

# Survivor Perspective

## *My 25-Year Sabbatical By Mark Murrell*

I've spent the last 25 years of my life recuperating from a closed head injury. These years have been full of chaos and confusion, but I have learned to hang on with patience, persistence, and prayer.

My December 1982 single-car accident definitely changed my life and the lives of my family. Suddenly it seemed that none of the old rules applied.

I once likened myself to a science fiction explorer in an alien world because I felt I had been plummeted into a strange new world. Early on, I felt I was in a prison or a medium security hospital until I finally accepted the fact that the blasé phrase "auto accident victim" was for me. It was a single car accident and boy was I ashamed. This caused me to hate myself and it is a hatred that never has left entirely.

If I had not had friends, family and doctors who counseled me through many days of rage and misunderstanding, I can't even begin to say how I would have redeveloped.

Luckily, I did have those contacts. In the midst of such chaos, and confusion, there were some hidden blessings - like the attention and therapies I received in this office (NC Neuropsychiatry) - as a part of ongoing patient care.

You see, I'm not fully recovered; my closed head injury is not over. I am a "survivor," yet my life is forever changed.

I think the phrase "forever changed" has always struck fear into my heart. My accident was a scarce six months after I graduated college. In short, I felt the whole rug was pulled out from under me and I have been playing catch-up ever since. "Forever changed" only begins to scratch the surface. Nonetheless, lots of surfaces must be scratched when dealing with recovery from a closed head injury.

One of the first qualities I knew I must develop in my new life is patience. Now I've never been big on this quality, but nothing teaches it better (or ore harshly) than closed head injury. Don't thing that you are a failure if you can't master this one right away. I've been trying for the past 25 years and still have plenty of

learning to do.

Persistence is another success strategy. Always tell yourself you are getting better. This can radiate outward to family and friends and can surround you with a buoyancy from loved ones.

Then there is prayer, the one I always full out when the other things don't work. Recovery from a closed head injury has taught me the need of prayer and its function. I stay tuned into spiritual concerns where I'm talking to an entity that knows my whole storey. I've been shown repeatedly how I can reach the limits of earthly powers, but I'm always ready to turn my overworked cares and concerns over to God.

In short, the three qualities - patience, persistence, and prayer have helped me the most in reconstructing my life after a closed head injury.

*Editors note: Thank you Mark, for sharing your experience and amazing insight -  
NCN*