



Getting Back on the Bike

David A. Grant Blogs About Life After Brain Injury

Learning to Live in the Moment After Brain Injury

Comments [10]

August 4, 2014

In hindsight, it's probably best that we didn't know what was coming. No one really wants to know that life is about to become difficult — very difficult.

It took several months for the severity of my own TBI to become clear. Early on, well-respected doctors — doctors doing the best they could in this strange and so often unpredictable land of traumatic brain injury — predicted a complete recovery.

A few weeks after my cycling crash, one of my first neurologists shared that I "would be back to 100 percent within a few short months." Always one to rise to a challenge, this time-frame didn't bother me a bit.

As time marched forward, his timeline for my complete recovery changed a bit. Months passed and I still had significant "issues." He upped the ante a bit and let me know it might be three years, but certainly no longer than five years, until I fully recovered. I would be completely normal again.

Looking back with the benefit of time, I see now that the good doctor really was doing the best he could. I have no room for lingering resentment or animosity as these are barriers to forward progress. Life can be challenging enough.

There really was such innocence during that first year after my injury. Sarah and I thought we were just biding time, waiting for life to return to normal. Life did return to normal, but it's the new TBI normal. We'll circle back to that later.

There was so much we just didn't know during year one post-injury. I find myself unexpectedly grateful for what we didn't know.



Sarah and David Grant

We didn't know that even now, well into year four, those PTSD nightmares would still haunt me. We didn't know that there really is no end game in brain injury recovery. We didn't know about the friends we would lose, the financial hardships that were coming, that life as we knew it was coming to a close.

Nine months after my crash, Sarah and I traveled to the Florida Keys. We were still living in the "Age of Innocence" as we were both expecting me to recover fully. A week in the balmy tropics seemed like a near-perfect way to help speed along my recovery. We basked under a mid-summer's sun, hopped from tropical beach to tropical beach, did lots of hand holding and figured we were still on the right track as my recovery continued.

Had we known what was barreling toward us at light speed, our trip would have been filled with dread and fear. Precious memories would never have been made.

More than three years have passed since our first trip to the Keys. This past summer found us back in the Keys again, a bit older and a whole lot wiser.

We have both learned so much along the way. The most meaningful life lessons come from living through what life puts on your plate. No longer do Sarah or I pay much attention to predictions. Trying to predict brain injury recovery is like trying to put a saddle on a cat. You can try really hard, but in the end, it becomes nothing more than a lesson in frustration.

More importantly, living life "in the moment" has become one of the biggest forward moving steps we have taken. The past cannot be changed. It's a cancelled check. The future never really comes. It's a promissory note.

This past summer found us walking on many of the same beaches on which we had walked a few short months after my injury. Though the beaches were the same, I am different now.

During our most recent trip, we passed a small nature trail at Bahia Honda State Park. In the "Summer of Innocence" back in 2011, Sarah and I walked a nature trail there. Both shutterbugs, she and I, we snapped countless flora and fauna shots. One of those butterflies travelled north with us in digital format. Never would I have imagined that this winged beauty would be the exact same butterfly I would use on the cover art for my book.

Tears filled my eyes as we passed that same trail. It's been such a long journey. Sarah never even turned to look at me. She felt high and sudden emotion rise from deep within me. Her grip on my hand tightened ever so slightly. We are connected at a soul-level like that.

Yes, living life in the moment is the real key to being okay with all this. In the moment, there is no fear of an uncertain future. In the moment, there is no regret for choices that could have been made differently. There is safety, security, and peace to be found in this moment.

And at least for now, in this exact moment in time, I am okay with that.

Comments [10]

Thank you! I am 17 months into my journey ... And still can't get the saddle on the cat. Your article was very timely and helpful. I know my husband will dearly appreciate.

Nov 1st, 2014 3:39pm

How do you learn to accept the changes in your life?

Sep 26th, 2014 12:13am

It's all about living in the moment. Almost 4 years ago I got my TBI from my own stupidity, riding my motorcycle with no helmet while whiskey drunk. I came so close to dying while I was