member completed their second set of 100 gut busters. When our team completed the 2nd rotation of gut busters our test was over. We ended a little after 5 pm.

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## One Step Closer to My Black Belt in the Mixed Martial Arts

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on December 3, 2008

In this post I want to share a joy with you. Several weeks ago I wrote a 3 part series, [Traumatic / Acquired Brain Injury — Do Not Give Up on Your Dreams](#). In that series I spoke about the dream that I have to earn my black belt in the mixed martial arts. I also explained how I participated in an 8 hour progress check / test with the other brown belts from our martial arts academy. The progress check was set up by our Sensei — instructor — to determine who might be ready to enter the black belt cycle in January.

In the 3rd part of that series — [Traumatic / Acquired Brain Injury — Don't Give Up on Your Dreams! Part 3 of 3](#) — I share in detail what we had to accomplish during the progress check on November 8.

I realized that fulfilling the demands of the progress check would not necessarily guarantee my entry into the upcoming black belt cycle. Completing the 8 hour long progress check would simply qualify me to be considered by Sensei to enter the black belt cycle in January 2009. Per your information, the black belt cycle will last for 10 months — from January 2009 to October 2009 — and then culminate in a 2 day black belt exam in the middle of October 2009. Last evening during class — 3 weeks after the progress check — Sensei met with some of the students who completed the progress check to reveal his decision — who would be entering the black belt cycle.

Towards the end of class Sensei asked to speak with me. After following Sensei into his office he had me sit in a chair on the opposite side of his desk where he sat. After a pause, Sensei revealed that all the instructors that were a part of the progress check — on November 8 — thought that I was ready to enter cycle. Sensei told me that he agreed with the other instructors and revealed that I would be entering cycle in January. As you might imagine I was thrilled to hear of his decision and to know that I would have the opportunity to enter the black belt cycle in January to prepare me for a 2 day black belt exam in October 2009.

Sensei told me that I would be receiving a formal letter in the next several days inviting me to enter the black belt cycle in January 2009 with other selected students. For me, entering black belt cycle has been a goal that I have been working toward for the past 7 1/2 years. Through my training process and on my journey to this juncture in my development — in the martial arts — there have been many times when I considered giving up. I am so glad that I did not give up on the process or on myself. I am so glad that I stayed committed to my journey one drill, one class at a time.

My hope is that I will be able to complete the rigors of the black belt cycle to test for my black belt next October. Your prayers would be appreciated. Thank you. I will keep you posted in the months to come concerning my experience and what I am learning through my process in the black belt cycle.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## When Circumstances Change our Plans Part 1

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 24, 2009

During the past 8 years I have been training towards my black belt in the mixed martial arts. In November I completed and passed an 8 hour long progress check to qualify to enter a 10 month long process called the black belt cycle. After meeting with my Sensei on December 1st, 2008 he told me that I had passed the progress check and that I was invited to enter the black belt cycle.

The cycle process began January 1, 2009 and I was fired up to begin the 10 month long process to test for my black belt in October 2009. And then on February 3, 2009 I hurt my right knee. To make a long story short I saw an orthopedist, had an MRI and discovered that I had a tear in my meniscus. During the past 2 – 3 weeks I have been back training at the martial arts school, while avoiding activities that could further damage my knee.

Today March 24, I met with my sports medicine Doctor. After discussing my MRI and the meniscus tear with my Doctor, I asked him a series of questions. When all was done and said my Doctor told me that if I continued in the black belt cycle — given the intensity of training required — I was asking for trouble. With the news I experienced some sadness over not being able to train toward obtaining my black belt in October, but happy to hear that I could continue training in the martial arts.

**As I have processed the reality of my knee being injured and not being able to test for my black belt in October 2009 I experienced some mixed emotions. In the process of sorting through my emotions my goal as a martial artist changed — from obtaining my black belt — to growing as a martial artist.**

My goal (s) for training in the martial arts has evolved over time. My priorities have changed. At one point obtaining the next belt was the goal and then the journey became more important than any belt. As I approached the possibility of a new door opening I focused on obtaining my black belt. With my knee injury and not being able to continue in the black belt cycle, my focus has changed back to enjoying the process, growing as a martial artist and developing my style of martial arts.

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar



## **When Circumstances Change our Plans Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on March 24, 2009

With my change of focus I became encouraged by the possibilities. In the next several month I will continue to train in various martial arts that do not necessitate pivoting and torching.

And who knows what my future holds for me in the martial arts. Hmm!!!

**“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**

### **Today’s Thought**

I have good news for you. Although one door of happiness may have closed on you — be encouraged — my friend. Possibilities exist. By letting go of our plans — when they do not go as we would like — we can open our hands and our heart and know that they will be filled.

Although one door of happiness may have closed for you my friend, be encouraged for another will open for you.

We can trust the process, because we don’t have to have the big picture. We can let go and know that we will get what we need. We will be led towards the light. We will know what we need to know.

We can trust the process, a loving God and ourselves, because possibilities never die.

## Traumatic Brain Injury and Questions

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on September 22, 2007

During the past week I have been searching for specific answers to some questions. In my quest to find answers to these questions I experienced some frustration. Because I sincerely believe that I am an empowered being with infinite resources at my disposal, I began looking for the resources that could help answer my questions. Although I was initially anxious about the situation that led to my questions, I was able to make contact with the appropriate resources and in the process gain some resolution.

### **When I find solutions to my frustrations I find a new source of courage and I am empowered.**

Questions provide wonderful opportunities to explore and learn. Questions provide the motivation to find answers that empower our process. Questions become the portal to a new world of understanding. With that understanding we gain wisdom, which in turn equips us to find solutions. Solutions empower and equip us to live the life that we have imagined in spite of our circumstances. When we are empowered we find the determination to succeed beyond our questions. Consequently, our circumstances no longer need to dictate to you and me, because we take full advantage of living life on life's terms.

My friend, you may have many questions. You may believe that you have been forsaken by life itself. You may believe — at the present time — that no answer could possibly exist. You may believe that you are stuck because of a roadside bomb or a drunk driver. You may have convinced yourself that nothing good could come from your injuries. You may have considered giving up on yourself and on your process. Based on my own experience as a traumatic brain injury survivor, I have good news for you my friend.

### **Rise Again! You best days are yet to come.**

Believe in your process, in a loving God and in yourself. More will be revealed with each new day. The answers to your questions will become apparent. You will find solutions to empower and equip your process. Take courage my friend. You are not alone in your struggle. Therefore, commit yourself to asking questions and passionately pursuing the answers to those questions. Reach out to those individuals who can provide the resources to answer your questions and thus provide you with solutions. The answers to your questions will empower you to live the life you have imagined. With time, you will realize that you are not limited because of your limitations, deficits or disability.

### **Dream Again!**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Living with a brain injury, Failures and Setbacks Part 1**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 17, 2010

Last night I stopped by the martial arts school to see my Sensei – instructor – and to see and say hello to some of the brown and black belts with whom I trained with for 8 years.

I then made the decision to stay for part of the brown and black belt class.

At the beginning of class, Sensei shared something with the students that I want to share with you my friend. May you be encouraged as you read through this article to not give up on your goals, your process, your dreams or your destiny. May the lesson – below – inspire you to keep getting back up no matter how many failures or setbacks that you may experience during your life time.

**As Sensei began class he shared a list of set backs and failures that an individual in history experienced during his life time.**

- 1832 Lost Job and defeated in the state legislature
- 1833 Failed in business
- 1835 Fiance / sweetheart died
- 1836 Had a nervous breakdown
- 1836 Defeated in run for Illinois House Speaker
- 1843 Defeated in run for nomination for U.S. Congress
- 1848 Lost re-nomination for Congress
- 1849 Rejected for land officer position
- 1854 Defeated for U.S. Senate
- 1856 Defeated for nomination for Vice President
- 1958 Again defeated in run for U.S. Senate
- 1860 Elected President (Success)

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Living with a brain injury, Failures and Setbacks Part 2**

Posted by [Second Chance to Live](#) on August 17, 2010

The above list of set backs and seeming failures are attributed to one of our greatest Presidents in American history. His name is Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln profoundly impacted his generation and generations to come because he made the decision (s) to not allow failures or setbacks to keep him from pursuing his dreams or his destiny. Because of his decision (s) to keep moving forward, freedom has occurred in the lives of many individuals for many generations.

Sensei went on to encourage the students in the class to not give up on their goals – be it advancing to their next belt rank or in another area in their life– even though they may encounter failures or setbacks in the pursuit of those goals.

Abraham Lincoln's example and Sensei's lesson inspires both you and I to stay committed to our goals, vision, mission, dreams and destinies — regardless of any failure (s) or set back (s) that we may experience during our life times. And as Abraham Lincoln brought a freedom to the lives of many individuals, so too will we bring about a freedom — simply by staying committed to our dreams and our destinies regardless of any failure (s) or setback (s) — to the lives of many individuals in our generation and in generations to come.

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

**“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.” Ambrose Redmoon**

**“We would accomplish many more things if we did not think of them as impossible.” Vince Lombardi**

“What you get by achieving your goal, is not as important as what you become by achieving your goal.” Zig Ziglar

## **Biographical Information About the Author**

My name is Craig J. Phillips. The reason for my writing to you is to share a little about myself and to also encourage you to not give up on your dreams. My hope is that my experience will encourage you to not give up on your process or your self. My hope is that you will not let disappointment to keep you from pursuing your bliss and your destiny. My hope is that you will not give up on hope, because – as I have found – more will be revealed in time. My hope is that as you read a little about my story, you will see your circumstances and experiences in a new light, you will find a way to follow your bliss in ways that will work for you and that you will be encouraged and empowered to follow your dreams.

I am a traumatic brain injury and survivor. My injury occurred as a result of a motor vehicle accident in 1967 when I was 10 years old. I sustained an open skull fracture, right frontal lobe damage, a several brain bruise with brain stem involvement. In 1967 there was not much known about brain injuries or neurological rehabilitation. Once my external wounds healed my traumatic brain injury was never again considered to be a factor in my development or my difficulties. Because I was able to teach myself how to walk, talk, read, write and speak in complete sentences the effects of the injury to my brain became invisible and hidden.

Although I was not expected to succeed beyond high school academically, I was able to graduate on time with my high school class and then go on to obtain my undergraduate (4 majors, 2 universities and one junior college in 10 years) and graduate degree (3 1/2 years and 2 different grad schools). I later discovered that the difficulties that I encountered during both my undergraduate and graduate degree programs were due to the residuals from my brain injury. In addition to having difficulties in both my undergraduate and graduate programs I had a long history of getting and losing jobs. While working as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, I became a client of the Dept. of Vocational Rehab.

After becoming a client of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and completing their evaluation process, I was deemed to be unemployable. Because I had been able to obtain my undergraduate and graduate degrees I found myself in a very frustrating predicament. Although I had diligently applied myself – both academically and vocationally – I felt like some one all dressed up with no where to go and with no one seeming to want what I had to give, despite my efforts. After all of my struggles to succeed I found myself unable to succeed and was declared disabled by the Social Security Administration in 1999 and began receiving monthly SSDI benefits.

Although I had diligently applied myself both academically and vocationally for many years, I found myself being effectively discounted and dismissed. Although I felt discounted, dismissed and like some one all dressed up with no where to go, I still had a desire to follow my dreams and my destiny. Although I felt minimized, marginalized, dismissed and discounted by people who did not want what I had to give, I still had a desire to encourage, motivate, empower and share hope. In my process of finding a way that would work for me I wrote an autobiography, a book and then on February 6, 2007 at the encouragement of a friend, I found my way to share hope through my web log Second Chance to Live. I began writing and publishing articles on Second Chance to Live.

To read a more detailed About Page concerning my process and journey, please click on this link: [Detailed About Page](#)

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