

# TBI HOPE & INSPIRATION

Magazine

Our Six Month   
**BIRTHDAY ISSUE**

Seven Schools  
**ONE DEGREE**

**Friends  
Till the End?**

The Brain Injury I Lived With

*But NEVER Knew I Had!*



TBI Hope &  
Inspiration  
MAGAZINE

*Serving All Impacted by  
Traumatic Brain Injury*

**August 2015**

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# Welcome

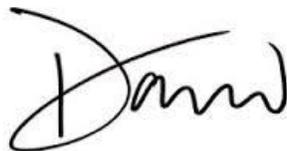
It is with great excitement that we bring you our Half-Birthday Issue of TBI Hope and Inspiration Magazine. This month marks six months of publications - and what a six months it's been!

We've heard from readers around the world offering mostly short (and sometimes very long) emails letting us know that they are no longer alone, having heard their own stories as shared through the words of our contributors.

The feeling you get when you realize that there are others who share your fate, others who "get it" as fellow TBI survivors, is just wonderful. I know this from my own personal experience as a survivor. It marks the end of isolation and aloneness and the beginning of realizing that you are part of a new kind of family.

This new family does not share a common Zip Code or shared DNA. Rather we share similar heartbreaks, challenges and even more importantly - triumphs as we walk this new and unexpected road.

To all our long-term readers, thank you for the encouragement. For anyone new to our TBI Hope and Inspiration family, a warm welcome. You never have to walk alone again!



David A. Grant  
*Publisher*

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# The Brain Injury I Lived with, but Never Knew I Had

By Sara Lewis



At the time of my motor vehicle crash in 1977, when I was 22-years-old, they didn't have a name for what happened to my head. Just blood and a flap of skin.

X-rays looked okay. Sew it up and move on to the more important things, like broken bones. Will she ever walk again?

At the time of my motor vehicle crash, I was just finishing college and was ready to take on the world. In spite of my doctor's concern about a "neurological event," I persuaded my parents to let me go to graduate school.

But they had to come rescue me at the end of the first semester, when I was confused and tired. I waited a year and then tried graduate school again. I went on to my first job, but fell apart after 3 years. I came home for a spell, and then went to graduate school again, this time in a different field: business. I managed to keep busy in three different jobs and I raised two children. But after 20 years, when the job was stressful and the children were teenagers, I fell apart completely.

It was then, 27 years after my senior year in college ended with a bang, that I went to a neuropsychologist who told me I wasn't crazy. I was just brain injured. Jobless and middle-aged, I tried to understand what it meant to have a brain injury. In 2004, there wasn't nearly as much information on the Internet. That was still before we heard much about the signature wound of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan or the concussion crisis in football. I was only able to find one survivor story, Claudia Osborne's book, *Over My Head*. I read the book. I tried to find a new job. I was barely a good parent.

Then, in 2009, when I was 54 years old, over three decades after the car crash, my father had a stroke and I had an “aha moment.” I saw my cognitive communication problems mirrored in my dad’s aphasia and word-finding difficulties.

I stopped and thought about how awesome it is that the brain regulates our verbal and non-verbal communication and therefore is the seat of our personality. I got so excited about the science of language I glimpsed during his therapy sessions with a speech-language pathologist that I went back to graduate school for the third time. In speech therapy, I thought I found something that would help me and others.

Unfortunately, I didn’t know enough about what it meant to be a real speech-language pathologist, especially a real SLP with a brain injury. It was hard, but I was learning, so I thought.

In clinical practice, the SLP is always on her toes, listening to clients, reasoning out their speech and swallowing related difficulties, thinking about the brain functions that relate to thinking up the words that do or don’t come out of their mouths.

I wanted to work with people with cognitive-communication problems, people like my father and me, who would need to learn strategies that would improve their ability to communicate successfully with others. I knew that I had not been a successful communicator because I didn’t know that my problems were all in my head, in the damaged brain cells and neurochemistry!

Instead of thinking that my problems were brain based and something that could be rehabilitated, I had only gotten mad at myself for doing stupid things. I beat myself up a lot. I had emotional meltdowns and yelled at people because I thought the communication problems were their fault. I thought people weren’t being nice to me. I didn’t know that the problem was me!

Toward the end of graduate school I found myself working in a clinical externship with a no-nonsense supervisor. She began to point out to me that I wasn’t a very good therapist. I was completely shocked! How could this be so? I

“I didn’t know that my problems were all in my head, in the damaged brain cells and neurochemistry!”

was making all A's and a few B's. I was handling my emotions and working so much better in relationships with other people now that I understood aspects of my brain injury. I thought I was coping so well!

Now that I get it, I am just amazed that people with brain injury are so unaware of the affect their brain injury symptoms have on their ability to be successful in their careers and social life.

What occurred to me next was something more than an aha moment. Because I was studying the brain and working with people with brain injury, it began to wash over me that I was an example of what I was studying and that I was one of them. That trip through the windshield had taken me to the other side where my acetylcholine deficit was forever. My left side deficit was due to an incurable upper neuron injury. I knew what it meant to have permanent auditory processing delay. The legs that broke in multiple places were now full of arthritis and oh so painful.

“At first, this realization floored me. I fell into deep depression again because I had failed to be able to do what I thought I could do.”

My no-nonsense supervisor was right. I could not be a very good therapist given that I was living and aging with brain injury symptoms. These symptoms would limit my ability to perform the job of a speech-language pathologist.

At first, this realization floored me. I fell into deep depression again because I had failed to be able to do what I thought I could do.

But this time, I snapped out of it. I snapped out of it because I decided to accept that brain injury places permanent limitations. Before, I hadn't acknowledged I was limited. I had been trying to get on with the life I expected, but

that darn supervisor put me in my place. She put me in my brain-injured place.

But she didn't count me down and out. She gave me a new lease on a new, right-sized life. I realized that I could push the limits if I wanted to, but that I had to make peace with the limits and not let them get me down. It took a lot of years and a lot of tears, but now I am free to be my best brain-injured self.

And now I can truly help people like my father and me. Perhaps I won't get to

wear an SLP badge in a busy hospital setting, but there is nevertheless so much that I can do in other right-sized places. I work part-time as an SLP in a small, private clinic. I facilitate two brain-injury survivor support groups. I wrote my survivor story to share with the world. I advocate for greater awareness of brain injury. I've trained a therapy dog. It's okay. I'm doing my best and I finally know what that means.

### **More about Sara Lewis**

Sara E. Lewis, M.A., M.B.A, M.S., has lived an eclectic life, skipping from jobs in museum management, to business management to education to healthcare. She is married, has four children, four grandchildren, and a dog. She is dedicated to spending the rest of her brain-injured life doing whatever she can to help persons with brain injury. Her memoir, *Not What I Expected: My Life with a Brain Injury (I Didn't Know I Had)*, was published by Lash and Associates in May 2015. She blogs about all things at the intersection of brain injury and speech-language pathology on her website at [thebraininjuredslp.com](http://thebraininjuredslp.com).



## **Photo Contest Winner!**

TBI Hope and Inspiration Magazine reader Mary Hampton was one of last month's photo contest winners. Mary sent us this photo of her son Daniel sporting his "I Inspire" photo contest prize t-shirt.

Thank you to Mary and all who participated. And to Daniel, we'd like to say that you sure do inspire!

Congratulations again to Mary and Daniel, our July contest winners!

# Friends till the End... or TBI

By Jennifer White

When you experience a TBI, you might wonder where all your friends went. Dealing with the physical results of a TBI such as headaches, balance issues, walking again, eating again, trying to remember the past are hard enough. Just imagine losing the network of close friends you once had.

On one hand it can be noted that people just don't know what to say or how to act. They cannot resist attempting to get their old friend to act like they once did. On the other hand, people are scared of what is different to them.

One thing is for sure, you cannot make people act the way you want them to act. Well, maybe for a little while, but people will be who they are.

Realistically, why would you want them to change? I am sure you resent them for wanting you to change. This leaves a couple of options - to rely on yourself to develop new friendships post TBI, or rebuild old relationships that were lost after brain injury.

I try to understand that my friends lost someone too. A result of my brain injury and my misperception of time, I found that I had lost several years. I did not immediately understand that my friends had moved on. When I was learning how to walk again, eat again, talk again, my friends were moving to new cities for jobs, having babies, succeeding at their jobs...things I was supposed to be doing!

I felt heartbroken that my friends seemed to forget about me, but in fairness to them they moved on with their lives as they should. The only person who has held me back was me and not my former friends. Personal character is tested during the hard times. My mother died after my brain injury. At her funeral a



relative of mine said she was scared to see me because she did not know what to expect. She thought I would be disfigured or even drooling on myself.

People are not comfortable seeing relatives, friends, the handicapped, ill, or disfigured. This is just the way we are. My father took his regret to his grave of not seeing his buddy before he died. My father told me he should have visited his ill friend, but he was scared. I better understood what he was saying.

Getting through the experience of a brain injury is ultimately your responsibility. If you are lucky enough to have a network of sensitive friends and family that render love and support you are lucky. If not, remember that YOU lived through an injury that kills many people and YOU can define your future.

### **Meet Jennifer White**

Jennifer White is a traumatic brain injury survivor from St. Louis, Missouri. When she's not writing about her life as a survivor, she enjoys spending time with her family and of course, quilting.

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**Because a TBI Affects Everyone!**



[www.facebook.com/TbiCaregiverSupport](http://www.facebook.com/TbiCaregiverSupport)

# A Glimpse into my TBI

By Dr. Katherine Kimes

*Slowly regaining consciousness, the altered vision my eyes conveys feels more like a dream than reality.*

*As I stare through the paned-glass window, I look over a secluded parking lot, enclosed by enormous black columns. Making a conscious effort, my eyes slowly move to the right of the window. An abundance of cards hangs on the wall, bringing the pale-cream wall to life. I am experiencing life for the first time, seeing the world through infant eyes.*



*I sluggishly turn my head, I see my mother. Anxiety distorts her face. Almost comical. She hugs the wall with her back, rigidly standing as if to prevent herself from falling forward.*

*A teenage boy hovers over me. Sobbing, crying and talking, his words are muffled. I am empty - who is this? What does he mean? He never meant for this to happen!*

*Tension enters my body. My left arm draws inward in agitation. The heavy cast hits my chest and cuts off the circulation at my elbow. Confined to the bed, I close my eyes, silent, completely detached from the dilemma that is now my life.*

It has been over 24 years since the car accident on a back road in Hampton Township, PA. At the age of 16, I was a passenger in a one-car accident. Even though I was wearing a seatbelt, I sustained a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). My brainstem, the delicate neurological component responsible for life sustaining processes, twisted and stretched, causing the right hemisphere of my brain to hit the inside of my skull. I immediately went into coma and was found seizing at the scene of the accident. I was Life-Flighted to Allegheny General Hospital. The doctors' prognosis was not encouraging; I would be bedridden for life and there was not much chance of any significant recovery. I was comatose for over four weeks.

It was only after I regained consciousness that the doctors changed their initial

prognosis. Their story now was that it was highly unlikely that I would graduate from high school without major assistance—and higher education was out of the question. This is something my parents never told me as they did not want to discourage me from being me. I had been a 4.0 student prior to my injury, a student who tried to excel in everything she did.

As I soon learned, the cognitive issues caused by the TBI were the least of my worries. The neurological damage from my TBI resulted in numerous physical impairments. I couldn't walk; the left side of my body was severely impaired and I couldn't even hold up my head. It wobbled like a newborn's.

However, the most psychologically draining impairment was my inability to speak, eat, or drink. My tongue lay paralyzed in my mouth. The innate ability to communicate thoughts, emotions and simple daily life experiences was taken from me in a matter of seconds.

A person never consciously thinks about how words are formed and how intricate the process of speaking really is. We unconsciously vocalize thoughts: tongues instinctively move and articulate; vocal cords vibrate with sufficient breath support, combining sounds and syllables, forming words into coherent sentences. My first attempt at speaking, however, wasn't as effortless. Rational thoughts accumulated in my mind, eventually leading me to verbally express myself, but the only sound I was capable of producing was an incoherent, monotone noise. Only vocalized air, no articulation.

Regardless of whether or not anyone could understand what I was saying, I spoke indifferent to my incoherency. The thoughts in my head were clear. I knew what I was saying. Unfortunately, my audience did not have insight to the words in my mind.

It takes me quite a while to actually finish eating. I get too tired and too frustrated and am not able to finish the meal. Even though the food is placed directly on top of my teeth, it is difficult to actually move the food around in my mouth. I need to use the nook to move it back over my teeth to chew. My



Consultation, training, transition services,  
and in-school support for traumatic  
brain injury, concussions & strokes.

swallowing reflex is getting stronger day-by- day, however, moving the food around in my mouth with my tongue is another thing. My tongue barely moves.

I do not remember anyone ever telling me that I had been in a car accident and that I had sustained a severe TBI. I don't remember anyone ever telling me the life I had lived for 16 years was now over, or that I would have to rebuild a life for myself. I had to learn this out for myself, piece by piece, bit by bit.

I felt like a child who was learning everything for the first time, but I knew I would get better, it would just take time. There has been a light behind my continuing desire and determination to succeed and it keeps me going day by day. I will always push myself. I have learned to overcome most of my physical impairments, including speech. I do not have my old, pre-injury voice back, but I do speak intelligibly now and most strangers I meet do not have trouble understanding me.

Despite doctors' prognosis, I did graduate high school in the top 10% of my class. I also went on to higher education. I have a BA in Sociology from West Virginia Wesleyan College and two Masters Degrees - one in Literary and Professional Writing from DePaul University and one in Transition Special Education with emphasis in acquired brain injury from The George Washington University (GWU).

I also have an Ed.D. from GWU in Special Education with a concentration in brain injury and am a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS). My personal, educational and professional endeavors have been focused on the field of ABI. I am a brain injury education specialist and started ABI Education Services, LLC a business that provides consultation, training, transition services and in-school support for children, adolescents and young adults with brain injury. I have excelled beyond everyone's expectations but my own.

### **Meet Dr. Katherine Kimes**

Dr. Katherine Kimes has a Master's Degree in Literary and Technical Writing from DePaul University. She also has a Master's degree in Transition Special Education with an emphasis in acquired brain injury and a Doctorate in Special Education also with a concentration in acquired brain injury, both degrees confirmed by the George Washington University. She has worked as a CSPPPD Service Coordinator and is a Certified Brain Injury Specialist. Please visit her website, [www.ABI-EdServices.com](http://www.ABI-EdServices.com), for more information.

# Seven Schools – One Degree

By Melissa Robison

It's rough having a brain injury. Like many others, I can get overwhelmed very easily. I freaked out at one school in the parking lot and never even made it to the first class, so that doesn't really count does it?

Moving forward toward getting my degree was an exhausting process. I started my first college class while I was stationed in Germany. I was pregnant with my daughter.



Unaware I had both post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a traumatic brain injury, I enrolled at University of Maryland and took classes all over the country. Later that year I was kicked out of my house, only to arrive back in Massachusetts with baby Kat on Christmas Eve.

A few months later, I enrolled in an EMT course. By the end of the course, I realized it was not a good fit, so I enrolled in community college. I struggled with learning the campus, but academically did great until mid-summer semester when my headaches were so overwhelming that I couldn't get out of bed to finish my classes.

I was taking week long intersession courses to get caught up, but by now my GPA was suffering. I never made it to the office to properly withdraw, resulting in failing marks on my record. Trying not to be phased, I applied and was admitted into UMass Boston. My momentum soon dissipated as I completely flipped out in what I considered to be an unsafe stairwell leading up to registration.

Having just bought a new home, I decided to enroll in a couple classes at a nearby junior college, where I excelled and transferred my credits to get my Associates Degree. It was time for me to try a four year school.

I started attending UMass Dartmouth with a full course load and had huge anxiety about my safety on campus. The walk between the parking lot and my night classes was heavily treed. Campus news about the high rape incidents really freaked me out. I began getting migraines and my PTSD spiked to the point I couldn't go to class.



At the time I had no diagnosis or knowledge of what was going on, and really began to hate myself for failing. I tried again at summer session, but then had a professor from the school asking me out and calling me at home.

This really stressed me and I dropped all my classes once again. I was working third shift loading trucks for the Teamsters at this time so I could spend time with my daughter during the day.

With little sleep, my TBI symptoms escalated.

Over the next few years I took a class here and there and at different community colleges. On the verge of losing my GI Bill benefits (*the military scholarship I sacrificed so much for*), I decided to go back to school full-time and leave my job at the Waldorf School. I just couldn't stand working for the low wages they offered and really wanted a few letters after my name. This didn't go over well with my husband at the time and we eventually divorced. I became even more committed to finishing my degree now that my daughters relied on me more heavily than ever.

I missed BSU fall applications but was able to enroll in full-time courses anyway. During winter break I got a denial letter for admissions, though I was at the top of my classes. After talking with an admissions rep, she stated it was because I dropped out of classes at my last two degree seeking schools. I was told that the only way I could get around that was to go back to one of them and successfully complete a course.

That semester, in addition to three classes at BSU, I re-enrolled in a degree program at Massasoit and took a single class. It worked and I was accepted to BSU. I spent a full year at BSU without being a matriculated student, which meant no financial aid, no loans, and all debt on my credit card. I felt I had to do

whatever it took, and I did.

After a total of ten years, and several different schools, I completed my Bachelorette in Science in Accounting and Finance, with a concentration in Accounting. Additionally, I was named BSU student of the week at one point. I had so much momentum built up that I took my GMAT without even having taking the suggested classes for the test, passed, and enrolled in Graduate School.

Receiving special permission to enroll in more courses than allowed, I then finished my Master's Degree in just one year. Now nineteen years later and just learning of my diagnoses, I can't believe I did it all without any help from Student Special Services.

Going through a divorce and moving a few times, I had multiple physical hurdles including surgery. Being a single parent with no family support and hours of commute time each day, I was able to graduate amid a long list of insanities that were present in my life at that time.

Looking back, I now consider going to school to be one of my strong suits. Yes, it's challenging having a need to always sit in the back corner. Now I can look back and smile. I've rewritten my educational history to be successful. However, I'm also not ready to stop here. The future now has limitless possibilities!

### **Meet Melissa Robison**

Melissa holds a Bachelor's In Accounting and Master's Degree in Technology Management, she is a recipient of the Massachusetts Women in Public Higher Education Award, and a featured Student of the Week at Bridgewater State University. A traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD Survivor, Melissa continues to give compassionately though she has debilitating daily health conditions. Melissa served as a member of a highly respected Spiritual Group in Massachusetts, where she volunteered Medium and Healing services. Melissa believes she chose this difficult path on this Earth, because she is a server to all of humanity, and will always continue to bring light to those needing it most.

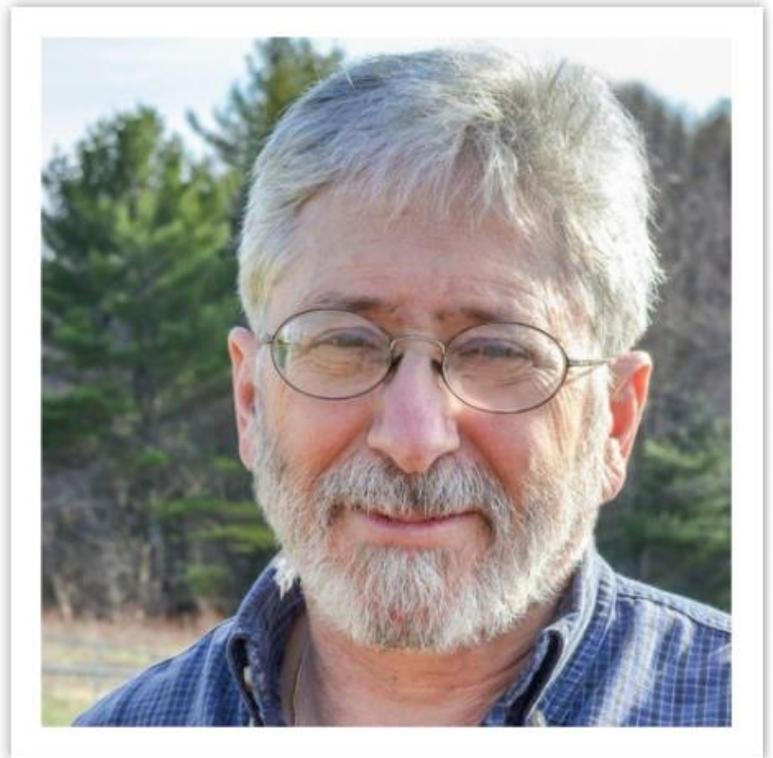


# When People Say Hurtful Things

By Jeff Sebell

As a card carrying member of SOBII (Society of Brain Injured Individuals), I feel I am qualified to comment on this.

I have certainly, over the last forty years, come across my fair share of people who are uninformed or (there is no other way to put it) ignorant, and who make a comment or an observation about me which I find offensive.



When someone makes some kind of disrespectful, unfeeling or inaccurate comment about us, we are right on it.

There is no doubt that we are territorial and emotionally connected to our brain injuries, and we have good reasons for this. We are understandably sensitive (some would say, hyper sensitive) when others make offhanded comments or broad statements that cause us to feel defensive, not understood or trivialized.

We should understand, though, that there may be a difference between “how we hear something,” and “how it was meant.”

*How should we respond?*

We can respond:

- 1) By letting what is said affect us emotionally (internally), or
- 2) By lashing out, verbally or otherwise, or
- 3) By looking at the bigger picture in an attempt to understand, learn and grow (easier said than done).

Make no mistake about it, nothing is forcing us to react in any way other than the

way WE choose. We are in control of our reactions. Granted, it may be more difficult to control ourselves at certain times, but ultimately, the burden for how we assimilate bad or hurtful comments into our lives falls on ourselves.

The key here is assimilate, and not react. When we respond by reacting, we don't think or look at the big picture. When we assimilate, we examine what was driving the words.

Assimilate means we find a way to think about what was said so whatever response we give has power and strength, and earns us credibility.

“When we respond by reacting, we don't think or look at the big picture.”

In order to respond properly, we need to be driven, not by the desire to correct the person or to prove ourselves, but by the need to claim our personal space and retain our dignity. If we respond directly to what was said, or to their words, we are giving validity to their words by making them important.

This way we avoid having to explain ourselves, which would only put us on the defensive, as though we have done something wrong that needs to be fixed.

We are never going to make sense to anyone who is not inclined to take the time to actively listen. Plus, you don't want to put yourself in the position of having to convince somebody, because right from the beginning you're putting yourself in a position of weakness, and you risk coming across as a whiner and a person with problems.

I'll give you an example of something that happened to me. About 10 years ago I was in a cigar bar, having a conversation with a middle-aged woman and her husband. She was asking me all kinds of questions, and somehow the conversation ended up on my brain injury, and the fact that I was on disability. She looked at me and with a knowing smile, and said something like, "You did a good job."

To me, she was inferring that I was really okay and had somehow wrangled my way onto disability. Not knowing what else to do, I stood up and left, feeling edgy and discombobulated. As I drove away, I began fuming over what she had said and how I had "let" her drive me away. When I was about a mile down the road I decided I needed to go back. She looked surprised when I opened the door and

walked into the same place I had left a few minutes earlier. I walked over to her and said, "That was a pretty stupid thing to say." She said nothing.

I fully expected to get punched out by her husband, but he surprised me by reaching over to me and extending his hand. I shook it and walked out. I didn't engage with her in a battle I couldn't win, but I responded to her, emphatically. In my mind, the situation was resolved and I was at peace.

The way I responded to her showed how I need to treat myself. Making sure we are being taken care of as human beings starts with us, and self-respect begins when we don't engage in situations like this; even when our emotions are screaming to engage. We are the ones from which the dignity and strength needs to originate, and the ones who need to show we are worthy of respect by how we handle ourselves.

When all is said and done, our words cannot convince anybody of anything. How we act and what we stand for will do all the teaching and talking.

## About Jeff Sebell

A long-time survivor, Jeff is the author of *“Learning to Live with Yourself after Brain Injury.”* You can read more about Jeff and his journey on his blog at [www.TBISurvivor.com](http://www.TBISurvivor.com)

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# Playing Defense after Traumatic Brain Injury

By David A. Grant

I was accused of faking my brain injury for attention. There is no way to soften the blow of a statement like this. I took what is arguably the toughest hit of my life, had to be rushed to the nearest trauma center with cuts, bruises, broken bones and a damaged brain – and was subsequently called a fake.

As I began my second life as a brain injury survivor, I found myself having to play defense against stunningly hurtful and relationship-ending accusations.

Brain injury is blatantly misunderstood by so many. The healing process for most injuries follows a predictable path. When I was plowed down by a car back in 2010, my orthopedist let me know that I would be in a cast for three months, and that most of my pain would be gone within six months.

Broken bones heal at a predictable rate. In fact, you could have set the Atomic Clock by his prediction. Six months after my accident, almost as if scripted, my physical pain ended.

But not so for my brain injury.

There is no end-date. No ah-ha moment when you wake up one day and say, “Thank God that nightmare is over!”

Our bodies heal, as do our brains. But we, as survivors, are left with unseen, invisible and silent injuries that we carry for life. They represent TBI battle scars



on our collective souls.

Those who know us, and often those closest to us, see us regain our physical wellness and expect our brain injury recovery to follow in lockstep.

*Kids, how's that one working out?*

My oldest son turned twenty-eight just last week and we haven't seen each other in years. His birthday tore open a still festering wound.

In 2011, the first year of my second life, the whispers started. "Dad is faking this whole brain injury thing for attention." These fires were fanned by a family member no longer involved in my life until they grew from small flames to fires only a dragon could produce.

My life lay in utter desolation, withered by false accusations. We know the old TBI two-step: I looked "normal."

"My life lay in utter desolation, withered by false accusations. We know the old TBI two-step: I looked "normal."

The most insidious part of it all is this... many are accused at the same point in time that they are least able to advocate for themselves, to defend against falsehoods. Early on, many of us have yet to find our footing. Our lack of the ability to meaningfully defend our injury is perceived by many as a passive admission of wellness. And to have an injury that needs to be defended is another can of worms entirely.

I, you, and anyone impacted by a TBI has much better things to do than walk through life "pretending" to be compromised. This topic hits a raw emotional nerve with me. Can you tell?

I've not seen my oldest son since 2011. He drank the Kool-Aid and thinks I am a faker. His younger brother walked out of my life as well. For the first couple of years, I kept calling and texting him:

How is life?

I heard you have a new girlfriend.

I heard you moved to a new place.

You can only reach out for so long and have texts and calls unanswered before you realize that each call, each text opens the wound anew. Last week was the first time in twenty-eight years I've not wished him a Happy Birthday. His life is moving on, and these years are unrecoverable. What I wouldn't give to hear his voice, to hear how his day passed, to feel my phone vibrate and see a text from him.

Later this month, his younger brother turns twenty-seven. He drank the same Kool-Aid. He moved from New Hampshire to Wisconsin last year – or at least so I heard. He's been gone for years as well.

Is life after brain injury complicated?

You tell me. I already know I am not alone in this one.

As time passes, I have found that by being painfully open, others who share my fate know that they no longer travel alone. Such is the power of survivors sharing with other survivors. Thank you for being there to hear me, and please know that I am here for you in this strange reality we share.

### **Meet David A. Grant**

David A. Grant is a traumatic brain injury survivor from Salem, NH. In addition to publishing TBI Hope and Inspiration Magazine, David is also a staff writer for Brainline.org as well as a contributing writer to *Chicken Soup for the Soul, Surviving Traumatic Brain Injuries*. David has also written two books since sustaining his brain injury in 2010. For more information about David, please visit [www.metamorphosisbook.com](http://www.metamorphosisbook.com).

## **Contributors Wanted!**

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