

APRIL 2016

TBIHOPE

AND INSPIRATION

The Vibe of Joy

An Unexpected Blessing

A Man With
TWO MILLION STORIES



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TBI HOPE MAGAZINE

Serving All Impacted by
Traumatic Brain Injury

April 2016

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Welcome

Welcome to the April 2016 issue of TBI HOPE Magazine. Last month's Brain Injury Awareness Month was a smashing success with a fully-packed day on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC and countless statewide conferences.

It's a safe assumption that more people have now heard the term *traumatic brain injury* than ever before. Ever so slowly, one person at a time, the advocacy and awareness efforts of so many are starting to end the silence that surrounds TBI.

Anyone can be a TBI advocate. Talking just a moment to share your own experience can change lives. Never underestimate the power of enough motivated individuals to change the world.

A warm welcome to our new readers. You will see elements of your own journey in our publication. You no longer travel alone. And to our returning readers, welcome back!

We hope you come away with a real hope that a meaningful life is possible after traumatic brain injury.



David A. Grant
Publisher

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A Man with Two Million Stories

by Tris Greenman

My husband and I met up later in life. We had both been married, had children, and divorced prior to becoming friends and tying the knot on 5/5/5. Best of friends, we were enjoying time together in our house in the woods without a lot of drama. He has led an amazing life, accumulated hundreds of friends and could tell a million fascinating stories of people he has met and adventures he's been on. I, on the other hand, led a quiet, reserved life with a few good friends and a handful of anecdotes.

June 22, 2013 brought our drama-free lives to an end. Wearing a helmet, my husband was riding motorcycles with a friend when a utility truck ran a stop sign. Fifty-three skull fractures, along with a broken neck, arm, sternum, ribs, pelvis and right leg were not the worst of his injuries. Tim was in a coma for 2 months, in which most of those injuries healed without him ever knowing he had them. I was wholly unprepared for the change our lives had just taken and knew not one thing about traumatic brain injury.

"I don't know who you are, but you sure are being nice to me," was one of the first things he said to me after we left the third hospital, and I brought him home to begin daily physical, speech and occupational therapy. Our haven was now being overrun by therapists, visiting nurses, medical supply deliveries and thankfully, friends.

There are many facets to Tim's TBI recovery, but the one I am discussing today is his confabulation. Sounds like a made-up word doesn't it? Confabulation is filling in gaps in memory by fabricating truths, without the conscious intent to deceive. In other words:

honest lying. Tim actually believes that what his mind thinks has happened. And so his million true stories have become two million, half are true and half are not. He can relate events that never happened in such detail and with such conviction that one cannot help but believe what he is saying.

Therapists have scolded me for letting him ride a motorcycle again (he has not). Doctors have patiently listened to him talk about his leg falling off in the driveway and various other extraordinary medical anomalies. Friends have called me up to question the latest version of events. “Tim said he was beaten by two men and left for dead in the woods.” Now quite a few of these stories are so fantastical they cannot be believed, however, there are some everyday confabulations that I struggle to determine if they are fact or fiction.



“I fed the dog already.” “My brother came to visit and has cancer.” “Monroe caught a 14” perch this morning.” No, the dog was hungry. No, his brother is fine.

Yes, Monroe caught a perch but it was only 9”. Dreams are a large

source of these confabulations. Many times, Tim dreams of his father, who has passed, and wakes up talking about what they are to do together the next day, only to have to be told that his father is gone. It can be heartbreaking. I often sit slightly behind Tim now if we have visitors or doctor appointments and shake my head yes or no to indicate his story’s validity.

One day I arrived home to find Tim excited and anxious to tell me that a young couple we are friends with had a bear in their yard earlier in the day. “Wow that is amazing!” I said, thinking they told him of a large dog or turkey, as there are no bears this far south in Michigan.

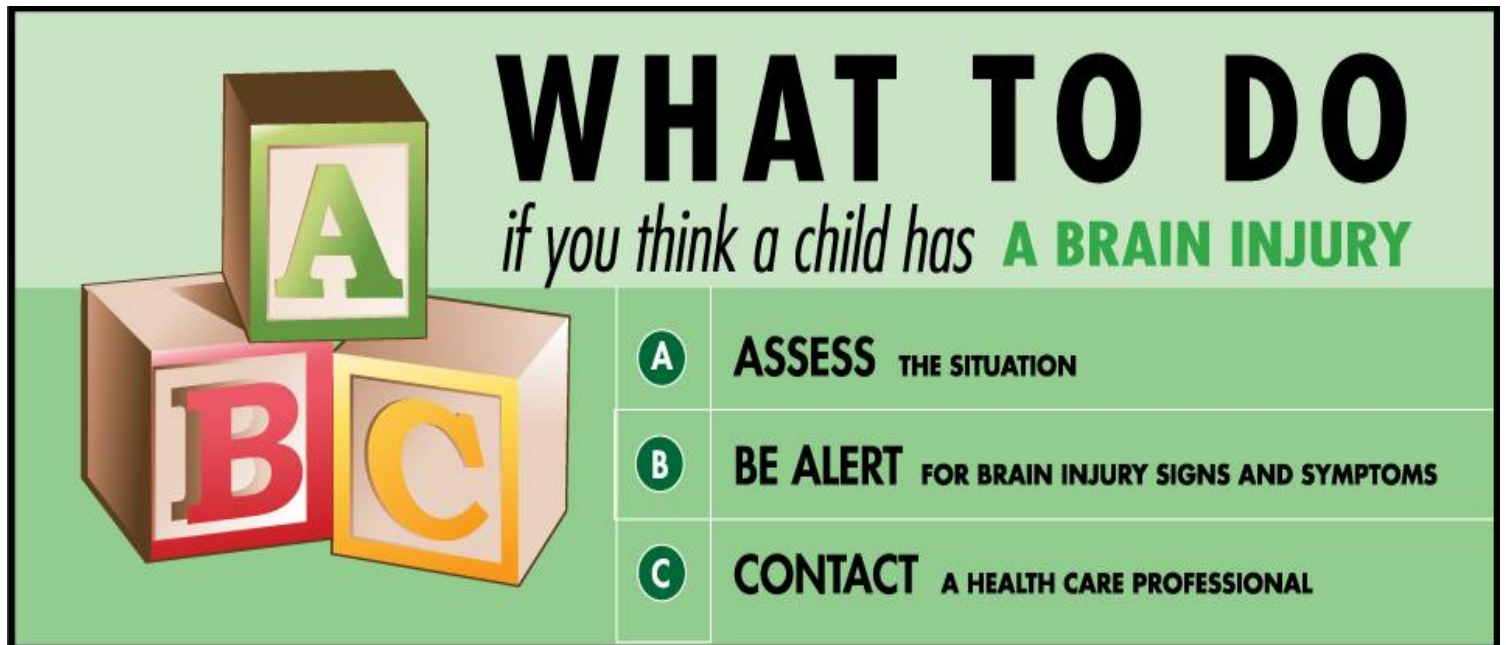
He talked on and on about it, hoping to take me over there to try to see it. I seldom contradict his stories but he was so persistent, I thought I would attempt to remind him that sometimes he remembers incorrectly and that we would not go over and bother the

couple. He grew quiet on the subject. During dinner, we watched the weather report and up popped a news story about locals who had sighted a large black bear in our area and was confirmed by the authorities. So much for my wisdom!

The challenges we have faced together dealing with Tim's TBI have led us down a different path than we had planned. The miracle of his survival and the past two years of his recovery have dispelled the quiet life. I now have many more stories to share, and by doing so, hope to enlighten and encourage other TBI caregivers.

Meet Tris Greenman

Tris is caregiver to her husband, Tim, in Southwest Michigan. She also works full-time as an accountant and tries to keep their lives on an even keel and regular schedule. She and her husband enjoy fishing, gardening and spending time with the grandbabies. "TBI has taught me to have infinite patience and to appreciate friends and the therapy community so much more!"



WHAT TO DO

if you think a child has **A BRAIN INJURY**

A	ASSESS THE SITUATION
B	BE ALERT FOR BRAIN INJURY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS
C	CONTACT A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL



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Why Did This Happen?

by Virginia Cote

My son, Rod has had a brain injury (AVM). He and his wife lived in Oregon and I live in New Hampshire. Rod was working by himself on a job when the bleeding in his brain happened. Because of his strong will and determination he was finally able to get to his truck and call 911. From there he was rushed to one hospital and then airlifted to another. After a lengthy operation and a short stay in the hospital he was brought home. He went through months of rehab.

His wife and his boss saw to his doctor's visits and his rehab but they couldn't understand what was going on in his head. They didn't understand the importance that praise and encouragement were to his recovery. His wife treated him like a child and his boss bullied him trying to make him get better. When Rod cried his boss would say, "Man-up, stop being a wimp."

Speaking with Rod every day, I told him over and over how I believed in him. He was confused and depressed all the time. He didn't know whether he should stay in Oregon or come back to New Hampshire. I told him only he could decide that. He finally decided to come home for a visit. Once here he decided to stay.

I found Rod has trouble getting words out. He knows the word; he can see the word but it takes a while for it to find its way out. His vocabulary is much smaller now, he gets confused when too much is thrown at him, on top of all of this, he has lost a lot of his eyesight. He sees blank places and has double vision. His eyes react badly to the bright

sun and the snow can blind him. This means he cannot drive. Rod loved to drive and he drove across the country many times.

With his disadvantages in mind I began to try to help Rod to adjust. I soon found out it was a big learning process for me as well. I move and think fast. I run a business out of my home which can be hectic. The biggest thing I discovered is how incredible Rod really is and how hard he works at his own recovery.

The first time we went into Walmart, as we approached the doors I began to list the items we needed to look for. All of a sudden Rod began to overload and panic.

I stopped right in the middle of the door, holding up traffic and I said, “Look at me; we are going to look for this item. Don’t worry about anything else. We are only looking for this item.” Rod relaxed and we entered the store. From this I learned how to break things down smaller so to give his brain time to process.



We walk a lot in the woodland parks. Walking is a great freedom for him. One day we met a man who told us about a new trail they had just made. He said to be careful because there were a lot of little stumps they were trying to figure out how to get rid of. Rod said, “I know how. You need one of those things.” And he began to move his arm back and forth and make a buzzing sound. I translated, “A Saws-All.”

Rod has his own way of communicating when he can’t find the words. He can mimic any sound and motion. Rod bought himself a Saws-All. We walked all the trails with Rod sawing the stumps out just below the dirt line. He found something he knew how to do that others didn’t and the man really appreciated his help.

While walking one of the trails, I met one of my customers, a husband and wife. We began to walk together often, which gave Rod a man to talk with. One day this friend said he wanted to find his property markers. Rod said, “I have a metal detector. I can find them.” We went to his house and Rod was able to find them even though they were buried underground. This was another boost to his ego.

I wish I could say I found ways to help Rod but it was more I fell into them and took advantage of them. Mostly it was Rod's hard work. He knew somehow he could be of use again. I know I have been a big part of helping him but I am not the only one.

He has made a friend over the internet and she has helped him to deal with his frustrations. Right now as I write this, he is visiting with her in China. He not only has made the trip there by himself but by himself he made all the arrangements. Rod, my son, this man, blows me away with his courage and his determination.

Meet Virginia Cote

Virginia has been running her own boarding and grooming kennels for 50 years. Rod is her only child. "It may sound strange to some of you but my experience in training dogs has turned out to be helpful in this new challenge," she shares.

Another love of mine is hiking. Walking turned out to be a good place to start on rebuilding Rod's confidence. This experience with Rod has not inhibited my life it has enriched it.



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The Vibe of Joy

by **Barbara Stahura**



A few years ago, when I was still freelance writing, a magazine editor in Italy emailed me out of the blue for permission to reprint one of my articles in his magazine. It was obvious that English was not his first language, but that made his emails all the more charming. I was going through a time of doubting my writing ability and desire to continue freelancing, so his request cheered me up. I told him that and gave my permission for the reprint. He replied that I was feeling “the vibe of joy.” I wrote those words on a small piece of paper which I taped to my computer, where I see it every day. They still make me smile.

What gives you the vibe of joy? Joy comes in all sizes, and those things that give us joy can arrive at any time, even during the darkest times. Maybe the sun shines brightly in a deep blue sky after a week of rain and fog. Maybe someone, a stranger, smiles at you and holds the door to the grocery store open when you’re having a terrible day. Maybe you realize you’ve made another solid step of progress in your therapy after a brain injury. Maybe your loved one with a brain injury recognizes you for the first time after waking from a coma.

Journaling about your joys and thank-you’s is an excellent idea for several reasons. First, you have a record in your own handwriting of the positive elements of your life. That way, when times are tough, you know it’s not true when you say, “Good things never

happen to me.” Second, by doing this kind of writing, you give yourself a gift: the time to sit quietly for a few minutes and appreciate those things you probably take for granted. Third, research shows that people who journal about the positive things in their lives, at least part of the time, fare better than people who concentrate on the negative.

I don't mean to be a Pollyanna. Life after brain injury can be unbelievably difficult, with challenges survivors and family caregivers never dreamed they would have to face. As TBI survivor Kara Swanson once wrote in her blog, “Brain injury is no gig for sissies.” She also wrote, “...NOBODY gets through life unscathed. Nobody. Everyone has or will have that condition, disease, accident, injury or event in their lives that knocks them sideways and turns their life upside down. It's one of the prices we pay for the gift of living.”



I would add that we can all find things in our lives to be grateful for and things that bring us joy, despite those times and events that knock us down. In fact, they can help us get back on our feet.

One of the men in my journaling group for people with brain injury was distressed that he could not return to work and support

his family.

Yet in one of his journal entries, he wrote, “Even though I can't work now, I'm home when my son comes home from school. He likes that. So do I.” He found this gift, and others, in the life he was now living.

What are some of the joys in your life, right now? What are you grateful for?

Some journaling exercises:

As least once or twice a week, give yourself the gift of some quiet, private time and write. You can use pen and paper, or an electronic device. If you can't do either of those, you

can speak your journal entry into an audio recorder (many smart phones have these), or perhaps a trusted confidante will write your words for you, without change or judgment.

If you're ready to do some private writing in your journal, choose one or more of these prompts to get started. Try to write for at least five minutes and go longer if you want.

- Make a list of 5 to 10 things in your life that bring you joy.
- Make a list of 5 to 10 things you are grateful for, which are not on your joy list.
- Now, choose one item from either of these lists and write a few sentences or paragraphs about it.
- At a later time, choose another item from one of your lists and write about it. Do this until you have written about all the items on your list.
- Then start the process again, with two more lists. You will be surprised by how many items you find that bring you joy and gratitude.

Meet Barbara Stahura

Barbara Stahura, Certified Journal Facilitator, has guided people in harnessing the power of therapeutic journaling for healing and well-being since 2007. She facilitates local journaling groups for people with brain injury and for family caregivers at HealthSouth Deaconess in Evansville, Ind., journaling for wellness and well-being classes for Ivy Tech Community College. She also presents or has presented journaling events for state Brain Injury Associations/Alliances. Co-author of the acclaimed [After Brain Injury: Telling Your Story](#), the first journaling book for people with brain injury, she lives in Indiana with her husband, a survivor of brain injury. www.barbarastahura.com.



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An Unexpected Blessing

by Sandra Madden



In one-half hour I had a diagnosis: Post-Concussive Syndrome, a mild traumatic brain injury. When this happens to you, it feels anything but mild. I had fallen head first over my bicycle handlebars 18 months earlier, but since I was wearing a helmet the emergency room doctor never suspected a concussion. But complaints of cognitive issues for 18 months led me to a referral to Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital for diagnosis and care. In conjunction with my brain injury, I have chronic pain issues, and was unable to work; I was on long-term disability from work and successfully applied for social security disability.

I learned the value of hard work, perseverance, and being thankful for the blessings in life from my late mother. With these values, I pursued volunteer work to fill some of my hours left empty from not working—where better to offer my volunteer time and commitment than the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA). I felt that they would best understand my cognitive issues and would offer me volunteer projects that would value my strengths over my weaknesses, weaknesses I felt everyday from my brain injury. This volunteer assignment proved to be my most memorable volunteer experience, providing me the opportunity to come out of my house and socialize, stay up-to-date on computer applications, feel self-confidence again, and succeed, even if they were little victories.

In 2011 I had another fall, tripping over a garden hose and falling face first into the cement driveway. This fall exacerbated my pain issues, and my cognitive issues continued. I felt determined to not let this interfere with my dedication to volunteering.

Nearly three years of volunteering passed and I found a huge boost in confidence that was sorely needed, and with that passing time I came to feel confident in my ability to work again, and began my quest to return to work full-time. The staff at BIA-MA made me feel valued and appreciated for any and all help that I gave to them, no matter the project, and the Manager of Volunteers, Patty Carlson, was tremendous in offering me support and mentoring in my desire to return to work.

Volunteering helped me learn that I could still perform tasks and work that I had done prior to my brain injury and that despite my pain, work was possible. Work was actually a great distraction from my pain issues and from one big side effect of my brain injury: “brain chatter”. In quiet time, I hear my voice talking and singing, I have weird thoughts best described as having a dream while awake; keeping my brain on a work task and being in a work environment is a tremendous distraction from this cognitive impairment.



In October of 2012 I was offered a position at the BIA-MA and celebrated my one year anniversary in October of 2013; I continue to successfully work there today, appreciating the value of having a job and working hard every day, I value the relationships with my colleagues and their supportive nature, and my self-esteem and confidence is made stronger with every day I go to the office. I have no doubt that these experiences are helping my brain to heal.

I have been able to dissolve my reliance on social security disability through the Ticket to Work program and no longer receive checks; I am thrilled and proud every time I get my paycheck from BIA-MA.

I often tell people that my TBI was a blessing. If it weren't for my TBI, I would never have learned what a brain injury was, which meant I would never have found the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts and with that, would have missed out on such an important volunteering experience. I would have missed out on meeting some tremendous volunteers and survivors. And, without BIA-MA, I might still be looking for an employment opportunity that values my strengths despite my cognitive weaknesses.

If it weren't for my TBI, I would never have found my fabulous support group BABIS (Boston Acquired Brain Injury Support group) and in turn would have missed out on

meeting many caring professionals and most importantly, developing important friendships with some tremendous survivors.

Traumatic brain injury, for me, became a valuable learning experience and an unexpected gift; I never look back at my accidents in anger and always try to look for the blessings I have received because of them. The blessings of the people, places, and experiences that have graced my life since that first fall.

“The unthankful heart... discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings!”

~ Henry Ward Beecher

Meet Sandra Madden

Sandra A. Madden, a graduate of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University is a photographer and writer, a Special Events Coordinator at the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA), and a brain injury survivor. We encourage you to support Sandra and [her book project](#). A portion of the proceeds from the sale of her book will be donated to the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts.



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The Many Faces of Traumatic Brain Injury

A Photo Essay





My Injury is a Part of Me

by Lori Lee

After putting groceries in my car on Sunday, March 25, 2012, I realized I didn't have a card for my dad's birthday or a treat for my 6 year old nephew who I was seeing that night at my dad's birthday dinner.

My then 16 year old son Chris and I went back in to the store. I felt myself sliding on the floor and the left front of my temple was heading toward a shelf. Next thing I knew, the back of my head was hitting the floor and I was covered in liquid laundry soap flat on my back and unable to move. I had slipped on clear liquid laundry soap. I am assuming someone had dropped a bottle and it spilled. They had picked up the bottle but the clear liquid was all over the floor.

An ambulance was called. I had a goose-egg on the left front of my forehead above my eyebrow and a 1-inch gash on the back of my head. I couldn't move and that was an odd feeling. After the firemen and the ambulance checked me out, it was decided I could not drive myself to the hospital to get checked out. I got my first ambulance ride as an adult; I was 49 years old.

After a few hours it was determined I had a concussion and I would feel crappy for a few days, but I "should" get better every day. In a couple of days, I could return to work, but if I felt worse I would have to go back to the hospital right away.

We took a cab back to the store to get my car and I drove home.

I took Monday off work and felt tired and dizzy and had a hard time focusing at times.

Tuesday came and I felt worse. I had two black eyes. Light hurt, sound was actually painful, I felt disoriented and could not think. It was hard to remember stuff like where my shoes were. I couldn't focus and the room felt like I was on a slowly listing boat. The nausea was bad. I called my doctor.

I walked the three blocks to the doctor and it should have taken me ten minutes; it took me half an hour. He checked me out and told me to get a cab and get to the hospital immediately. The hospital is two blocks from his office, so I told him I would walk.

He made me promise to call an ambulance or taxi if while walking I felt I couldn't make it. I said I would.

After four hours and a CAT scan, I found out I had a moderate concussion. It has been 4 years since my accident. I celebrate every March 25 as my new birthday. As my new me birthday.



I have had occupational therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and I am going into my third year of neurological physiotherapy. Yes I have had tons of both physical and emotional counseling. I have had tons of support from my medical team, my son and my father.

I lost my job of ten years and another after that one. I am on disability and I am trying to find a job that I can do while moving forward with learning to live with my current abilities and situation.

My life has changed in the following ways:

I have gained patience and perspective.

I have gained many internet friends who “get” me.

I have learned that things are not always as they seem...I have vision problems.

I have learned acceptance.

I will walk with a cane, have headaches, dizziness and nausea.

I will not do extreme sports again such as skiing, mountain biking, and swimming.

I will not write like I used to or read a novel in one day again.

I have learned that I have limitations (ok, I am still working on that!)

I am working on learning it is ok to be tired.

I can't see a movie in the theatre as it visually too much for me (I am working on that).

I like the new me: I am gentle, calm, loving and sensitive (somedays too sensitive).

Thank you to my TBI tribe. You have helped me accept my injury as a part of me, not only something that happened to me.

Meet Lori Lee

Lori is a 53 year old single woman and mom of a 20 year old son. She is also a former essayist and horsewoman having ridden both English and Western. She is hoping to get back in the saddle next year. She is currently on disability and working hard on her recovery. She is getting back to her writing and moving towards being a life coach and advocate for adults, children, and families with TBI or anxiety and depression.



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WITH A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE



Learning to Fail

by Jeff Sebell

Did you know failing can be a beautiful thing? Now that's an idea that goes against what many of us have been taught since birth. Those of us who have experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury are all too familiar with *failing* as we strive to make our lives work following TBI; it eats at us and drives us crazy.

Our first encounters with failing after TBI occur as we learn that we can't do the things we used to do. These are *educational* failures, and they are necessary to go through simply because we need to learn about ourselves.

After that, we go through a prolonged period when we engage in *practice* failing as we re-learn and re-apply those skills and abilities we are trying to recapture. This type of practice failing is necessary also. In essence, we are re-learning how to be a human being.

Yes, failing is a necessary thing as we work to live a fulfilled life after TBI. For this reason, *failing* should be looked at as, "But one step taken on the road to success."

Easier said than done

Life would be a lot easier if we were living our lives in a glass dome; where there was no one around to pass judgment on us and no one's expectations to meet.

Except, of course, for our own. Yes, our own, for we are probably our harshest critics. We do not forgive ourselves for failing, even when the failing is *educational* or *practice* because we can't get it through our heads that we are allowed to fail.

In our society, people who are considered "failures" have a stigma attached to them. They are outcasts; looked down upon, and frowned on. "Failures" are frequently said to "not have their act together." Some think people have failed because they, "didn't want it bad enough," or simply, "didn't try hard enough."

It must be noted that there is a big difference between "living your life as a failure" or "being a failure," and the act of failing. Sometimes, you need to fail in order that you "get your life together."

Imagine you are a first time baseball player and you're standing in the batter's box waiting for the pitcher to throw the ball. He winds up and throws an amazing pitch that baffles you; the ball at first looks like it's going to your head but then seems to magically take a left-hand turn, and drops perfectly over the plate.



If you've never seen a pitch like this before how are you going to know how to hit it?

You don't.

We are learning how to live this life after brain injury; in other words, we are seeing the pitch for the first time. We need to adjust and adapt.

Make failure your friend

Those of us who have suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury have this in common...we fail at things where we used to be successful. The inability to live up to our own expectations is one of the most damaging aspects of brain injury, but it can be corrected.

Just think...why should we have those expectations? Who are we trying to impress? What are we trying to prove? Why should a person who has suffered a TBI beat themselves up because they could not function the way they used to? You're not going to learn how to do anything better or faster by treating yourself poorly.

There is just no sense in it.

Accepting those times when you fail is all part of learning to forgive yourself and getting to know the new person you are. Like it or not, things have changed. You might as well like it, put on your explorer's hat, pull on your hiking boots and go for the ride.

Don't miss this **opportunity** to learn about what a brave, great person you are when you go off and explore new worlds in order to become more than you ever thought you could be **because** you accepted failing.

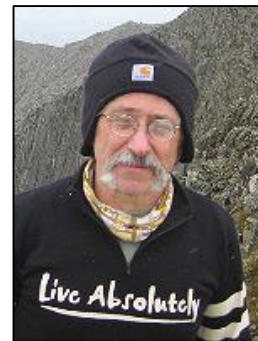
The mistake is thinking you have to go back and be the person you used to be. Get over the thought that you have to do everything perfectly, and realize that the only way you're going to be able to improve yourself is by *trying* new things. The use of the word *trying* implies that whatever you do, you may not be successful.

Start small. Start by trying things that won't have major repercussions if you fail. You have to spend some time *learning* the right way to fail, and gradually build up your repertoire to have things you are successful at. As your successes build, so does your self-confidence and knowledge.

It's not a fast and easy road, but it's the only one in front of us. Who cares that it is not paved? What does it really matter? We are strong. We know what we want, and we're going to make it happen whatever way we have to.

Meet Jeff Sebell

Jeff Sebell is a nationally published author, speaker and blogger - writing about Traumatic Brain Injury and the impacts of his own TBI which he suffered in 1975 while attending Bowdoin College. His book "[Learning to Live with Yourself after Brain Injury](#)," was released in August of 2014 by Lash Publishing.





The Healing Power of Oxygen

by Brian Maram

Eighteen months after my stroke I learned about HBOT, which is short for Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy. Further investigations lead me to discover the remarkable healing powers of oxygen. Everything I read made sense and appeared feasible, but there were no clinical tests providing proof that it worked.

I decided to purchase and import a portable chamber - after all, what did I have to lose? Paralyzed on the left side of my body, my cognitive skills resembled those of a two-year-old. I had the attention span of a mosquito and I was desperate and willing to try anything.

Eagerly, I waited for the chamber to arrive. Coupled with an oxygen concentrator, I was able to maximize the full potential of the chamber. HBOT is certainly not a quick fix; it takes dedication and tens of hours in the chamber.

Having unlimited access, I was able to make full use of it in my own time. As the weeks and months passed by, I started to notice changes. My attention span was improving, I was now able to sit through a full one-hour TV program and I was able to read more than a few paragraphs in a book. Sensation had also started to return to my lifeless limbs.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy was working for me; I did not need clinical tests to tell me it worked. I was experiencing the benefits first hand.

What is Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy?

Before getting started, we need to understand the meaning of Hyperbaric. 'Hyperbaric' is an operating pressure that is greater than normal atmospheric pressure. Therefore, HBOT is the administering of oxygen under increased pressure.

While in a full body-chamber and exposed to increased levels of oxygen, HBOT puts the body under greater-than-atmospheric pressure. It is painless and non-invasive.

For example, under normal circumstances at sea level, a pressure of 1 atmosphere (ATA) is exerted on the body. As we ascend in altitude, the pressure starts to decrease, increasing the size of the gas molecules. On the other hand, if we descend the reverse happens and the pressure starts to increase, reducing the size of the gas molecules.

How does it work?

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) works by increasing the pressure in an enclosed chamber and delivering larger amounts of oxygen to the patient.

HBOT is based on several gas laws.

Henry's Law which says that at a constant temperature, the amount of a given gas that dissolves in a given type and volume of liquid is directly proportional to the partial pressure of that gas in equilibrium with that liquid.

In other words, at a constant temperature, as the pressure increases on a liquid, so the liquid will be able to hold more gas molecules. This theory can easily be seen in use in every day soda drinks.

The Soda Effect: Soda is essentially syrup and water. Under normal conditions (1 ATA) the pressure on the liquid is in equilibrium with the atmospheric pressure, but by increasing the pressure in an enclosed container, we are able to dissolve carbon dioxide into the liquid and keep it there, while under pressure. Once the container is opened, the pressure is suddenly reduced and the CO₂ will come out



of suspension and attempt to reach equilibrium with the outside atmospheric pressure again, this gives us the fizziness we all enjoy in our Sodas. Once equilibrium is reached, we then refer to the soda as being flat.

Dalton's Law of Partial Pressure states, "In a mixture of non-reacting gases, the total pressure exerted is equal to the sum of the partial pressures of the individual gases." (*Source: Wikipedia*) In other words, the total pressure is the sum of all the individual gases under pressure.

Red blood cells are limited to the amount of oxygen that will bind with the hemoglobin (the protein in red blood cells). The plasma (the clear yellowish fluid portion of blood) only carries about 3% of the oxygen concentration.



Placing a patient into a hyperbaric environment at pressures greater than normal atmospheric pressure, combined with an increased oxygen partial pressure, allows the body to dissolve more oxygen into its blood cells, blood

plasma, cerebral-spinal fluid, bone and other body fluids.

This oxygen saturated blood is then delivered to all of the body's cells, tissues, and fluids in higher than normal concentrations, which greatly accelerates the healing process.

Portable hyperbaric chambers are pressurized to 1.3 ATA, being about 0.3 ATA or 4psi above the outside atmospheric pressure. That is approximately equivalent to about the same pressure you would experience while diving down to the bottom of a swimming pool in the deep end.

The increased oxygen concentration enhances the function of the white blood cells, which are part of the immune system that protects the body against infectious disease and foreign invaders, thus promoting the body's ability to aid in its own healing.

Not only does increased atmospheric pressure and oxygen levels reduce inflammation, it also promotes new blood vessels to start growing into the affected area.

Increasing the oxygen levels to damaged tissues allows the body's natural healing mechanisms to function more effectively, even when the blood supply has been compromised. Damaged tissues can receive oxygen via other body fluids and plasma from surrounding areas.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy is particularly effective in delivering increased amounts of oxygen to wounds with poor blood flow or injured tissue that is swollen. Daily exposure to increased amounts of oxygen enables the body to speed up the healing process of the wound.

Editor's Note: TBI HOPE Magazine does not endorse or support any treatment protocols. Brain injury is a serious medical condition requiring treatment by medical professionals. Please consult your physician immediately if you have concerns about your health.

Meet Brian Maram

Brian Maram is a Traumatic Brain Injury / stroke survivor from Johannesburg, South Africa. Brian takes pleasure in motivating other stroke and TBI survivors. He is in the process of writing a book about his journey and is a regular contributor to TBI HOPE Magazine.



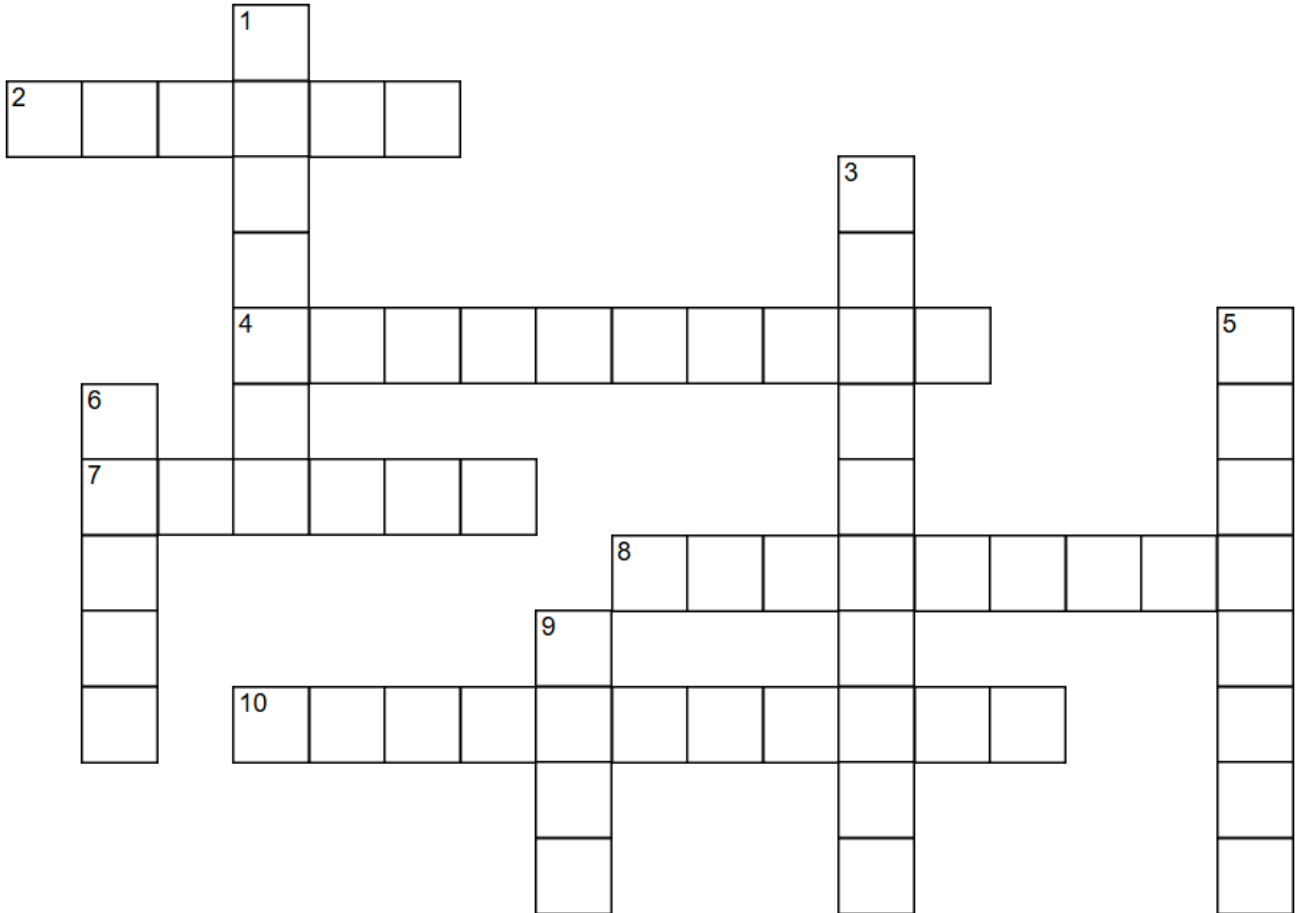
Living With Hope

By Patrick Brigham



Fun 'n Games

Take the Cranium Crossword Challenge!



ACROSS

2. Nerve cell that can receive and send information
4. A deficiency that interferes with normal activity.
7. Ability of the brain to retain and recall information
8. The ability to think out logically
10. Physician who specializes in the nervous system and its disorders

DOWN

1. What holds your gray matter?
3. Another name for a TBI.
5. Ability to form a correct conclusion
6. Star of Concussion
9. She's our magazine mascot.

Puzzle Answers on the Back Page!



How To Conquer A TBI

A Former Green Beret's Quest

by Andrew Marr

I was six months into a downward spiral and nothing was helping. After suffering numerous head traumas, I was told I could no longer take the risk of being a Special Forces Operator at the end of July, 2014. My drinking had gotten so out of control that my wife, who was nine months pregnant with our 5th child, asked me if I could keep my drinking down for the day in case she went into labor and couldn't drive herself to the hospital.

On August 31st we had to take my son, who was 13 months old at the time, to the ER for a congenital lymphatic malformation (cyst-like formation) he had in his neck. It was infected and swollen. My wife was having contractions, and for the last three days I was dealing with what I thought was the worst calf spasm the world had ever known. All three of us were admitted into the same room in the ER.

It was ultimately decided that my son had to go to the Operating Room for surgery on his neck, and my wife went into labor not long after. My son was getting operated on, on the fourth floor while my wife was giving birth on the 2nd. I was in unbelievable pain at the time, and was basically dragging my leg between the 2nd and 4th floors to be there for both of them as much as I could. After my son's surgery, my wife gave birth. In order to be at the side of my wife and newly born son, I remember drinking and mixing opiates to combat my pain and anxiety.

I refused treatment while my son and wife were in need. I eventually ended up in radiology to get some imaging on my calf. The imaging revealed a Deep Vein Thrombosis (big blood clot) in my leg, which by that time had broken off into a bi-lateral Pulmonary Embolism affecting both of my lungs. Had we not taken action when we did, it most certainly would have killed me. I had two hospital stays lasting several weeks, my son had over seven different hospital and ICU stays with multiple surgeries on his neck, and our newborn had a complication that required ER treatment and was admitted for four days after he stopped breathing twice. Both times my wife and I were able to revive him. All of this took place in the span of six weeks.



Near the midway point through that nightmare, I remember coming to a crossroads. I could blame my external circumstances and keep on the path conventional medicine had laid out for me: a path destined for my death and the destruction of my family. Or, I could embrace the current pain, accept it for what it was, and use it to improve myself. I decided to take ownership of my life and to quit allowing external obstacles to have power over me.

I then used that new-found razor sharp focus to change what I didn't like about my current condition. From that moment on I understood that I had the power and free will to choose how I would receive, internalize, and respond to external circumstance in my life. That epiphany felt as if I had just broken free from heavy shackles, it was euphoric.

I told myself that I was going to do whatever was necessary to become the man that my family and my sick boy needed me to be. I started to ask myself, "How can I make the most of every second? What must I do to improve, to be the husband, father, and leader that I require of myself?"

What Is A Traumatic Brain Injury?

We now know that the brain can suffer two distinctly different types of trauma as it relates to TBI's. The initial trauma can arrive from an external impact like an explosive blast wave, or even acceleration alone. The second and infamous "invisible injury" of a TBI occurs in the minutes and days after the initial trauma. One of the secondary injury processes that cause the biggest problem is post-traumatic inflammation.

Traumatic brain injuries can cause a host of physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects, many of which can be difficult to detect. The scientific literature tells us that symptoms can appear on impact or weeks to years following the injury.

My Last Deployment

My last deployment was in 2013. It was an emotionally and physically taxing trip. We were engaged in constant combat through the entirety of it. A majority of our team was wounded in combat before it was all said and done; my injuries resulted in a medical retirement.

My wife and I had planned on this being a relatively short trip for me. She was six months pregnant with our fourth child and first son when I left. We could not have been any happier with our life and what the future held for us. With her expected due date in early July, I planned to travel back several weeks prior to be there with her and our girls to welcome our new son into the world. It was planned that I would attend an advanced Special Forces course after the birth, keeping me stateside.

June 08, 2013

I watched an explosion blow a vehicle that weighed over 42,000 pounds, not counting our ammo or weapons, over 10 feet in the air, crashing down on its passenger side. I can still picture it in high definition and slow motion when I think about it. The very second it went off, I knew from past experiences exactly what it was. I knew the type of force that was required to send something that heavy that high into the air, and I understood the magnitude of the situation immediately.



I began yelling over and over again fearing the worst. I quickly regained my composure, understanding that the probability for a follow-on attack was high. We got our ground force commander the quick update, “Let higher know that we have sustained a catastrophic IED strike on one of our vehicles, casualty report to come, we need serious air support now.”

The wounds to our men, my brothers, were serious and the follow-on attack was fierce. We did what we had to do in order to hunker down and get our wounded out to the next

highest level of care. It was a long day into a long night of constant combat before we finally got out of there. We didn't have the time to properly assess the number of enemy killed, but it was substantial. We made sure the enemy had every opportunity to make their ultimate sacrifice, and many did.

When we sustain a casualty, it is known that no one is to communicate with the outside world until the family members of the deceased or wounded have been notified. So once we got the go ahead that it was OK to call back home, I made the dreaded phone call.

I told my wife, "I don't know how to say this but...." and explained to her what had happened. I gave her an update on our guys. I told her that I would not be coming home, and that I would not be there for the birth of our first son. I told her that she and the kids



were in a safe place and were well cared for. The guys out here were not, and I felt compelled to remain with them and continue to pursue and kill the enemy. Our survival was dependent on it. I could never face my son as a man who left his team when they needed me the most. That goes against everything I stand for, and I know one day this decision will make him proud. Becky

was a seasoned veteran wife of multiple deployments, and without missing a beat she said, "I love you baby, and I am so proud of you. Do whatever you have to do, but you bring the rest of those boys back home alive. We will all be here waiting for you when you get back."

For the first time in my career, I began to video the team and me in combat on that last trip. We were walking the razor's edge out there and I knew it. I wasn't positive I was going to make it home. I wanted my boy to be able to see his Dad in action. I wanted him to have something to be proud of, something that he could actually see to let him know who his Dad was and what he was about. It was an emotionally and physically taxing trip.

The Come Down

It was about three months after my return home before I started to notice any changes. I began to be plagued by psychological, physiological, and physical manifestations, including depression, outbursts of anger, anxiety, mood swings, memory loss, inability to concentrate, learning disabilities, sleep deprivation, loss of libido, loss of lean body mass,

muscular weakness, and a number of other medically documented conditions, that prior to my return had never been present.

By the time I finally came to my breaking point, I was drinking a 750ml bottle of bourbon a night, was on over a dozen medications, and had become completely detached and isolated from everyone that I loved. I was sleeping with a handle of whiskey and a loaded shotgun by my bed, dementia was quickly setting in.

The Truth

The quality of your questions can determine the quality of your life. Individual assessments using evidence-based diagnostics are required to pinpoint and treat impairments. When those methods were used on me, it changed everything. The proper diagnostic exams revealed that I had major vestibular and neuroendocrine (hormonal) deficiencies from blast-induced TBI's; however, by pinpointing the impairments we were able to effectively treat the problem. Everything up to this point had just been a Band-Aid, a temporary fix that attempted to only treat symptoms, not the root issue. We were able to get to the truth by asking quality questions. Through my treatments at Carrick Brain Centers and the Millennium TBI network I have been sober since October of last year and have come off a dozen different medications. I am performing as good if not better than my pre-injury self. My mind is clear, my body is balanced, and my spirit is grateful.

Meet Andrew Marr

Marr is a former Special Forces Green Beret, founder of [Warrior Angels Foundation](#), an organization whose sole purpose is to stop the deaths of veterans suffering from PTSD symptoms caused by traumatic brain injuries. He joins us today to share that solution with you in the hopes that we can slow if not altogether stop the twenty-two veterans a day who are committing suicide thinking there is no hope or help for them. There is hope, and there is help.



TBI HOPE Back Page



From the Desk of the Publisher...

Time after time, I have read stories about survivors who have beat the odds and families that have become closer because of shared tragedy. These true heroes of humanity have been presented with what so many others may see as an insurmountable challenge – yet against the odds and with almost unfathomable perseverance, they have been able to build new, meaningful lives after traumatic brain injury.

In the five-and-a-half years since my own brain injury, I have seen the emergence of a new national narrative that is slowly ending the silence that surrounds traumatic brain injury. Frankly, it's about time.

For decades, millions have lived with little knowledge of their condition, many have turned to alcohol and substance abuse to self-medicate, and countless others have chosen suicide to end their torment. Thankfully, this era of silence draws to a close.

Today I am going to challenge you. Over the last few years, as I have become more open about my own life as a traumatic injury survivor, I have seen countless others begin to share their own stories. One-by-one, as one person shares their story with another, the number of people who become aware of this silent epidemic grows. I have learned to never underestimate the power of individuals bound by shared experiences to reshape the world.



So my challenge to you is a simple one: share your story with someone. You need not take to a podium, nor post about it on a social site. Just a simple one-on-one sharing with another member of our shared human family is enough. And one story at a time, one person at a time, you can be part of the solution, a shared solution that we can all participate in – one that can indeed change the world.

David