

Surviving Brain Injury Still Counting My Blessings

by

Monica Candeloro

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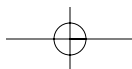
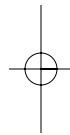
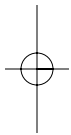
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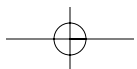
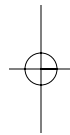
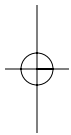
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This book is dedicated to all my friends in Tbichat.



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Foreword

In her own inimitable style, and with a sincerity and passion that typifies her fighting spirit, Monica has written a book about acquired brain injury that should be mandatory reading for everyone affected by this traumatic condition.

As we share the courage of Monica's journey of recovery, we learn that every person who undergoes a brain injury has a unique story. Each recovering brain will be faced with a unique set of challenges and circumstances. Each recovering brain will need a unique perspective on how to face those challenges. Those of us privileged enough to be entrusted with the work of aiding in that journey of recovery need to be able to listen very carefully to what the recovering person is telling us they need. This is one of the most valuable lessons that Monica and many others have taught me over many years.

The other lesson that I have learned over the years, one that Monica reminds us of in her book, is that the brain never stops recovering. This may be both a blessing and a curse. It means—as Monica, herself, has experienced—that it will be a very tiring journey of recovery. But it will be an exhaustion that has a purpose.

My work in the field of brain injury has allowed me to meet some of the bravest people a person could ever hope to come across. Monica's is the voice of their story. Because recovery never stops, the struggle never stops. It is not a solitary struggle, but one shared by everyone close to the injured person. However, it

is a lonely journey, in that it can only be *experienced* by the injured person. Fortunately, Monica gives us a glimpse into her lived experience.

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Introduction

In April, 2005, I had very serious health problems.

Following that, I wrote my first book: my autobiography, *A Challenged Life*. I don't want or need to come back to that; it is now published on demand at www.trafford.com.

A Challenged Life is my whole life story. My brain injury and my road to recovery are included, of course, but it is much more than that.

This is going to be something very different. My life changed forever when I suffered a ruptured severe brain aneurysm that almost claimed my life and left me paralysed on the left side of my body with acquired brain injury. I didn't die, though, so now, a few years down the track, where do I stand? Life is not the same as it was before, of course, but life is good nevertheless. I have come a long way.

The public awareness of brain injury is very limited. Maybe my writing can help change that. My objective is to share with the world what I have learnt about brain injury in the years since it happened to me.

Before my aneurysm I knew next to nothing about brain injury. I would prefer to not know anything about it still, but I have acquired a fair bit of knowledge and understanding during these years.

Brain injury is very common. It can happen to anybody in many different ways. Brain injury is called the invisible injury be-

cause more often than not the person suffering from it appears completely normal on the outside. A brain injury cannot be seen by the naked eye. The struggle very often takes place inside. But just because you can't see the injury, that doesn't mean there isn't one. I hope to make this clear and understandable to everyone. It's a big objective, I know, but helping people understand brain injury will mean that what happened to me will have happened for a reason.

Who Are We? Profiles of People Living with Brain Injury

For a few years now I have been visiting a traumatic brain injury chat room. There I have met hundreds of people living with brain injury, so I can tell you that the list of ways to get a brain injury is endless. To now share with you how these chatters got a brain injury and what it means for them in their daily life, I will share the profiles of the people I have met in TBI chat. Although brain injuries are like fingerprints—no two are the same—many of the same symptoms and issues are experienced by people living with a brain injury. I am including the age, gender, and nationality of these people in an attempt to show that brain injury has no frontiers, doesn't discriminate between men and women, and can happen at any age. I am not using names or nicknames for privacy reasons. I hope my friends from TBI will forgive me for having reduced them to numbers.

1. Man, thirty-eight, South Africa, 2003 car crash. He suffers from double vision all the time; he is able to walk, but his biggest challenge is memory.
2. Woman, twenty-seven, USA, shot in the head in 1998 in her driveway with a bullet not intended for her. She cannot walk, read, spell, can't feel her right side, and she

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- suffers from speech, reading, writing, and math difficulties. She is able to walk and uses both arms.
3. Woman, forty, USA, three brain injuries, all from motor vehicle accidents, the last in 2005. She suffers from numbness on her left side, headaches, seizures, and vision problems; she underwent sixteen surgeries and had to learn to walk again.
 4. Man, forty, Australia, air bubble in brain, which his doctors stuffed up. He's doing pretty well, but he has a bad memory; he lost movement on his right side at first, but it came back; he learnt to spell and read again; his two kids are with their mum, who took off with them after TBI.
 5. Man, forty-eight, USA, 2005 motorcycle accident. He suffers from memory loss and emotional issues.
 6. Woman, forty-three, Australia, single, no kids, TBI many years ago from encephalitis and frontal-lobe syndrome. She has no physical deficits, but she suffers from slow learning and self-esteem issues.
 7. Woman, forty-six, USA, 2006 ruptured aneurysm. She suffers from bad headaches, short-term memory problems, fatigue, and concentration problems.
 8. Woman, twenty-one, USA, 2005 brain stem stroke. She recovered physically 95 percent; she is only dealing with memory and emotional issues now; her short-term memory is gone, and she is deaf in her right ear.
 9. Man, fifty-five, UK, 1962 drunk-driving crash. He has trouble with his left extremities (arm, hand, fingers) and speech; no cognitive issues.
 10. Woman, forty-two, Australia, 2005 ruptured severe cerebral aneurysm. She lost movement on left side of her body, and she also lost peripheral vision on the left for both eyes; no cognitive issues.
 11. Man, twenty-four, USA, 2002 skateboarding accident while holding onto a truck driven by his friend; he fell and broke his head open. He spent two months in a coma; he walks and uses both arms; he has no physical deficits; he

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- was in a wheelchair in the hospital, his short-term memory is bad, and he can't drive.
12. Man, thirty-eight, UK, single, no kids; 1988 assault, 2005 car crash. He suffers from poor executive functions (memory, language skills, deductive reasoning, decision making, multitasking), has bit of a limp, is very nervous driving, and lost faith in his abilities.
 13. Man, twenty-three, USA, car accident when he was four years old. He suffers from schizophrenia, but he is otherwise fine; he's okay when using meds.
 14. Man, fifty-eight, USA, married, two kids, two aneurysms one year apart—1998 and 1999. He suffers from short-term memory problems, hearing loss, and double vision; he walked with stick for about three years, but has no deficits that are noticeable.
 15. Man, thirty-eight, USA, hit by car in 1984 while crossing the street, flew twenty to thirty feet and landed on his head. He spent two to three weeks in a coma, underwent four brain surgeries to remove the plate of bone and relieve pressure, lost the use of his legs and right arm, and did three to four months of rehab; he is physically okay, but he has severe anger-management issues; He finished high school, then went to college and finished in four years; the TBI was twenty-three years ago, and he's been in denial ever since, so he has a completely different lot of problems to deal with; he can't hold a job.
 16. Woman, fifty-five, USA, in 2003 she blew out a brain vessel, drowned, and her heart stopped all at once. She is slow thinking, has some balance issues, and has executive-function problems; she had to learn to talk and walk again, and she can now use both arms, but it took over two years to get to that point.
 17. Man, thirty-six, USA, married, one son, two strokes in 2005 and 2006. He has fully recovered physically; he still has problems emotionally and mentally, namely short-term memory problems; he underwent six neurological procedures in two years; he has no sense of smell, gets overwhelmed easily, and hasn't worked since.

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18. Man, forty-three, single, no kids, TBI as an infant sustained in a car accident, and he only found out about it recently. He has massive anxiety attacks, stress, and obsessive compulsive disorder; he has no physical deficits or cognitive issues; he has had one brain injury but two breakdowns.
19. Woman, thirty-four, Canada, 2007 car accident. She spent three weeks in a coma, one month in rehab; she still has much recovering to do.
20. Woman, fifty-two, USA, 2006 skate-sailing accident. She suffers from speech issues, anxiety, slow thinking, noise sensitivity, and personality change; she likes her new-and-improved identity better.
21. Woman, forty-nine, USA, 2001 car accident. She suffers from confusion and memory problems.
22. Man, thirties, 2007 motorcycle accident. He can't talk, walk, or swallow (has a tube).
23. Woman, forty-two, USA, fell down stairs, landed on concrete, and shattered her face. She sustained level-three concussions and doesn't remember one month after the fall; she suffers from facial numbness, headaches, mood swings, sleep disorder, and acceptance issues.
24. Woman, nineteen, USA, 1997 car accident in which the van rolled three times while she was in the middle. Her right side is paralyzed, and she had to relearn everything; suffers from speech problems and slow reaction time.
25. Woman, forty-nine, USA, 2003 car accident. She suffers from memory, reading, and sleeping issues, and her right arm and hand don't have the dexterity they used to.
26. Woman, nineteen, USA, 2007 car accident. She sustained a broken jaw and a crushed nose, and she was in a coma for one month. She is in acute rehab, can't use her right arm/hand, can't sit up or hold her head up, may have to go to a long-term rehab centre, speaks some, but she is hard to understand.
27. Woman, forty-five, USA, 2006 car accident. She can't control her emotions, says words she didn't mean to say, has trouble organizing and planning, and has a bad

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- memory; she used to be a lawyer, but that's now out of the question; she can't seem to get household work done, let alone do another job; her biggest problem is suppressing emotions; she is lost with anything to do with numbers and can't remember the date.
28. Woman, twenty-nine, USA, 1998 car accident. She suffers from short-term memory problems.
 29. Woman, thirty-two, Australia, 2006 car accident. She sustained close head and neck injuries and suffers from short-term memory problems, mood swings, depression, and anger issues; she had a shattered pelvis and was in wheelchair, but the pelvic injury is healed now.
 30. Woman, fifty-four, USA, caught her foot in wires while moving across the office, tripped and landed on some steel, and came down on her forehead. She has no physical deficits, but she has seizures.
 31. Woman, thirty-five, USA, 2005 car accident in which she was the only survivor. She has serious physical and cognitive impairments, she is non-verbal, can't walk, has severe spasticity, and has a very limited ability to comprehend. She was hospitalized for a long time, then in a rehab centre for six months, and she's now home with her mother.
 32. Woman, twenty-five, USA, 2000 car accident. Her head goes numb, and she's lightheaded and dizzy, all at the same time; her doctors don't know why; she had no problems for two years after the brain injury; she is now on disability.
 33. Man, forties, 2008 motorcycle accident. He is physically okay, so thinks he doesn't need rehab; he sustained a left temporal lobe injury.
 34. Woman, 1994 car accident. She spent twelve days in a coma, sustained a broken jaw, and has seizures; the hardest part is finding work and friends.
 35. Woman, thirty-eight, USA, 2007 motor vehicle accident. She sustained a torn aorta and she suffers from paralysis, damage to her left eye, and memory issues; she can't drive, can't work, and swears like a trucker.
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36. Woman, twenty, USA, 2004 car accident. She spent three months in a coma and suffers from right-side weakness, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and had to re-learn to walk, talk, and swallow ; she lost most friends.
37. Man, fifty-four, Australia, 1998 cardiac arrest due to allergy to meds. He suffers from memory, concentration, vision, and cognitive issues.
38. Woman, thirty-five, Canada, brain infection at ten-months old, 2004 motor vehicle accident; she suffers from memory problems and constant headaches; she can walk short distances, but long walks are hard on her hip.
39. Man, forty-three, USA, 1994 accident, went through a window shield headfirst at fifty miles per hour and landed on his head. He is in cognitive rehab for TBI; at first he was dragging his right foot around and he is slow in talking and walking, but he uses both arms; he is antisocial and hates crowds; he lives with his mother.
40. Woman, twenty, USA, 2001 car crash. She spent six months in a coma, finished high school, but didn't pass her graduation exams; she is blind in left eye and she can't drive; there's not much else she can't do as before; she has no physical deficits, but she has a bad memory.
41. Man, fifty-seven, USA, 1973 mosquito bite while playing golf, contracted encephalitis. He spent forty-three days in a coma and suffers from dystonia (neuromuscular disease).
42. Man, thirty-six, USA, 1999 car accident, only survivor (wife died). He spent two months in a coma; he now lives alone and works in a shop fixing cars; he has no physical deficits.
43. Man, forty-three, Australia, 1982 fall from three-storey roof. He has no physical deficits, but he does have memory problems.
44. Man, fifty-one, USA, 1997 surgery for a brain aneurysm, followed by a stroke. He was a photographer, gourmand, and hiker; he became an aphasiac (lost the ability to comprehend and use language); he has no physical deficits.

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45. Man, forty-six, USA, assaulted coming home from a concert, hit in the head with a baseball bat, and his hand was almost cut off; the perpetrators were not charged. He still has problems with his right side; he walks and uses both arms, but his right hand is weaker; he takes care of his affairs and is still working on speech.
46. Woman, forties, UK, 1997 brain bleed. She suffers from short-term memory problems; she is mostly okay, but she doesn't realise anything is wrong; she lives with her hubby and three daughters.
47. Man, twenty-five, USA, 2004 blow from baseball bat while coaching. He had a brain stem stroke, spent three months in a coma, and is quadriplegic and mute; he has no cognitive issues and is going back to his studies in 2008.
48. Man, twenty-six, Australia, hit by a car in 1997. He spent six weeks in a coma, underwent ten operations, and died twice; his left side is weaker than before the accident.
49. Man, twenty, USA, 2002 throw from the back of a pickup truck. His skull smashed by the truck, but he came out alive; his memory is intact, as well as his motor skills, but his personality has changed.
50. Woman, twenty-three, USA, 2001 car accident. She had to relearn everything; she studies and works part time and lives with her parents.
51. Man, twenty, USA, 2007 car accident. He sustained a diffused axonal injury, and he suffers from fatigue, confusion, and memory issues.
52. Man, twenty-three, USA, brain tumour the size of a grapefruit removed when he was seven years old. He is visually impaired, walks funny, and stutters.
53. Man, forty-four, USA, 2006 fall from semi-trailer truck while delivering milk. He had a large blood clot removed, and spent two months in rehab; he suffers from mood swings, aphasia, difficulty keeping his balance while walking, and problems in crowds.
54. Woman, fifty-two, USA, hit by bus in 2007 while crossing the street. She has memory, speech, and executive-func-

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- tion issues; she is doing amazingly well; she's in a nursing facility and continuing rehab; she has no physical deficits.
55. Woman, late forties, USA, fell and went into a coma when she was three. She underwent brain surgery in 1983; she was in a car accident in 1987; she has memory problems, and she doesn't recognize people; she has no physical deficits, only internal injuries and a few organs missing; she suffers from seizures and memory problems, and she is light sensitive.
56. Man, thirty-one, USA, 1997 skiing accident. His left side is affected; he is heavily involved with physiotherapy, and he suffers mostly from left arm/hand disability.
57. Man, fifty-one, USA, 1993 hang gliding accident. He was in a coma; the experience led him to do volunteer work.
58. Man, forty-six, Canada, gassed with hydrogen sulphide in 2003—enough to kill him three times—in the oil fields in Saskatoon; he was a truck driver, the hose blew off, and he absorbed hydrogen sulphide through his skin and inhaled some. He lost his memory of his kids, but he is here now to share their lives; he had memory loss from 1986 until 2003; his balance is better now, he has no physical deficits, and he can look after himself.
59. Man, thirty-six, USA, 1996 motor vehicle accident. He spent six days in a coma, four and one-half months in the hospital, seven months in rehab, and had to learn to write again; he has no physical deficits.
60. Man, fifty, USA, 1991 blow to head. He suffers from right side deficits, frontal lobe injury; he doesn't work but fixes things for others.
61. Woman, sixty, hit by truck in 1994. She was paralysed on her left side and still can't talk or eat.
62. Man, thirty-eight, USA, 1995 car accident. His face was crushed, and he had brain swelling, nerve damage, and back and neck pain, he couldn't read for a while, he had continuous pain for eight hundred eighty days, his wife put him through hell, his money ran out in 1999, his wife had to get a job to support them and has hated him since, and he feels empty, like there's nothing left.

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63. Man, twenty-eight, USA, hit by a truck in 1998. He was in a coma for ninety-five days, had to relearn everything, spent two years in wheelchair, one year with a walker, and then used a cane; He suffered nerve damage, he shakes really bad, and his jaw was smashed, so he has problems talking; his mind thinks clearly, but he has no work.
 64. Man, twenty, USA, hit by fuel truck in 2006. He spent one month in a coma, and he suffers from a right frontal lobe injury, memory problems, reasoning problems, and emotional issues; he works part time and is trying to go back to college.
 65. Man, sixty-one, USA, 2004 stroke and heart attack. He suffers from left-side weakness and memory and cognitive issues; he has no physical deficits.
 66. Man, twenty-three, USA, lost control of bike while passing a car in 2004, went off the road and his head hit a tree. He had to relearn to walk and talk; he has no physical deficits or memory problems.
 67. Woman, thirty-one, USA, brain tumour at the age of nineteen and another brain tumour undiagnosed; she was discovered unconscious in a hotel room in 1996. She lost peripheral vision in her left eye, and she suffers from seizures and fatigue.
 68. Man, forty-one, Australia, 1997 motorcycle accident. He spent one week in a coma; he needs to take things slowly, and he has mood swings; his biggest issues have been emotional and behavioural, especially anger; he has a slight balance issue.
 69. Man, forty-five, New Zealand, 1998 head-on collision with a truck trailer, during which his daughter and wife were killed. He has balance, speech, and walking issues, and he has some cognitive issues; he doesn't work, and he couldn't speak for months.
 70. Man, thirty-three, Australia, brain tumour. He suffers from memory problems, slow thinking, and poor vision in one eye.
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71. Man, fifty-one, USA, 1997 anoxic brain injury after a heart attack. He has short-term memory loss and doesn't do well in crowds.
72. Man, thirty-three, USA, 2001 assault with a golf club. He is partially paralysed on his left side, has a short-term memory problem, and he has obsessive compulsive disorder; he walks with difficulty (lots of pressure on cane).
73. Woman, twenty-six, USA, 2003 motor vehicle accident. She spent four months in a coma; the spasms are under control now, her memory is getting better, and a lot of things have gotten better overall.
74. Man, forty, USA, 2007 motorcycle accident, during which he was not wearing a helmet. He was in a coma for a while, and he has balance issues and diminished sense of taste; he lacks the ability to multitask, drive, and work; he is on disability because he is mentally slow and has anger problems.
75. Woman, twenty-nine, USA, 2006 drunk-driving accident. She couldn't move her left side, she sustained a broken jaw, she loses balance, has lots of seizures, and has short-term memory problems; she hates the new person she has become and misses her old identity.
76. Boy, nine, meningitis/encephalitis at eleven months of age, which caused a coma and a massive stroke. He has no physical deficits, but he can't dress himself, he is developmentally delayed, and he is totally dependent; he suffers from seizures, vision problems, growth failure, and inability to speak.
77. Woman, forty-three, Australia, 1995 encephalitic disease, no found cause. She suffers from memory loss, seizures, and bone growth (had hip surgery to remove it); she has no physical deficits; she has lived with her parents since getting out of the hospital.
78. Man, sixty-five, Canada, whacked at work in 1996. He suffers from memory, balance, cognitive, and emotional issues, and he has right-side numbness; he has no physical deficits, and he is able to drive.

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79. Woman, forty-four, Canada, closed head injury at the age of twelve (she fell off a pony), motor vehicle accident when eighteen, and a 2001 brain infection. She walks, talks, and looks okay; she has seizures (induced by stress), social deficits, she couldn't read until 2005, she has memory loss and personality change, and she has lost her speech and number skills.
80. Man, forty-seven, USA, 1994 blow to the head with a hammer while in college. He spent three months in a coma and had to relearn everything; he has seizures and short-term memory loss; he is not able to drive or live alone, so he lives with his mother; He has no physical deficits.
81. Man, thirty-two, USA, 2005 motorcycle accident. He spent ninety days in a coma, he can't walk or talk, and left side is weaker.
82. Man, twenty-seven, USA, 2001 car accident. He has shown no noticeable progress in seven years.
83. Woman, fifty-two, USA, kicked in the head by a patient while working in a psychiatric facility for children. She suffers from balance and gait problems, hearing loss, and severe pain; she lives alone.
84. Man, forty-seven, New Zealand, hit by a truck in 2002. He suffers from fatigue, memory and concentration problems, and noise sensitivity; he has no physical deficits.
85. Woman, forty-six, USA, 1998 fall down the stairs in her home at night. She spent six weeks in the intensive care unit (ICU) and another six weeks in hospital; she was paralysed on her left side and she had to relearn to walk, talk, and take care of herself again; she has recovered very well and uses both arms; you'd never know she was disabled; she can't smell or taste, she has balance problems, has no memory, and has trouble processing info; Her family doesn't acknowledge or accept her injury.
86. Woman, fifty-nine, USA, ran down by a car in 1975 when twenty-six years old. She suffered from broken ribs and loss of memory; she is back to normal now.

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87. Woman, forty-two, USA, kicked in the head several times in 2006. She suffers from migraines, seizures, memory problems, and stroke-like symptoms; she is dizzy a lot and unable to drive; she has no physical deficits.
88. Man, twenty, USA, 2005 motor vehicle accident. He is doing okay, but he is depressed, he doesn't want to do anything, and he has lost lots of weight.
89. Man, forty-one, USA, 2005 aneurysm and stroke. He suffers from short-term memory problems, inability to multitask, cognitive issues, and seizures; he has no physical deficits.
90. Man, forty-six, USA, 1989 head-on car crash. He suffers from memory problems, fatigue, and shortness of temper; he lost his teaching job; he has no physical deficits.
91. Woman, forty-nine, USA, rear-ended by truck in 2004. She suffers from migraines, vertigo, tremors, sensitive cerebral sleep apnoea, fatigue, and walking issues; she uses a walker for short distances, a motorized cart in stores, and a wheelchair in overstimulating places.
92. Man, fifty-two, USA, 2006 brain stem stroke. His left side is shot, but he does well with limited walking in a power wheelchair.
93. Man, twenty-one, USA, 2004 car accident. His short-term memory is bad, and he has poor walking ability and balance issues.
94. Woman, forty-seven, USA, 2005 attack, kicked in the head four times, then hit her head on the back of a bus. She could not move her left side for a couple of months, but she regained movement; she suffers from migraines, seizures, memory problems, and talking difficulty; she had a TBI when she was a baby, so she always had trouble with her memory.
95. Woman, thirty, USA, 2002 car accident. She is physically okay but mentally screwed up.
96. Man, fifty-five, USA, open-heart surgery, woke up with brain injury. He has no physical deficits; his main issue is memory.

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97. Woman, fifty-nine, USA, 1998 motor vehicle accident. She had no nose until six months after the motor vehicle accident, having broken the steering wheel with her face; she suffers from a loss of peripheral vision and speech problems (her vocal chords were destroyed when intubated); she walks with a cane and uses both arms.
98. Man, twenty-three, USA, 2003 car accident. He was in a coma for two and one-half months and learnt to walk again; going through school was tough, but he graduated in May, 2008.
99. Girl, nine, USA, 2005 car accident. She sustained a depressed skull fracture, and she suffers from seizures and learning disabilities.
100. Woman, forty-five, USA, 1994 car accident, during which she slipped on black ice and rolled downhill three times. She suffers from fatigue, headaches, dizziness, and memory issues; she is able to drive.
101. Man, brain injury from service in the Middle East caused by some strange virus crossing the blood-brain barrier. He was in a coma and suffers from seizures. His girlfriend never left him and accepted his marriage proposal after the brain injury; he had to relearn to walk, talk, and deal with the basic aspects of living; he was declared permanently disabled by epilepsy.
102. Woman, eighteen, USA, victim of SBS (shaken baby syndrome). She graduated high school in May, 2008; she suffers from anger and short-term memory problems.
103. Man, forty-five, New Zealand, 1987 car accident. His left side is badly damaged, he moves slowly, and he has balance and speech issues.
104. Man, forty-one, USA, 2008 cardiac arrest after emergency surgery, during which his heart stopped for eighteen minutes. He is in a vegetative state and has no response, no awareness, no recognition, and no speech; he lives in a nursing home, and for him all movement is unconscious.
105. Man, thirty-six, USA, had shunt put in at birth; some damage was done when putting it in, and he had nineteen surgeries in total; more damage was done from the anaes-

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- thetic that was used for the surgeries. He suffers from short-term memory issues and frustration issues; he works part time.
106. Man, thirty-two, USA, 2005 motorcycle accident. He spent ninety days in a coma; he can't walk or talk and has left-side weakness.
107. Man, thirty-seven, Canada, hit by a tractor trailer in 2007. He has headaches all the time as if he were stoned or hung over, he feels like an old man, and he thinks he's disabled for good; he has no physical- or mental-health problems and no physical deficits, aside from his back being crooked and always being stiff and sore; his identity and way of life gone, he is unable to have independence or privacy, he feels stoned and slow, he is semiretarded, doesn't know where he's going, feels stranded, has headaches, emotional overload, back injuries, and permanent physical injuries; the brain injury robbed him of his health, independence, and way of life; he feels inadequate, less human, and his head is very cloudy.
108. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, 2002 car accident, during which she was hit by a dump truck on the way to pick up her kids from school; the truck took almost the whole left side of her head. She has issues with personality change, memory, spelling, forgetting words, headaches, stiff body, and depression.
109. Man, thirty-seven, USA, hit by a semi-trailer truck in 2004 while outside of his truck because of iced windows; the oncoming truck was going 70 mph. He suffers from memory loss, seizures, a broken neck, collapsed lungs, a laceration to his adrenal gland, and bad depth perception; he is able to work.
110. Man, forty, USA, 1996 twenty-foot fall at work, during which he landed on his left side on concrete. He is doing well; social recovery took the longest, and he is now working, so his life is more complicated in some aspects.
111. Man, twenty-nine, UK, 2001 car accident. He spent nine months in the hospital; he has no physical deficits, but the psychological/mental effects could drive anybody insane.
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112. Woman, thirty-five, Canada, 2002 stroke. She suffers from mobility problems, her left side is affected, and she has very little movement in her left arm, which is very frustrating. Her only issues are physical, namely weakness of her entire left side, although she is able to drive; she lives alone, and it took a lot to deal with living alone; she has learnt so much about herself through this.
113. Man, fifty, USA, 2001 car crash with deer. He suffers from vision and short-term memory issues; he has no physical deficits.
114. Woman, thirty, USA, 1995 motor vehicle accident. She looks okay on the outside, but she spent eight weeks in a coma, four months in rehab, relearned to walk, talk, brush her hair, everything again; she is doing wonderful now, and she walks and uses both arms.
115. Man, forty-seven, USA, 2006 motor vehicle accident. He suffers from nausea, dizziness, balance issues, and putting thoughts and words together; he walks with limp and gets sidetracked easily; he is able to work.
116. Man, twenty-four, USA, 2005 fall from the back of a golf cart, after which he woke up in the ICU. He suffers from short-term memory issues, fatigue, and organisation difficulty; he has no physical deficits.
117. Man, forty-three, Canada, 1975 motorbike crash. He spent five days in a coma and now has weakness on his left side, frustration issues, and mood swings; He has no physical deficits.
118. Man, thirty-eight, USA, 1987 motor vehicle accident. He spent fourteen days in a coma, and he has bad balance and walks like a drunk.
119. Man, eighteen, USA, 2005 head-on collision with semi-trailer truck. His doctors said he'd never live because he was one point away from being brain dead; he has no physical deficits; his face was reconstructed, his balance is sometimes a little off, he has memory and cognitive issues, decision making issues, concentration problems, and he is impulsive; he lives with his mother.

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120. Man, thirty-eight, USA, 1995 head-on car crash with semi-trailer truck. He spent two weeks in a coma and was paralysed on his left side; he got most motor skills back on the left, and he now walks and uses both arms; he is better now but will never be the same.
121. Man, forty-six, Canada, fell down concrete steps in bar while seeing a band with whom he used to play. He had a craniotomy one week later; he has brain injury due to compression/expanding blood on left compressed brain to right skull; he has been okay, completed college, works, used to have epilepsy, had surgery in 2002, and has been seizure-free since, but he lost some peripheral vision, so he can't drive, and he has memory problems.
122. Woman, forty-five, USA, was a social worker, 2006 car accident. She was in a coma and she is still in rehab, where she is relearning everything; she suffers from seizures, balance issues, and frequent falling, and she can use both arms, but her coordination is bad; she is significantly impaired.
123. Girl, seventeen, USA, fell riding a horse and hit her head on patch of concrete. She is doing well and getting a lot better physically, but she has changed so much for the worse emotionally since it happened; she threatened to kill herself when discharged from the hospital, but she is feeling better now.
124. Man, forty-two, USA, 2001 collision with tree in a four wheeler. He sustained a right temporal-lobe injury, and he has short-term memory problems and emotional problems; six months after the TBI he started drinking heavily, but he quit in 2003; TBI depression is still trying to get him.
125. Woman, forty, USA, 2005 stroke while driving to work. She has left-side deficits and she walks with cane; her arm and hand are useless, and there's not much hope of gaining the use back, but she hopes to be able to walk more normally.
126. Woman, fifty-one, USA, 2007 fall from a golf cart, during which she broke an ankle and sustained a head injury. She

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- lost her senses of smell and taste, and she suffers from headaches, memory trouble, cognitive issues, finding the right words, and she is very uncoordinated and off balance when walking; she has no physical deficits.
127. Man, eighteen, USA, fell off third-floor balcony and landed on his head. He has made a full physical recovery; he suffers from cognitive and short-term memory issues and extreme impulsivity.
128. Boy, sixteen, USA, hit by a drunk driver in 2005. He can't walk or talk but is doing much better and going to a rehab centre.
129. Woman, thirties, USA, 2007 motor vehicle accident. She is uncoordinated, has a very difficult time walking, stutters bad, and has nausea; she walks with a walker now and talks better but can't find the right words.
130. Woman, forty-eight, USA, pedestrian who was hit by car in 1985. She sustained a subdural hematoma, skull fractures, and a fractured leg, hip, and wrist; she suffers from memory problems and panic attacks; she walks sometimes with the use of a cane, and her brain deficits stabilized around 2000.
131. Man, fifty, USA, 1997 truck accident. He suffers from seizures; he is learning to read and spell again and had to learn to walk and talk again.
132. Man, sixty, UK, 1988 stroke, was forty at the time. He has built a new life for himself.
133. Woman, thirty-four, Canada, hit from behind at high speed on the way to work. She sustained collar bone and pelvic injuries; her physical injuries still bother her, she feels off a lot, and she suffers from memory and coordination problems, difficulty following instructions, slow thinking, anxiety issues, speech problems, and personality change; she likes her new/improved identity better.
134. Man, forty-six, 2007 car accident. He doesn't make sense when he talks and he suffers from short-term memory issues; he has no physical deficits.
135. Man, thirty-four, Australia, 2006 assault with an iron bar. He spent time in a coma and lost his senses of smell and

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taste; he suffers from double vision and headaches, his body thermostat is out of whack, and heat is very hard for him to handle, causing him to sweat all the time; he now walks and talks; his main issue now is anger, as all else has settled down.

136. Woman, forty-one, USA, 1991 car accident, after which she died at the scene but was resuscitated. She has a degenerative disk in three places and she is bipolar (mostly down, never super high); she suffers from memory problems, balance problems, forgets words she has known her whole life, forgets what she was doing or saying, dizziness, and seizures.
137. Man, forty-five, USA, 1993 motorbike accident while drunk. He spent four months in a coma and it took about one thousand stitches to put him back together; he wasn't wearing a helmet, and his body was torn apart, his brain hung out, his stomach fell out, his intestines were down to knees, and he suffered a broken arm and leg; he has left-side weakness; he can now do just about anything, he just has to figure out the best way to accomplish it.
138. Girl, ten, USA, hit by a train in 2004. Her left side is weaker; she has problems with memory, attention, and vision, and she has left optic-nerve damage; she is learning brail.
139. Man, fifty, Australia, 2005 car accident. He sustained a broken back and then had a stroke; he spent three and one-half months in the hospital, and he has short-term memory problems; he is learning to walk again.
140. Man, forty-seven, USA, 1993 motorcycle accident. He is now in a wheelchair.
141. Man, forty-six, USA, 1993 accident, during which he fell asleep while driving home and hit a house at 60 mph. His doctors didn't look into this until 2007, when neuropsychological tests showed right-side brain damage; he suffers from sleep issues, personality change, depression, impulsivity (says things he regrets), anxiety, anger, personality change; he just wants to be himself again, and he feels frustration because he is capable of doing things but

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- people act as if he is not; he was an assistant teacher with special-needs kids, so he understands attention span difficulty and easy distraction, but he is frustrated because he is experiencing problems that he help others overcome.
142. Woman, forty, USA, bad fall in 2007. She is confused and freaked out, and she suffers from bad vision, light sensitivity, central-vision loss, spine pain, upper-spinal injury, pain when walking, numb feet, headaches, and ringing in her ear; she has has had no rehab yet, but she is speaking, breathing, and swallowing a bit better now.
143. Man, thirty-four, USA, 1993 assault with a bat. He spent two weeks in a coma; his short-term memory is bad, and he has left-side weakness.
144. Man, thirty, USA, 2005 fall from a ladder. He suffers from double vision, dizziness, and he feels as if his whole body were physically reset; he has no physical deficits.
145. Woman, thirties, 2007 head-on collision. She sustained ten broken bones, and she spent three and one-half months in the hospital, having sustained a frontal-lobe injury and needing a new forehead; anger and emotional problems are the major issue since her accident.
146. Woman, twenty-four, Taiwan, hit by a car in 2002 while riding a scooter; she walked to the ambulance by herself the day of the accident. She suddenly began experiencing problems in school, such as memory problems and being slow to learn new things; she has no physical deficits.
147. Woman, thirty, USA, 1995 fall. The right side of her body is numb, and she is lucky not to be paralysed; she also has memory issues but no physical deficits.
148. Man, forty-eight, USA, a young horse fell with him and kicked him in the head in 2004. He only has 90 percent use of his left arm, and he walks like a drunk.
149. Man, forties, Scotland, 1995 seventeen-foot fall at work, landed on his head. He suffers from temper-control issues, mood swings, fatigue, depression, and personality change, and he can't relate to anything he's done in the past.
150. Woman, twenty-eight, USA, 2000 car accident with double-loaded semi-trailer truck. She spent forty-eight

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days in a coma and has memory issues; she is up and walking again.

151. Man, twenty-nine, Canada, 2004 car accident. He suffers from chronic neck and shoulder pain, memory problems, fatigue, and anxiety attacks; he is on disability and still trying to finish school.
 152. Woman, thirty-eight, USA, 2003 fall in her driveway while trying to get out of the way of the car that her son was backing for her; the clutch popped while she was in the driver's-side door; she landed on her head and the car ran over her arm. She spent one month in the hospital with a big frontal-lobe subdural bleed and then went back to work eight months after the accident; she started having seizures and fluid leaking in her brain; her cognitive and executive functions have declined greatly to the point where she now can't work; she suffers from seizures, sensory overload, memory issues, and the loss of her senses of smell and taste.
 153. Man, forty-seven, USA, 1982 motor vehicle accident. He spent twelve days in a coma and suffered a ruptured diaphragm and a collapsed lung, for which he spent two months in the hospital; he has mostly recovered, except for emotional issues, memory problems, sensory overload, and speech problems when stressed; he lives alone.
 154. Man, forty-two, USA, 1996 small-plane crash. He was busted orthopedically and has a hard time dealing with and accepting brain injury; he suffers from denial issues, cognitive problems, fatigue, edginess, memory problems, and sensory overload.
 155. Man forty, USA, 1988 motor vehicle accident. He spent three months in a coma and he suffers from right-side paralysis, spasticity problems, pain, and constant discomfort; he walks and uses both arms.
 156. Woman, forty-five, USA, 2004 blow to head by an access panel at work. Her headaches are so bad they cause nausea, her memory is bad, and she lost her senses of smell and taste for a long time; she moves fine.
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157. Woman, twenty, USA, 2006 car accident. She sustained a diffused anoxic injury and a broken jaw, and she spent two months in a coma; she sustained four broken vertebrae and two bulging disks, and she suffers from short-term memory loss; she lost her apartment while in a coma and moved back with her parents; she does not have any physical deficits.
158. Man, forty-four, Canada, fall, which caused brain swelling. His right frontal lobe was bruised and subsequently removed to reduce pressure in his skull; he suffers from anger issues, memory and concentration problems, and low tolerance for stress; he is highly functioning but doesn't work, and he has lost his friends.
159. Man, forty-six, USA, 1995 blow from baseball bat by girlfriend. He has good days and bad days, suffers from panic attacks, and is afraid of people.
160. Man, forty-six, New Zealand, 2003 subarachnoid bleed. His concentration is not good without meds, his short-term memory is terrible, and he suffers from fatigue; otherwise, he has made a good recovery and has no physical deficits.
161. Man, forty-four, USA, 1995 head-on collision with truck trailer. He has balance and speech problems, and he lacks peripheral vision.
162. Man, forty, USA, 1997 motor vehicle accident. He still has trouble with sensory overload, but fewer issues than he had initially.
163. Woman, forty-three, USA, coma during childhood, and then she was hit by a car in 1999 while riding her motorbike and incurred some minor brain injuries while playing hockey. She has memory problems and hearing and balance issues; she is able to work.
164. Man, twenty-eight, USA, 2004 dirt bike accident, fell forty feet and landed on his head. He spent three months in a coma; used a wheelchair, then a walker, and now he doesn't need assistance walking; one arm is better than the other; he is going through a divorce.

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165. Man, thirty-four, UK, 1996 car accident. He still has difficulty walking and talking; he is able to work.
166. Man, thirty, Australia, 2005 accident in which a towel dispenser fell off the wall and hit him on the head. He had a brain infection, which caused memory problems, personality change, migraines, bad neck, ringing in his ear, and anxiety; he has no physical deficits; he lives alone, and he doesn't go out very often (once every week or two), as he is anxious being around people; his girlfriend left him after the accident.
167. Man, nineteen, USA, 2005 cardiac arrest. He has an abnormal ventricle, and he has a lack of comprehension and memory issues; he has no physical deficits
168. Man, thirty-eight, USA, car fell on him while he was doing repairs and his wife lifted it off of him. He has short-term memory problems, and he lost his sense of touch and the strength on his left side; he has no physical deficits.
169. Man, fifty-two, Canada, 1991 car crash, a kid ran a red light and hit his car. He sustained a stem and frontal lobe injury, and he suffers from fatigue, sensory overload, and personality change; he was engaged many years ago but never married, then he stopped seeking marriage after brain injury; he has no physical deficits.
170. Woman, fifties, USA, accumulated damage from seven concussions, the last in 2005. She suffers from weakness on her right side, and she has concentration, balance, and short-term memory problems; she has no physical deficits.
171. Woman, forty-five, USA, 1997 car accident, 2000 horse riding accident. She suffers from seizures and is very unsteady on her feet; she lives alone and has no physical deficits.
172. Woman, twenty-one, USA, 2005 car accident. She has problems controlling her emotions; she has no physical deficits.
173. Man, twenty-four, Spain, 2007 fall from horse at the last jump of a cross-country competition. He was in a coma, and he woke up paralysed on his right side but got move-

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- ment back as the swelling decreased; he suffers from speech and writing problems; he was in a wheelchair at first, but he now walks unaided.
174. Woman, thirties, 2005 car accident, not diagnosed until 2007. She did one year of outpatient rehab in 2008.
175. Man, nineteen, USA, 2005 accident. He suffers from short-term memory problems, slurred speech, shattered pelvis, and has to wear a brace; he is doing well, in school to become a registered nurse, and he is now able to drive.
176. Woman, fifty-four, USA, 1998 car crash. She suffers from depression, bad memory, dizziness, vertigo, shoulder and back pain; she has no physical deficits.
177. Man, fifty-two, USA, hit by high speed iron projectile in 2007 while walking, and hit by car in 2007. He used to be a commercial pilot and a multi-axle howler in energy fields; he wants to go back to work but can't leave the house without losing it; he suffers from seizures and short-term memory loss; he is staying with a friend, but he scares his friend a lot with his condition; he is afraid of how his mental being has changed.
178. Man, thirty, USA, 2007 cerebral artery dissection resulting in two strokes. His left leg and arm have to be retrained to work; he walks with a modified walker.
179. Man, thirty-four, UK, 1997 car accident. He spent fourteen days in a coma and then eight months in three different hospitals; he walks with a stagger and experiences weakness on his left side; he is able to use both arms, he does fencing for therapy, and he is able to work.
180. Woman, nineteen, USA, 2003 car accident. She suffers from short-term memory loss and doesn't drive; she graduated high school on time and now takes a couple of college classes.
181. Man, twenty-four, USA, 2005 fall at work, hitting his head. He suffers from anger as well as cognitive and memory issues; he stabbed someone while he was in jail and was transferred to mental institution; he began writing poetry while in jail.

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182. Woman, forty-five, USA, 1965 accident in which her mother, who was drinking and driving, crashed into a tree. She spent one month in a coma; she now lives in group home and works.
183. Man, twenty-seven, USA, 2005 motorcycle accident in which he nearly killed himself. He sustained six broken ribs in twelve places, a punctured lung, a burst spleen, and a broken arm; brain bleeding and swelling caused personality change, anger issues, and mood swings; no physical deficits at this time.
184. Boy, fourteen, USA, hit by a car in 2004 while riding his bike. He was in an induced coma for one week; he has many issues, including paralyzes on his right side; he now moves but lacks feeling and also suffers from memory problems.
185. Woman, twenty-one, USA, a pedestrian who was hit by car in 2007. She had to learn to walk again, and now has posture issues and double vision.
186. Woman, forty-seven, USA, 2007 fall while working with a young horse. She sustained an eight-inch skull fracture and couldn't walk; she walks now but has numbness in the left side of her face; no physical deficits.
187. Man, thirty-seven, USA, 1999 motorcycle accident in which an old lady ran a red light hit him. He is doing well.
188. Man, forty-seven, USA, train conductor, 1999 accident in which his train hit a semi-trailer truck on tracks while travelling 50 mph.
189. Woman, forty-four, USA, 1999 motor vehicle accident. She has visual deficits, problem-solving difficulty, organising issues, memory issues, and fatigue; she was a registered nurse.
190. Woman, fifty-nine, Australia, 2007 ruptured aneurysm. She spent fifteen days in the ICU, two weeks in the hospital, and is now doing rehab; she suffers from weakness on her left side and memory problems.
191. Man, thirties, USA, 2003 snow tube accident in which he crashed into a tree. He spent two months in a coma and

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- was paralysed on his right side, but he regained mobility; he has had a lot of other complications, too.
192. Woman, thirty-two, Ireland, hypoxic brain damage after 2008 heart attack. She is in a persistent vegetative state, no reaction to anything.
193. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, 2007 slip on ice, causing a plate in her head from 2006 surgery for epilepsy to shift. She suffers from intracranial bleed, damage in outer cortex (the part of the brain that governs emotions, memory, and sexual behaviour), a recurrence of seizures, and bad judgement skill; her husband of fourteen years wants a divorce and custody of their two young daughters, saying there is no way she can care for them emotionally.
194. Man, fifty-three, USA. Suffers from slurred speech, trouble communicating, (getting thoughts out of his mouth), and gets easily sidetracked.
195. Woman, fifty, USA, 2003 car accident. Suffers from sleep issues (causing her to wake up tired) and memory problems; she has difficulty talking, walking, and reading; she also has social issues.
196. Man, forty-eight, USA, hit by a truck 2005. He has a global brain injury, crushed brain stem, and global bleeding; he can't work anymore, and wife was told he'd be in persistent vegetative state; he walks and uses both arms, although he can't use the right arm very well, as it is hard for him to keep it open; he has trouble talking, gait issues, vertigo, seizures, zero depth perception, and lives in a freak-out denial mode; he couldn't use either arm for months, and lost use of his right arm for a year, he can't figure out how to do things, it took a year for him to re-learn to walk without falling, and he can't remember where he lives half of the time.
197. Man, forty-two, USA, 2004 nasal surgery led to a brain infection. He overdosed on his meds and stopped breathing, but he was revived by his fiancée; he sustained mid-brain and frontal lobe damage, and he suffers from seizures, balance problems, memory loss, and difficulty with executive functions.
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198. Woman, thirty-five, USA, 2005 accident as a passenger in a taxi, and a 2006 fall in the bathtub which caused her to hit her head. She sustained frontal and occipital lobe damage; she suffers from personality change and light sensitivity; she is in freak-out denial mode, she couldn't use either arm for months and lost the use of her right arm for a year, she can't figure out how to do things, she spent a year to relearning to walk without falling, and she can't remember where she lives half of the time; she has massive cognitive impairments, such as vertigo.
199. Woman, fifty, USA, hit by a truck in 1992. She is self-employed and struggling, she walks with a cane; she suffers from vision problems, comprehension difficulty, thinking issues, and staying awake.
200. Man, twenty-seven, USA, 1999 motor vehicle accident, which caused a skull fracture. Suffers from memory trouble, speech problems, balance problems, and difficulty concentrating; no physical deficits.
201. Man, twenty-nine, UK, 2002 twenty-three-foot fall. He spent two months in a coma and three years in a wheelchair. He suffers from mood swings; he is looking forward to rehab in a transitional rehab unit.
202. Man, forty-nine, USA, a state trooper who was rear-ended while writing a ticket on the highway. He suffers from frontal lobe injury, pain, anger issues, seizures, and frustration.
203. Woman, forty-eight, USA, 2007 case of meningitis/encephalitis. She is doing great on motor skills but has a hard time concentrating.
204. Man, forty-five, USA, 1989 head-on car accident while serving in the army. He suffers from lingering effects, such as memory problems; he is unable to be in relationship.
205. Man, forty-nine, USA, 2007 fall at work; he fell four times (once on metal table), resulting in a closed head injury. He suffers from long-term memory loss, headaches, dizziness, ringing in his ear, and memory problems; he can't drive, he has no long-term memory, and he doesn't know how to do anything.

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206. Man, twenty, USA, 2007 car accident. He had a double craniotomy (both sides of the skull removed) for swelling; he suffers from short-term memory issues; he currently lives with his parents.
207. Man, forty, USA, hit by car at 50 mph in 1994. He was in a wheelchair for over a year with metal rod in his lower leg; he can't sleep and suffers from back pain; he doesn't work and is on disability; no physical deficits.
208. Man, thirties, 2006 car accident. He spent three weeks coma, and when he woke up, nothing worked; he is still relearning to walk and suffers from long-term memory loss; he lives with his parents.
209. Man, twenty, Australia, 2006 car accident. His right side is affected, and his short-term memory is so-so; he lives with his family; no physical deficits.
210. Man, twenty-four, New Zealand, 2002 aneurysm was treated with an induced coma. He has little issues, such as balance problems, migraines, and fatigue; he has hydrocephalus, which is treated with a shunt; he lives with his parents.
211. Man, twenty-nine, 1997 assault. His short-term memory problem has come very far, he is driving again, he works, and he was married in June, 2008.
212. Man, twenty-five, USA, 2001 car accident. He spent seventeen days in a coma, was paralysed on left side, regained the use of his left leg, but arm only makes general movements at the shoulder, and chronic pain is his worst symptom; he has eight screws and two rods holding his back together.
213. Man, thirty-nine, USA, 1997 accident while serving in the Marine Corps, in which he hit his head while in a Humvee. His reading is not good, he suffers from seizures, and has balance problems; he had to wait two years before starting rehab; he is able to take care of himself and has no physical deficits
214. Man, thirty-eight, USA, 1990 skiing accident. He spent three and one-half months in a coma; he has no cognitive

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- or memory issues, just fatigue; he lives alone, drives, walks, and uses both arms.
215. Man, forty-six, USA, 2005 stroke. Suffers from double vision, and short-term memory issues; no physical deficits.
216. Man, forty-eight, USA, 2002 motorcycle accident. He spent four and one-half months in a coma; suffers from balance and memory problems and walks with walker.
217. Boy, five, nearly drowned in 2006. He is much better now, more cognitive, smiles and cries—some days he cries all day; he is receiving lots of therapy to deal with emotional problems.
218. Man, twenty-three, USA, 2004 assault in which he was chased and attacked by eleven gang members. He is totally paralysed on his right side; he lives with his parents.
219. Man, thirty-nine, USA, 1994 accident in which he was hit and dragged by car while biking; he ended up pinned under the car and broke his head in multiple places. He sustained front and temporal lobe damage, which destroyed the nerves that govern smell and taste; he has problems with emotions, cognition (thinking), and memory; he drives, lives alone, and has no physical deficits.
220. Woman, forty-three, USA, abused as a child, received many hits to the head. She used to have seizures but had surgery in 1999. She no longer has seizures, but she does suffer from short-term memory problems, depression, and anxiety, and she is unable to walk in a straight line.
221. Woman, thirty, USA, 2004 accident in which she was hit by a semi-trailer truck during Hurricane Charlie. She suffers from anxiety, she can't complete a task, she gets overwhelmed and really depressed, forgets to shower and brush her teeth, has problems with confusion, bad balance, memory problems, and panic attacks; she also has several physical injuries.
222. Man, forty-nine, USA, 1999 head-on car crash, in which he cracked the windshield with his head. He suffered from severe orthopaedic problems, so his cognitive issues went unnoticed for several months, except by his wife; he has a

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- major memory problem, can't work, and has sleep and concentration problems; time lost all meaning for him after the brain injury, so he gets sidetracked and distracted, and he has the attention span of a six-year-old.
223. Woman, hit by car crossing the road in 2007. She suffers from difficulty walking and talking, she lost hearing in her left ear (although it is returning), her neck and back are not so good, she has a fuzzy head, struggles with sleep, anxiety, emotional problems, and tends to overreact; she is slowly learning to compensate for her physical deficits, and she is much better psychologically; she's not doing well cognitively, she's getting worse neurologically, and she is dealing with negative thoughts.
224. Man, thirty-two, USA, 2007 wreck in his company's semi-trailer truck. He suffered a broken skull and much more; he was out of rehab in 2007, staying home to nurse his badly injured arm; he suffers from memory problems and double vision; he didn't recognize his family after the TBI, but he's getting better, although he may not return to work.
225. Man, twenty-five, USA, 1996 car accident. He had to re-learn to walk and talk after spending two months in a coma; his right arm has a severe tremor, he has short-term memory problems, and some cognitive issues, but not too many; he works to keep busy.
226. Man, twenty-six, USA, 2002 stroke, and 2004 car accident. He spent two weeks in a coma, couldn't walk at first, but he is walking okay now; he recovered physically, but suffers from emotional issues, and suicidal thoughts; he is extremely competitive and not willing to accept any type of failure in his life, regardless of the TBI.
227. Man, thirty-six, USA, 2005 car accident. He can't speak well or use the right side of his body, has little use of his left side, he is not walking (wheelchair bound), he can stand a bit but his balance is bad; his memory is okay.
228. Man, fifty-two, USA, hit in the face by a pipe while at work on the oil fields. He suffered from a brain hematoma, broken ribs, and a closed head injury; he had

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- been on the job only six months and then had to spend five months in the hospital; the greater part of his injury is physical.
229. Man, twenty-two, USA, 2007 truck accident. He spent twenty-eight days in a coma that was caused by anoxia; he has no problems physically, but he has memory issues and anger issues.
230. Man, forty-six, USA, 1982 car accident in which he ran a red light. He suffered from a left frontal lobe and right temporal lobe bleed, spent two and one-half months in a coma, and he is partially paralysed on his left side; he can't play sports, but his left side is functional now.
231. Woman, forty-seven, USA, car-versus-bike accident when she was nineteen. She has no physical deficits and was able to graduate college; she can't work, suffers from depression, and is unable to organise; she lives alone.
232. Man, thirty-seven, USA, 1990 skiing accident. He spent eleven months in rehab has been driving since 1994, living alone since 1999, and working every day; he has no physical deficits.
233. Woman, forty-seven, USA, 2006 motor vehicle accident. She spent three weeks in a coma, and she suffers from vertigo, balance problems, and dizziness.
234. Man, forty-three, UK, 2007 accident in which his car crashed into a cement truck. He is in a long-term rehab programme.
235. Woman, forty-eight, UK, 2005 aneurysm and stroke. She now has a titanium plate in her head and is doing fine, was hoping to get back to work as of April, 2008, although she still has left-side weakness; she walks and is improving all the time; she was a teacher before the brain injury.
236. Woman, twenty, Canada, 2003 contraction of viral encephalitis. She was in a coma for six months; she has full body functions, although her short-term memory is bad and she is easily overwhelmed; she was taking courses at a university, two at a time, but she is not in school anymore.
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237. Woman, twenty-five, USA, her car was hit by a drunk driver 2001. She spent two months in a coma caused by a closed head injury; she was the only person wearing a seat belt and she was hurt the worst; she was scheduled to graduate college in May, 2008.
238. Woman, thirty-eight, USA, 1996 motor vehicle accident in which she hit a telephone pole after attending a wedding. She spent four months in a coma, suffers from impairment when walking on uneven surfaces, can only use her left arm a little due to nerve damage, and has speech impairment.
239. Man, twenty-two, USA, 2004 car accident. He spent seven days in a coma, has a shunt in his head, doesn't work, can't drive, and walks with a limp; he wants to have a girlfriend one day and then a wife and kids.
240. Woman, forty-one, New Zealand, fall while ice skating. She has problems with memory, fatigue, speech, and info processing; no physical deficits.
241. Man, thirties, USA, shot in the head at an amusement park. He is paralysed on his right side and was in a wheelchair, although he is now walking with walker.
242. Man, forty-two, USA, 1994 car accident. He suffered from collapsed lungs, spent three and one-half weeks in a coma, and three months in the hospital; his balance on the right side is affected, and he has memory problems.
243. Man, twenty-two, USA, 2003 motorcycle accident. He spent twelve weeks in a coma and had to relearn everything; he suffers from speech problems, his left arm is not straight, and his walking is a bit staggered; he can't drive, and he is struggling through junior college.
244. Woman, twenty-four, USA, 2005 hiking accident in which she fell one hundred feet. She spent two years in coma, but she is now moving and doesn't have major disabilities, although she walks as if drunk and has no memory of the time before, during, or after the accident; she still has poetic ability, and she said bye to the wheelchair in 2007.

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245. Woman, thirty-three, Canada, 2006 fall while water tubing behind a boat. She sustained a skull fracture which led to an infection of the right temporal lobe; she suffers from vertigo, speech problems, epilepsy, and frequent falling; she is going back to school, but she has lost all of her friends.
246. Woman, forty-eight, USA, 2001 motor vehicle accident. She suffers from short-term memory and organisation issues, time management problems, and she forgets how to do simple things like writing a cheque.
247. Man, thirty-two, USA, car accident on his graduation day when he was eighteen. He suffers from short-term memory loss, and he is not able to keep a job.
248. Woman, forties, USA, 2005 ruptured aneurysm. She spent two and one-half months in a coma and had to re-learn to walk and talk; she suffers from memory issues and personality change, her left arm doesn't work very well, she is weak, has trouble meeting people, experiences confusion, and generally doesn't fit in.
249. Girl, seventeen, USA, 2008 car accident in which she was thrown out of a car. She is doing day therapy three days per week, and she is doing well but still has meltdowns; she suffers from sensitivity to light, noise, and crowds; she has sensory overload, short-term memory loss, and she suffered some bruises on her pancreas, liver, and lungs; She didn't sustain any broken bones, so she will hopefully have gone back to school during the end of summer, 2008; she lives with her mother,
250. Man, thirty-one, USA, 1997 motor vehicle accident in which he hit black ice and flipped the car, which landed on its roof. He sustained degloving of the left-upper side of his face and multiple skull fractures; he lost his motor skills, had to relearn to walk, talk, and swallow, and he struggles with speech; he lost friends, and he lost his girlfriend.
251. Man, thirty-two, USA, 1996 car accident. He has vision and memory issues, and his left side slower than his right; no physical deficits.
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252. Woman, sixty-one, USA, 2002 car accident. She has absence seizures, which last a few seconds: her eye blinks suddenly and then nothing is familiar to her; she can get through most situations as long as they aren't complicated; she has no physical deficits.
253. Man, twenty-two, USA, 2006 car accident. He spent one month in a coma, and is unable to walk or talk, his right side is weaker than his left, and he can't read or write; he is starting to be able to hold himself in a wheelchair, and he understands everything,
254. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, 1990 car accident. She spent two months in a coma, can't handle being told more than a couple of things at once, is very moody, and has memory issues.
255. Woman, thirty, USA, 1996 drunk-driving accident. She spent three and one-half months in a coma, and had torn ligaments in her right knee and a broken right foot; she suffers from speech and balance problems.
256. Man, thirties, 2002 car accident. He sustained diffuse frontal lobe contusions, a left temporal lobe bleed, and some aphasia; he's doing great, almost feeling like the person he was before the accident, and he no longer drinks; he does suffer from mood swings and outbursts, but they don't last; he works and drives, and his memory is okay.
257. Man, fifties, USA, 1970 accident in which he drove over a cliff and was thrown forty feet from his car, hitting the back of his neck on a rock.
258. Woman, twenty, USA, 2007 motor vehicle accident. She spent five days in a coma, and has experienced a major personality change and memory issues; she was in her second year of nursing school when the accident happened, and she hopes to return one day.
259. Man, fifty, USA, sports injuries, childhood abuse, a motorcycle accident, and a car accident; he is weary of life, has memory and attention problems, executive functions issues, has intentional memory suppression, and has never

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- had a job more than eighteen months; he has no physical deficits.
260. Woman, forty-four, USA, 2005 accident in which a speeder slammed into her car on a highway exit ramp. Her spinal cord was injured and she sustained brain swelling, causing her to be unconscious for a while; she has issues that will not get better, such as difficulty using right arm and tremors, although she is able to walk with a stick; she feels okay most of the time and tries to stay positive, but her marriage has been falling apart since the TBI; what's worse, eight months after the accident she was T-boned by a van while driving to an appointment with her neurologist.
261. Woman, fifty, USA, accident in which a big clock fell on her head and pinned her into a bleacher; she was doing okay, but she fell again in 2007, breaking some of her ribs and one shoulder. She is having hard time, suffering from seizures, and balance issues; she falls a lot.
262. Man, fifty-two, Australia, 1999 brain stem stroke; he has neither physical deficits nor memory issues; he has fully recovered.
263. Woman, twenty-three, USA, 2002 motor vehicle accident. She had to relearn to walk and talk, which took two months; she suffers from memory problems, sensory overload, and issues with maturity; some of her deficits are not seen by the naked eye, and she is having a hard time in her college classes.
264. Woman, fifty-six, USA, 1994 aneurysm, which was clipped before it ruptured. She had surgery again to repair a mistake made the first time, and then had another surgery for an aneurysm behind her left eye; she has memory trouble but no physical deficits.
265. Woman, thirties, USA, 2003 car accident in which her skull was fractured by a scuba tank in the back seat; she then had a stroke in 2005; she walks with a cane and can use her arm a little; she was a rehab nurse prior to the TBI.

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266. Woman, thirties, USA, 1999 accident in which a computer box fell on her head at a store; she suffers from fatigue and distorted perception.
267. Man, sixty-two, USA, 2005 accident in which he rear-ended a five-ton truck. Every bone in his face was broken, but he is not disfigured; he has undergone a personality change and doesn't like his wife of twenty-four years anymore; he has no physical deficits, and he is retired with a very good income, but he is not happy; he has emotional problems, he can talk but doesn't want to, he sleeps all day, and he curses, which he never did before.
268. Woman, thirty-one, USA, cerebral palsy. She is doing well overall, but she suffers from speech trouble, ataxia, hearing problems, and is very uncoordinated; although she walks a bit, she has mostly been in a wheelchair since 1997 because her balance is so off; she does stuff for herself and gets help when she can't, and she lives alone.
269. Man, forty-five, USA, 1988 motorcycle accident in which he hit a deer. After spending six months in a coma, he is blind in his right eye, has no sense of smell or taste, has seizures, and his memory is so-so; he learnt to walk and talk again, and now he walks freely and uses both arms; he lives with his mother.
270. Man, thirty-three, Israel, fall at age four and one-half. He suffers from dyslexia when talking and reading and has problems with short-term memory; no physical deficits, but he has had clinical depression for fifteen years and became suicidal, which caused health problems.
271. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, 2006 crash in car with a train. She spent three months in the hospital and eight months in rehab; the accident happened the Friday before she was going back to work after maternity leave; her left arm has a limited range of movement, and her memory was so bad she didn't recognize her baby after the TBI; she was using a wheelchair, but she is walking now.
272. Man, fifty-five, USA, 1957 accident (when was 5) in which his head was caught between pickup bumper and

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- cotton trailer. He suffers from headaches, double vision, and balance issues.
273. Man, fifty-two, USA, 1973 case of carbon monoxide poisoning. He suffers from memory problems which have changed from short-term to long-term.
274. Girl, twelve, USA, hit by car in 2007. She is able to attend school and glad of it, while she still suffers from memory problems and confusion; no physical deficits; she lives with her family.
275. Woman, midfifties, USA, 2003 motor vehicle accident. She suffers from mental slowness, confusion, dizziness, seizures, slurred speech, constant headaches, and fatigue.
276. Woman, fifty-five, USA, 2003 accident in which she collided head on with a truck at 75 mph; she sustained a bleed both sides of her brain and torn brain tissue; she is very slow thinking, and has poor balance and cognitive issues; she drives but can't work.
277. Man, thirty-four, USA, 2007 accident in which he sustained an anoxic brain injury. His doctors want to put him in a nursing home because his progress is too slow; he doesn't talk or do much of anything except become agitated.
278. Man, fifty-six, USA, 2000 ATV accident in which he sustained a brain stem injury. He spent six weeks in a coma, and suffers from chronic insomnia, right-side weakness, and bad reflexes, which prevent him from driving.
279. Woman, fifty-five, USA, 2003 brain bleed in which both sides of her brain lining were torn. She suffers from memory problems, fatigue, confusion, poor judgement, difficulty walking, inability to multitask, which means she can't work.
280. Man, thirty-seven, USA, hit by a semi-trailer truck in 2006 while sitting in his car, waiting for a tow truck. His spleen was taken out and sections of his intestine were removed; he sustained a broken left arm, collar bone, and ribs; he sustained a fractured pelvis, broken tail bone, and broken back; he walks crooked, his left arm is weak, he is

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- slow thinking (although his memory is not bad), he is unable to multitask, and he's bad with stress.
281. Woman, forty-three, USA, 1994 car accident; she was a nurse before the TBI; she suffers from seizures, memory loss, and sensory overload; no physical deficits.
282. Man, twenty-three, USA, 2007 car accident. His TBI consisted of mostly frontal lobe damage; he was paralysed on his left side early on, but he has mostly physically recovered now; he suffers from double vision, bad memory, poor coordination, and personality change; he now feels psychotic after one year of denying having any problem, and he has lost his friends.
283. Man, forty-eight, USA, 2004 motor vehicle accident that caused a subarachnoid bleed; suffers from pain, fatigue, sleep, memory loss, balance issues, and muscle weakness; he no longer works.
284. Woman, twenty-three, USA, 2007 heroin overdose. She had a baby after the injury, but she is still in a vegetative state: she can't move, can't talk, turns her eyes to communicate, and makes noise when she is hungry or uncomfortable.
285. Woman, 46, USA, found unconscious after leaving the hospital where she worked. She was in a coma for weeks, and no one knows whether she was assaulted; experiences left-side weakness, memory loss, double vision, seizures, headaches, personality change, and mood swings; she doesn't have any injuries that she can't overcome, and she has no physical deficits.
286. Man, thirty, USA, 1995 motor vehicle accident. Rescue workers used Jaws of Life equipment to get him out of the truck; he died three times during the flight to the hospital and his right side stroked out; his emotional issues are unreal, his anger is terrible; he lives with his family.
287. Man, twenty, USA, 2007 accident in which a light fixture fell on his head. He was unconscious for a few hours, and suffers from depression and anxiety.
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288. Woman, twenty-six, Puerto Rico, hit by car in 1992. Suffers from memory loss, concentration problems, insomnia, migraines, and chronic pain.
289. Man, forty-three, USA, 1998 TBI at work. Suffers from seizures, memory loss, cognitive issues, emotional problems, fatigue, and personality change; no physical deficits.
290. Man, forty-two, USA, 2006 motor vehicle accident. After thirteen days in the ICU he had a stroke. He walks with a walker, but he can't read or write.
291. Woman, twenty-five, USA, 2006 accident in which she slammed her head on a thick slab of steel while walking quickly with weight in her arms. She suffers from memory loss, migraines, and personality change; she got her degree and she works; no physical deficits.
292. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, 2001 car crash in which she hit a bridge. Her right side is messed up, she has a bad limp, and she has memory loss.
293. Man, nineteen, USA, sustained a TBI when he was two years old. He has required special education, but he still can't get a job or keep the few he gets; he has no physical deficits, but he also has no social skills, can't tell the time, can't follow instructions in a sequence, needs consistent supervision, can't do any maths at all, and is simple minded.
294. Man, thirty-six, Ireland, 2004 brain bleed. He walks, drives, and lives alone; however he suffers from memory loss, fatigue, depression, and anger.
295. Man 49, USA, 2004 fall at work. He spent two weeks in the ICU, and he has problems with vision, balance, noise, crowd anger, memory loss, neck pain, personality change, and difficulty learning new things; he has no physical deficits; he spent eighteen months rehab, and he is unable to work now.
296. Woman, thirty-six, USA, 2005 car accident. She has left-side impairments, vision issues, and noise sensitivity; she walks with a walker or cane.
297. Man, twenty-seven, USA, 2004 motorcycle accident. He spent three months in a coma, has lost movement on the

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- left side of his body, and can't walk; he can use his left arm a little, but his strength is in his right arm.
298. Man, fifty-seven, Finland, 1982 motor vehicle accident. He suffers from double vision; he can use all of his muscles, but he moves slowly.
299. Woman, twenty, USA, 2006 car accident in which she was thrown through the windshield. Her leg was degloved (skin and muscles taken away from the bone), and she sustained a torn femoral artery, a fractured hip, and a broken arm; she spent nine weeks in a coma, after which she had to relearn to swallow, talk, and write; she suffers from weakness on her right side, she walks with a cane, and can't move or talk well yet; she lives with her parents.
300. Girl, fifteen, USA, 2008 skiing accident. She is doing well physically, but she has memory problems and swears a lot.
301. Woman, forty-two, Ireland, 2004 car crash. Her memory is gone, and she has problems with speech, balance, pain, handling money, decision making, maths, reading, writing, and vision.
302. Man, forty-three, USA, 2000 motor vehicle accident. He walks with a walker, and his motor skills are fine, his speech is not so good, but it's okay, and he uses both arms, although his left side is weak.
303. Man, twenty-eight, USA, 2006 motorcycle accident. He's in a persistent vegetative state and quadriplegic, and he can't do anything purposeful except blink his eyes; he was sent to rehab two months after the accident, and he was only given eight weeks to come out of his vegetative state; he couldn't, so they shipped him out; he requires twenty-four-seven care and lives in a hospital eighty miles away from his family; he has to relearn everything.
304. Woman, twenty-eight, Canada, 1998 motorcycle accident in which she was thrown off the bike. She has no short-term memory.
305. Woman, fifty, USA, 1999 brain aneurysm. She had to relearn to talk, suffers from migraines, her left is difficult to walk on, her left arm is so-so, she suffers from depression,
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- still has problems finding the right words, mentally slow, and can't talk fast enough to have a job.
306. Woman, twenty-nine, USA, 2006 waterskiing accident. She has problems with thinking, memory, fatigue, and multitasking.
307. Boy, seventeen, USA, 2007 car accident in which he was ejected from the car. He sustained a collapsed lung, bruised heart, broken back and pelvis, and bleeding under the inside of his eye, and he has trouble finding the right words; his back healed, and his doctors said he'd never talk again, but he does, although he had to re learn everything; he walks with cane.
308. Man, forty-eight, USA, 2002 explosion at work in which he was hit in the head by a piece of metal. He was paralysed on his right side, but he regained movement in everything except his right ankle; he was right-handed but now uses his left; he is doing much better now.
309. Woman, fifty, Canada, 1996 car accident. She suffers from attention problems, fatigue, headaches, and neck problems; she still struggles with things but learnt to cope and not focus on it.
310. Woman, fifty-six, USA, 1999 car accident. She suffers from seizures, memory loss, and speech problems; no physical deficits.
311. Woman, forty-four, USA, 2002 brain surgery for epilepsy. She has scar tissue on the right side of her brain, which led to personality change, migraines, short-term memory loss, and back and neck pain; no physical deficits.
312. Man, forty-seven, USA, 1981 car accident. He was married four months, was three days from opening his own business, his wife was eight months pregnant, and then BOOM—all gone; he suffers from severe impulse-control issues and wild mood swings; he is now almost homeless and awaiting his second divorce.
313. Man, forty-five, New Zealand, 1988 car accident, in which he was hit badly on his left side; he walks slowly and uses both arms.
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314. Woman, forty-six, Canada, hit by a school bus in 2001. She spent seven days in a coma, and suffers from confusion and fatigue.
315. Woman, sixty-three, USA, epilepsy since birth. She has damage to her left temporal lobe, a brain tumour at the base of her brain, and has been given three months to live; she has lost feeling in all but one-third of her body, walks with difficulty, and is light sensitive; she has no visible deficits, and uses a seizure-alert mobility dog.
316. Woman, fifty-eight, USA, 2006 fall down stairs in which she whacked her head three times; she is still trying to figure out everything, having mostly cognitive issues, such as problems with fatigue and balance; she was a nurse for thirty-five years, but she can't face the job now, she's scared.
317. Woman, twenty-eight, USA, 2001 head-on car accident. She is doing well, no physical deficits; she does have bad headaches and memory issues.
318. Woman, fifty-three, USA, 2003 fell headfirst at work. She suffers from seizures, panic attacks, and she feels stoned all the time; no physical deficits.
319. Man, twenty-one, USA, 2007 accident in which a light fixture fell on his head. He was in the hospital a few weeks, and he couldn't remember a thing, but he's getting a lot better; his symptoms are depression and crying all the time; no physical deficits.
320. Woman, twenty-four, USA, hit by a car in 2006 on her college campus during the last day of the school year. She suffers from emotional issues, balance problems, fatigue, difficulty finding the right words, migraines, and memory loss.
321. Woman, thirties, USA, 2003 accident in which she was rear-ended by a large truck while stopped and rescuers had to use Jaws of Life equipment to get her out. Three areas of her left temporal lobe are damaged; she went from managing a finance division to not knowing how to count.

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322. Man, forty-five, USA, 1988 motor vehicle accident. He regained nearly all abilities without assistance.
323. Man, forty-eight, Australia, 2002 brain tumour, which caused a stroke. His short-term memory is gone, he lives with pain twenty-four–seven, and he suffers from mood swings, personality change, and anger.
324. Man, twenty-seven, UK, 2006 night out in which he was attacked by strangers. He has no physical deficits, but he suffers from frontal lobe injury and anger issues.
325. Man, fifty, USA, boating accident when he was about twelve or thirteen in which he fell out of a boat on a concrete drive. He found out about the TBI in 2006, when he went to a doctor due to memory loss and confusion. After getting an MRI, the doctor told him that parts of his right and left frontal lobes are not there.
326. Woman, thirty-five, USA, 1992 car accident in which she avoided hitting the other cars and hit empty school bus. The cops called it careless driving. Her body is okay, although her left side slower than her right, but she has memory problems and seizures.
327. Boy, twelve, USA, cardiac arrest when he was one month old, during which he died for one-half hour and then spent two months in the ICU. A cardiac ablation was performed, which got him out of the woods physically; he has autistic spectrum disorder.
328. Man, thirty-one, USA, 2007 stroke. He suffers from slows, and he is in denial; no physical deficits.
329. Man, twenty-six, USA, 2008 bike accident in which he was hit by a golf cart/landscaping vehicle. He suffers from short-term memory problems, and his speech is so-so; no physical deficits.
330. Man, sixty-five, Canada, hit by a flying object in 1998. His right side is numb, and he has balance and cognitive issues; he is able to walk.
331. Man, twenty-seven, USA, victim of a 2006 car bombing in Iraq. He has short-term memory, cognitive, and reasoning issues, as well as a shrapnel wound in his back and

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- arm that cause physical issues for him; he is out of the military now and getting some kind of rehab.
332. Woman, thirty-four, New Zealand, 1992 car accident in which she drove over a cliff. She spent four and one-half weeks in a coma, she's a tetraplegic in a wheelchair, and she has spasms and balance issues; she wasn't meant to talk again after her tracheotomy, but she talks and uses both arms and is learning to walk again; she lives alone and is able to cook and clean.
333. Woman, forty, Scotland, two aneurysms in 2007, one was coiled, but one ruptured. She spent one week in a coma; she has no physical deficits, but she is slow-thinking, has bad balance, lacks emotion, and has memory problems.
334. Man, forty, USA, 1988 car accident. He spent five and one-half weeks in a coma; he suffers from short-term memory problems and is unable to play sports, but his life is great, he has a great job, he walks and talks, and everything's fine now.
335. Woman, twenty-eight, USA, 1986 car accident. She spent ten days in a coma, and she is paralysed on her left side; she learnt to walk again and graduated from college 2007 with a degree in sociology.
336. Woman, twenty-one, USA, 2005 stroke. She had to re-learn to talk and walk, but she made a full recovery.
337. Man, forty, USA, knocked out in 2005 and his head hit the pavement. Emergency surgery saved his life; he is doing well but he suffers from memory problems, he can't recognise what things are, he doesn't use the right word, he can't come up with a solution to a problem, he can't control his emotions, he can't remember how to do simple things (like dishes), and he suffers from mood swings, memory problems, concentration problems, and personality change; his only physical issue is bad balance.
338. Woman, fifty-nine, USA, 1985 three-wheeler accident. She suffers from migraines, memory problems, and sensitivity to heat, light, and noise; no physical deficits.
339. Man, thirty-five, USA, 2006 accident in which he was T-boned by a drunk driver while in his police cruiser. He has

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- a slight limp and some nerve damage in his right arm, but no other physical deficits; he suffers from short-term memory loss, fatigue, and anger; he is unofficially retired.
340. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, 2002 car accident in which she was hit head-on by a drunk driver. She received a lot of physical therapy but no cognitive therapy; she had to relearn to walk, talk, and swallow, and her short-term memory is gone; she can't write or read anymore, she forgets to use the restroom, and she hallucinates a lot; she currently lives in a nursing home.
341. Man, twenty-one, 2004 motor vehicle accident. He sustained a frontal lobe injury that affects his right side. He does nothing for himself, and he lives with his mother, as there is no way he could live alone; he can't walk, although he stands and the use of his legs is improving; he can speak when feels like it and he understands everything; he is very manipulative.
342. Woman, thirty-six, Australia, severe epilepsy in her twenties that screwed up her brain, the very last incident occurring in 2000. Fatigue is one of her biggest issues.
343. Man, thirty-three, USA, 1999 car accident. He has had manic depression since the TBI, and he has been on antidepressants for ten years, although he feels pretty confident and is able to work.
344. Woman, thirties, USA, 2002 car accident caused a spine injury. She suffers from memory problems, headaches, light sensitivity, confusion, and lots of pain.
345. Man, twenty-nine, USA, a split ring from the tire of a semi-trailer truck blew up and took part of his skull. He suffers from seizures and he cries a lot; his wife and two kids left him after the TBI.
346. Woman, sixty, USA, 1999 brain aneurysm that ruptured. Her right foot drags when walking, she can't write well anymore, and her short-term memory is better but will never return to normal.
347. Man, fifty-one, USA, 2005 motorbike accident in which he was hit by a semi-trailer truck. He was a truck driver himself, but that is now out of the question; he spent one

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- month in coma, he was in and out of the hospital/rehab for three and one-half months, and he has been in a wheelchair for two and one-half years; he uses both arms, but shakes a lot and has short-term memory loss.
348. Man, forty-nine, USA, 2005 assault in which he was robbed and almost beaten to death. He suffers from depression and has the use of left arm only, although he was right-handed; otherwise, he is physically in pretty good shape, and he is able to walk.
349. Man, fifty-four, USA, bucked off a horse. He is doing well after two rehabs, but he does have short-term memory loss.
350. Man, forty-four, USA, 1998 work accident during which he fell thirty-six feet. He doesn't have to work another day in his life, but he suffers from mild seizures, headaches, and the loss of his senses of smell and taste.
351. Woman, forty-one, USA, 1994 motorcycle accident. He spent four months in a coma and couldn't walk for two years; he walks now, but he suffers from seizures.
352. Man, forty-eight, USA, problems with his heart implant in 2006 caused him to fall down a flight of stairs. He spent nine days in a coma as a result of a frontal lobe injury, and he now suffers from slurred speech, concentration problems, anger and aggression issues, and headaches; he forgot how to drive, he can't read, and his girlfriend left him, taking all she could steal.
353. Man, fifty-six, USA, 1994 headfirst fall through a roof onto cement from thirty feet. He now drives, writes, and dates again; he has no physical deficits, but he wobbles when walks, due to vertigo.
354. Man, forty-eight, USA, a 2006 shock from a new implantable cardioverter defibrillator pacemaker implant caused him to leave his apartment to go to the ER, at which time he fell from the second floor because there wasn't enough light. He has front lobe dementia, anger issues, frustration, and so-so memory; he has no physical deficits, but he hurt a disc in his back, so he uses cane.

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355. Man, forty-four, USA, 2004 accident in which he hit a deer with his brand new motorcycle when driving it home. He spent three months in a coma and had to re-learn everything; he now has no use of his right arm, but he is able to walk.
356. Boy, five, USA, infection at birth that went to his brain. He has no physical deficits, but he is mentally and developmentally like a one year old; he has MS and is non-verbal, but he is finally able to feed himself.
357. Man, fifty-seven, USA, TBI at birth caused by a lack of oxygen. He loses jobs because he is mentally slow, he has dyslexia and learning disabilities, and he is not good with abstract thinking; he is able to drive.
358. Woman, forty-seven, USA, 1999 assault by a guy she was dating; when she tossed him out, he came back and gave her a TBI; he is serving forty-five years, and he has lost everything, including his business. She sustained spinal tears and dislocated discs; she suffers from headaches, short-term memory loss, scheduling issues, and inability to read, and she gets lost if there are no dots to follow; she is able to work, and she still has the skills she had before the moment of impact, however new things are scrambled.
359. Man, forty, New Zealand, 2006 fall from a scaffold at work onto the concrete floor. He suffers from headaches, fatigue, sensory overload, and problem-solving issues; no physical deficits.
360. Woman, fifty-two, USA, 2004 hit-and-run accident. She underwent brain surgery, and she now suffers from memory loss, speech problems, and very little recall of life in general; she likes her new identity better, once she figures out what's she's doing and where she's going, and she is trying to get back to work.
361. Man, forty-four, USA, 1988 motor vehicle accident. He suffers from balance problems, vision problems, memory issues, and deterioration of his language skills, which were previously good; he never had rehab, and he lost friends.

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362. Man, twenty-four, USA, 2008 TBI during an airborne jump while serving in the army. His superiors are not supportive, and he doesn't know who to turn to; he suffers from anger, anxiety, stress, and sensory overload; his wife is having hard time with him, but he still gets up at 4:00 a.m. and goes to work every day.
363. Man, forty-eight, USA, 2008 fall from a roof did not cause a TBI, but a haematoma and subarachnoid bleed that same year did cause a TBI. He had three seizures and spent sixteen days in the ICU; he is now in rehab, trying to overcome problems with speech, memory loss, anger, and unsteady walking.
364. Man, forty-two, USA, hit by bus in 1979 while crossing the road and was thrown ten to fifteen feet. He went into an immediate coma; he is now working two jobs and taking courses online, but lost a lot of his life; he is taking five courses, one at a time, to become certified in working with TBI students.
365. Woman, eighties, USA, 2007 motor vehicle accident. She sustained a left temporal lobe injury, and she is in rehab but doesn't want to participate; she was totally independent before this, and she knows things are not right and is very upset; she suffers from lost speech comprehension, garbled speech, and sadness, and has bad cognitive issues.
366. Man, thirty-two, Canada, 2007 car accident. He spent twenty-six days in a coma but is finally back home; he has speech problems and had to learn to write again, but he was hoping to go back to work in the autumn of 2008.
367. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, shot in the head in 1998. She had to relearn everything, and could not swallow; she lost movement on her left side, causing her to walk with a limp, and she has no use of her left arm.
368. Man, fifty-five, USA, 2005 stroke. He recovered, but his brain is scrambled; he lost his fine motor movement on his left side, but he is functional and can use both arms.
369. Woman, forty, USA, 1993 hit-and-run accident, in which the driver was caught but walked away with minimal pun-

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- ishment. She has memory issues, spine issues, and walks a little funny, but she is doing well for the most part.
370. Woman, thirty, USA, hit by a drunk driver in 1998 while crossing the road. She is high functioning and independent, but she suffers from sensory overload and interpersonal problems.
371. Man, forty-two, USA, 2003 assault during which he was hit in the head with a bat by a house robber. He sustained an aneurysm that ruptured and was in a coma for three weeks; he was just getting back on his feet from it in 2008, but he has a hard time using the right side of his body, and he has headaches; he is getting better and walking with a cane, but he no longer works.
372. Man, forty-two, USA, 1999 car crash. He spent seven and one-half weeks in a coma and one year in the hospital; he was in wheelchair, then he used a walker, and now a cane; his strength is coming back, and he can talk better.
373. Man, twenty-three, USA, 2004 fall during which he hit his head. He is in a state mental hospital by court order after getting into a fight and stabbing someone in the arm; he has had personality change, he got into drugs when came home, and he has lost his cognitive reasoning; no physical deficits.
374. Man, twenty-eight, USA, 1997 motor vehicle accident. He spent four days in a coma, and his left side was paralysed for a couple of days, but he regained movement, and he has headaches; no physical deficits.
375. Woman, thirty-seven, Canada, lack of oxygen at birth, and then hit by a car when five years old. She only found out about the TBI in 2007 when she began having seizures.
376. Woman, forties, USA, 2004 car accident. She sustained frontal lobe swelling, which has caused anxiety and memory issues.
377. Woman, thirties, USA, 1999 ruptured aneurysm. She has no physical deficits, but she has memory and cognitive issues, along with headaches.
378. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, 2007 fall when slipping on ice and hitting her head. A plate in her head from a 2005

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- epilepsy surgery shifted, causing brain bleed, memory problems, depression, and mood swings; no physical deficits; she works in a nursing home.
379. Man, fifty-one, USA, 1991 parachuting accident during which he had a midair collision with another jumper. He spent four weeks in a coma, five and one-half months in the hospital, and six months in outpatient care; he suffers from memory and attention problems, blurred speech, difficulty finding words, balance issues, clumsiness, difficulty learning new things, and problems processing information.
380. Man, thirty-four, UK, ran over by taxi in 1999, after which he successfully sued, although the case took years. He has been in a wheelchair since then; he has use of his arms, but the left side of his body is affected, and he has a titanium plate in his head.
381. Man, thirty-four, USA, sustained an arterial venous malformation in his brain while doing sit-ups at the police academy. He spent one month in a coma and never graduated; his memory is bad, but he is otherwise fine and has no physical deficits.
382. Woman, forty-six, USA, hit by a car in 1977. She was in a coma and has amnesia; she is deformed and crippled and has a curved spine; she is legally blind and has mental and emotional issues.
383. Woman, thirty-eight, USA, 1986 car accident, during which she was thrown out of a jeep that then landed on her. She spent two months in a coma, and eighteen months in rehab, on and off; she suffers from anxiety, memory issues, and chronic pain; she says the wrong things, so it's difficult for her to have friends or romance; she has two screws in her left elbow, which causes a limited range of movement, and she has major nerve damage; an overdose on morphine brought her to the hospital for a couple of weeks because she kept passing out.
384. Woman, fifty-seven, USA, two aneurysms in 1995, one of which leaked and brought her to the hospital. She was paralysed on the left side, but is no longer, so she spent

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time using a wheelchair, then a quad cane, and now she walks unassisted; she lost peripheral vision on her left, so she can't drive.

385. Man, thirty-one, USA, hit by a truck in 2004 while riding a bicycle. The injury is localized at the rear of the head, and his body has been doing its job, healing, but he suffers many of the same symptoms as when first injured; he was never physically incapacitated, although he broke vertebrae and ribs; he suffers from memory loss, personality change, loss of organizational skills, attention problems, mood swings, and neck pain, and he was easygoing, but he now gets easily irritable.
386. Man, thirty-eight, USA, 1993 car accident in which he ran into the back of a semi-trailer truck. He spent seven and one-half weeks in a coma and one year in the hospital, undergoing seventeen operations; he is blind in his left eye, suffers from short-term memory issues, and has limited ability on his left side, such as weakness and slowness of his left arm, although he can walk; he lives with his mother.
387. Man, 29, USA, 2005 assault during which he was hit on his head with a stick, fell and hit the ground, and cracked his skull. He has undergone three surgeries, gone into a coma twice, and accrued \$1.8 million in medical bills, he has had to relearn everything, including walking, and he suffers from balance issues.
388. Man, fifty-six, USA, four strokes in 2002. He takes care of himself, drives, and is very independent; he suffers from short-term memory issues, acting like a child at times, and right-side weakness; he reads, writes, and speaks, and has no physical deficits.
389. Man, twenty-one, USA, 2006 car accident during which he was ejected from the car. He spent seventeen days in a coma, and sustained a bleed on both sides of his brain.
390. Girl, fourteen, USA, 2007 four-wheeler accident. She has problems with memory, emotions, cognition, and concentration; no physical deficits.

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391. Woman, twenty-nine, Canada, TBI from birth caused by water in her brain. She suffers from seizures, and she has been in a wheelchair since 2000, when her legs gave out from sports injuries, before which time she walked.
392. Man, twenty-three, Australia, assault at his high school by four boys. He died four times on the way to the hospital, spent nine months in coma, and underwent seventeen surgeries to fix his face; he sustained lots of damage and lost his sight and hearing on one side; he sees a little with one eye, and he walks and uses both arms; he had to relearn to walk, talk, and drink.
393. Man, fifty-four, USA, 1994 severe drug interaction caused a brain stem stroke. He was fearless, but he became afraid of everything; he suffers from depression, sensory overload, fatigue, and memory loss; he has no physical deficits, and he lives alone and is self-reliant.
394. Man, forty-eight, USA, 1993 shooting. He sustained a minor TBI, which causes seizures.
395. Woman, thirty, USA, 1993 car crash. His left arm was paralysed for a couple of months, but he can use it now, although it's still weak; he is able to walk and he lives alone.
396. Man, forty-nine, UK, hit by car when three years old; he had an MRI with a metal plate in his head when he was forty-two, causing a second TBI; he suffers from bad headaches, bodily pain, and anger; there's not much he can do but keep on going.
397. Woman, thirty, USA, 2005 sumo wrestling TBI. She had several surgeries, she suffers from diffuse damage, fatigue, and attention issues, and she can't smell or walk straight.
398. Man, fifty, USA, 2007 accident during which he blew a red light and hit a semi-trailer truck. He has no physical deficits, but he lost his senses of smell and taste, and he has memory issues.
399. Man, thirty-eight, USA, 1991 skiing accident. He spent three and one-half months in a coma, and he now suffers from sensory overload and a very slight limp; his life has

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- been lonely since the TBI, and he has been living alone since 2000.
400. Woman, fifty-eight, USA, assaulted by a stranger in the park in broad daylight while walking her dog and severely beaten on the head; 2003 ten-foot fall while putting up Christmas lights on her roof, during which she lost her balance and landed headfirst on the pavement. She has no physical deficits, but she suffers from memory loss, migraines, depression, neck pain, double vision, and hearing impairment.
401. Woman, fifty-three, USA, 2005 motor vehicle accident. She suffers from pain in her back and other body parts, as well as cognitive, balance, and vision issues; no physical deficits.
402. Woman, fifty-four, USA, 2004 forklift accident during which she flipped over one blade and hit the other blade with her face. She couldn't read for over three years, as she wasn't diagnosed at the hospital, which let her go after the TBI; she suffers from headaches, memory problems, speech problems, and back issues.
403. Man, fifty-three, USA, 2006 motorcycle accident. He spent one month coma and had a long rehab; he suffers from left-side weakness, loss of peripheral vision on his left, memory problems, and anger, and he hasn't been able to work.
404. Boy, seventeen, 2007 car accident. He spent three months in a coma and two months in rehab; he is in a vegetative state and can't talk, he recognises people but there is no communication.
405. Woman, forty-two, 1984 car accident. She has temper issues when her personal space invaded but has no physical deficits; studying in college toward degree.
406. Woman, forty-three, USA, 2004 fall at work. She suffers from headaches and memory problems; she's doing okay, though, having finished college with an Associate's degree.

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407. Man, thirty-four, USA, 2000 motor vehicle accident. He suffers from short-term memory issues and lives with his mother.
408. Man, thirty-seven, USA, fall from the third step of a ladder, hitting his head on the concrete. He spent three and one-half months in a coma, and he sustained a fractured skull, which required a titanium plate; he loses his temper and is violent, and he suffers from headaches and sleep issues; no physical deficits.
409. Woman, forty, USA, hit by a car while riding bike to work in 2005, during which time she was thrown in the air, landed on a rock, and her head bounced a few times. She has problems with concentration, fatigue, seizures, anxiety, and vision; no physical deficits.
410. Woman, thirty-two, USA, hit in 1995, when she was in high school, by a fifteen-year-old in a stolen car who was being chased by the police. She suffers from concentration problems.
411. Man, thirty-one, USA, 2000 fall from twenty-six feet and landing on his head. He spent twenty-four days in a coma, he is paralysed on his left side, he is not able to speak or walk, he can't eat or dress without assistance, has no sense of balance, had to relearn to stand, and has cognitive issues; his memory is okay, and he has done lots of rehab.
412. Man, forty, USA, 2007 car accident. He spent six weeks in a coma; he has no physical deficits, while his biggest problems are memory, sensory overload, and light sensitivity.
413. Woman, thirty-seven, Canada, 2006 motor vehicle accident. The TBI went undiagnosed until four months later, when she couldn't read or talk anymore; she relearned to read and write, but speech is still an issue.
414. Woman, forty-five, USA, 2006 motorcycle accident in which she had no helmet, and the person who hit her was on a mobile phone; she has no physical deficits, and she relearned to walk; her mental state is still a battle, involving memory problems, sensory overload, and neck and back pain.
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415. Man, forty-four, USA, hit by a pickup truck in 1990 while he was home on break from working in the Alaskan oil fields. He spent two weeks in a coma, and is now very functional; he has metal in his pelvis that causes his lower muscles to hurt bad at times.
416. Man, forty-seven, USA, 1982 motor vehicle accident. He is still learning to do things with right side, but he did re-learn to walk, talk, read, and write; he is able to drive.
417. Man, fifties, USA, 2002 brain infection that was caused by having his teeth cleaned and getting an infection that spread to his brain. He spent two months in the ICU; he was paralysed on his right side, but he prayed very hard one night, and the next day he could move his right side, and he started to talk, walk, and run; the staff could not believe the progress and discharged him one week later.
418. Man, forty-eight, USA, 1998 car accident. He was busted up, sustaining a subdural haematoma to his left parietal temporal frontal lobe and some contra coup concussions; he has issues with maths, reading, and writing, he walks with cane, and has right-side goofiness; sometimes he doesn't work.
419. Man, thirty-eight, USA, 1998 motorcycle accident during which he flew sixty feet after hitting a mile post on a mountain highway. He sustained collapsed lungs, and he shattered parts of his spine, one-half of his brain came out of a coma after three and one-half weeks, while the other half took three and one-half months, he has tremors on the left side of brain and the right side of his body, but they are mild now; it took him six months to walk again and two and one-half years to get his driving license back (he had to be seizure free for over a year); he still suffers from short-term memory problems, but he now walks, talks, and drives.
420. Man, fifty-three, UK, low level CO poisoning for several years as an infant, although he only found out recently. He suffers from short-term memory problems, and neurological and behavioural issues.

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421. Man, twenty-three, UK, twenty-three-foot fall. He spent three months in a coma, couldn't walk for three years, and was off to a different rehab in 2008 for mental rehabilitation.
422. Man, thirty-eight, USA, 1987 car accident. He spent three days in a coma, and was in another car accident one month later when he had a seizure, hitting a tree and being thrown out of passenger window onto his head. This time he spent one year in a coma and couldn't make a sound from his mouth for three years.
423. Man, nineteen, USA, 2006 car accident. He sustained a severe TBI, but he is recovering fast and doing pretty well going to graduate from high school in 2008; the left side of his body was affected, and he had to relearn everything; He has short-term memory issues, but no physical deficits.
424. Man, forty-nine, USA, 2000 fall while riding his bike. He spent four weeks in a coma and can't walk without support.
425. Woman, forties, USA, double aneurysm ruptured one morning when getting ready for work. She was found unconscious on the floor by her roommate; she doesn't have any deficits now and is driving again.
426. Man, thirty-one, USA, 2007 car accident followed by a stroke. He spent one month in a coma, and he is now doing great; he started walking again, and his balance is getting better, but he's very confused and doesn't recognise his family.
427. Man, thirty-six, USA, 1993 brain tumour. He sustained some paralysis on his right side, but he is doing fine; his speech is not always great, but people don't have an issue with it.
428. Woman, thirty-seven, USA, 2005 ruptured brain aneurysm. She had to relearn to walk and to use her right arm; she lost movement on her entire right side, but she regained it with rehab; she suffers from sleep issues.
429. Woman, fifty-one, Canada, hit by elderly driver at full speed in 2001. The teeth from the guy at the back whose head collided with hers were in her head for weeks and

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- caused an infection; she suffers from short-term memory problems, sleeping issues, bad executive functions, inability to hold her head up, bad vision, and inability to put one foot in front of the other; she fell on her patio in 2005, which added the symptom of ringing in her ear; no physical deficits.
430. Man, forty, UK, 1991 motorbike accident. He spent seven weeks in a coma, his left side is paralysed—the paralysis moved to his right side as the left recovered—he had to learn to do everything again, and he suffers from memory problems; he walks with a stick and sort of uses both arms.
431. Woman, forty-five, USA, 2001 car accident. She sustained a left hemisphere–right frontal lobe injury; she suffers from memory problems, cognitive issues, problems finding words and connecting thoughts, and sensory overload; she lost her friends.
432. Woman, forties, USA, 2008 fall when she slipped on ice. All her neurological functions are stuffed, and she suffers from memory issues, cognitive issues, vertigo, and inability to sit up for long; she lost her job, family, and home.
433. Man, thirty, USA, 1994 accident in which he was blinded by kids deer spotting and hit a tree. He spent two and one-half weeks in a coma and broke almost every bone on the left side of his body and the top of his head; he is living at his own house now, but it took a while to get where he is at now.
434. Woman, twenty-five, USA, 2002 car accident. She works now and is physically fine; she has emotional problems, though, chiefly depression.
435. Woman, fifty-six, USA, 2006 motor vehicle accident. She suffers from information-processing issues, sensory overload, frequent falling, and concentration issues; she is mentally slow, and she can't work or drive.
436. Woman, forty-seven, USA, 2007 motorcycle accident. She suffers from memory problems, she has an MBA but functions as a sixth grader, she had to close her business, has

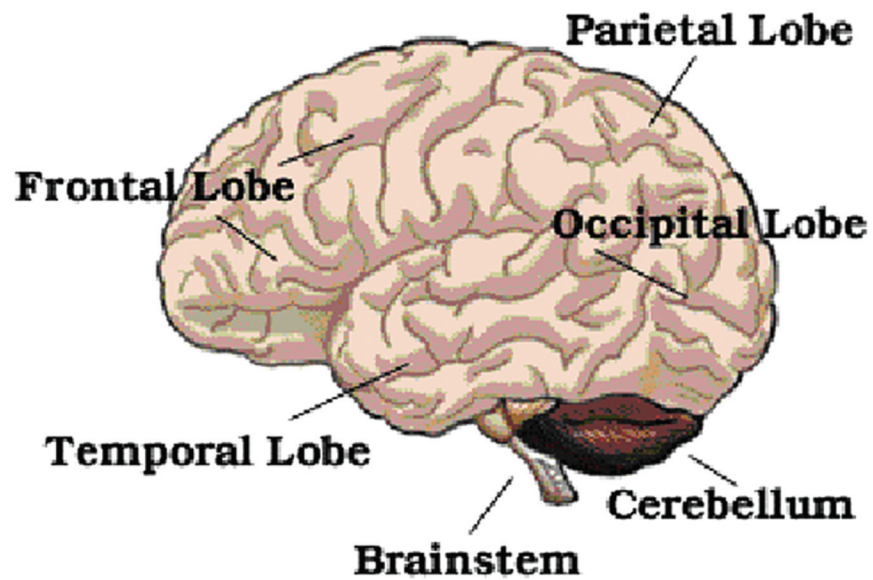
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bad anger issues, and her daughter freaked out when she didn't recognise/remember her after the accident and went to live with her dad.

437. Man, fifty, Canada, 1994 motor vehicle accident. He was in rehab till 1997 and was okay till recently, when he began having nightmares, memory lapses, anxiety, and panic. He was working till 2007, but this recurrence of symptoms has forced him to stop.

All these people have to live in a world that doesn't understand brain injury and what it means to the person who has it. I am hoping to somehow change that with my writing.

General Information about the Brain



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Frontal Lobe

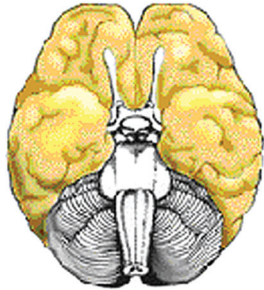
The frontal lobe is the front part of the brain. It is involved in planning, organizing, problem solving, selective attention, personality, and a variety of higher cognitive functions, including behaviour and emotions, cognition, and memory. The anterior (front) portion of the frontal lobe is called the prefrontal cortex. It is very important in the higher cognitive functions and the determination of the personality. The posterior (back) of the frontal lobe consists of the premotor and motor areas. Nerve cells that produce movement are located in the motor areas. The premotor areas serve to modify movements. The prefrontal area governs the ability to concentrate and attend, and it controls elaboration of thought. It is called the “Gatekeeper,” meaning that it governs judgement and inhibition, in addition to personality and emotional traits.

Damage to the frontal lobe may create impairment of recent memory, inattentiveness, inability to concentrate, behaviour disorders, and difficulty in learning new information. It can also lead to lack of inhibition (inappropriate social and/or sexual behaviour), emotional lability (or flat affect), contralateral plegia, paresis, and expressive/motor aphasia.

The frontal lobe is divided from the parietal lobe by the central sulcus.

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Cerebral Cortex



The cerebral cortex is the outermost layer of the cerebral hemisphere, which is composed of grey matter. Cortices are asymmetrical. Both hemispheres are able to analyse sensory data, perform memory functions, learn new information, form thoughts, and make decisions.

Left hemisphere sequential analysis is the systematic, logical interpretation of information. Interpretation and production of symbolic information include the use of language, mathematics, abstraction, and reasoning. This includes memory stored in a language format.

Right hemisphere holistic functioning is the processing of multisensory input simultaneously to provide a holistic picture of one's environment. This includes visual spatial skills. Holistic functions such as dancing and gymnastics are coordinated by the right hemisphere. Memory is stored in auditory, visual, and spatial modalities.

Callosum



The callosum connects the right and left hemispheres to allow for communication between the hemispheres. It forms the roof of the lateral and third ventricles.

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Parietal Lobe

The parietal lobes contain the primary sensory cortex, which controls sensation (touch and pressure). Behind the primary sensory cortex is a large association area that controls fine sensation (judgement of texture, weight, size, and shape).

Damage to the parietal lobe right can cause visuospatial deficits. (eg, patient may have difficulty finding their way around new, or even familiar, places.)

Damage to the parietal lobe left may disrupt a patient's ability to understand spoken and/or written language.

Any damage to the parietal lobe may lead to inability to discriminate between sensory stimuli or inability to locate and recognise parts of the body (which leads to neglect). A severe injury can cause an inability to recognise oneself, disorientation of environment space, and inability to write.

Occipital Lobe

The occipital lobe is the region in the back of the brain, which processes visual information. Not only is the occipital lobe mainly responsible for visual reception, it also contains association areas

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that help in the visual recognition of shapes and colours. Damage to this lobe can cause visual deficits.

Damage to the occipital lobe may lead to a loss of vision in the opposite field or a loss of ability to recognize an object seen in the opposite field of vision. This takes the form of a flash of light, or stars.

Temporal lobe



There are two temporal lobes, one on each side of the brain, located at about the level of the ears. These lobes allow a person to tell one smell from another and one sound from another. They also help in sorting new information and are believed to be responsible for short-term memory.

The right lobe is mainly involved in visual memory (i.e. remembering pictures and faces).

The left lobe is mainly involved in verbal memory (i.e. remembering words and names).

Damage to the temporal lobes may lead to hearing deficits, agitation, irritability, and childish behaviour.

Limbic System



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Limbic lobes govern sex, rage, fear, and most emotions. They control the integration of recent memory.

Damage to the limbic lobe can lead to the loss of sense of smell, agitation, loss of control of emotion, and loss of recent memory.

Cerebellum

The cerebellum is the portion of the brain located at the back that helps coordinate movement (balance and muscle coordination). Damage may result in ataxia, which is a problem of muscle coordination. This can interfere with a person's ability to walk, talk, eat, and perform other self-care tasks.

Most Common Symptoms of Brain Injury

I am sure you will have noticed that some symptoms show up again and again in the profiles I shared with you earlier. I will now try to explain them a bit more, so that you get an idea of why these things are problems for the people living with them.

I have read many times a very well-explained book about brain injury that we recommend to basically all the new chatters coming to the chat room, as it provides a good explanation of symptoms and is a very good place to start learning more about brain injury: *Traumatic Brain Injury Survival Guide*, by Dr. Glen Johnson, clinical neuropsychologist. This book is, I guess, my own version of the *Survival Guide*. I have taken some information from it and combined that with information I downloaded from the Internet and from what I have learnt talking with survivors. My idea was to write a more human version, one that shows that brain injury happens to real people. I hope I have managed to do that in what follows.

Memory loss

This must be the symptom with which almost every person with a brain injury struggles. More often than not, the problem lies with short-term memory. The person's long-term memory might be working really well, and that person may remember her past

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but won't be able to tell you what she did the day before, or what she had for lunch or dinner. Having a problem with short-term memory also makes it hard for the injured person to create new long-term memories. The other problem with memory is retrieval. The information might be stored somewhere, but how to retrieve it can be a challenge. Some people have lost years of memory.

Many people with a brain injury live with Post-it® notes to remind them of things, or with a timer that rings to keep them on track, reminding them to take their meds or else! Living with short-term memory problems is often about finding ways to work around it. Some people have become experts in doing that.

Sensory overload

Sensory overload occurs when there is too much information for the brain to process, and it simply shuts down. For some head-injured people, watching a movie overloads their brain. The visual and audio information is too much for their brain to process, and they might need to watch it without the sound. Sensory overload occurs when someone is overwhelmed by what's happening around them. It can be caused by a crowded place or too much noise. There is too much information for their brain to process. Some people become irritable or develop headaches. Sensory overload can also be visual, like going from a dark building to the bright light outside. Some head-injured people prone to sensory overload use ear plugs for noise and sunglasses for light everywhere they go.

Someone once described sensory overload to me by saying that it is like living with a paper bag on your head—not a nice feeling! Sensory overload is like being mentally half alive. It is a paralysis of the mind, like when a computer crashes when taking in too much information. It's like a paper bag hovering over your head, and you don't get to decide when it drops. When it does drop, the brain shuts down. Sensory overload is also known as "flooding." We can imagine the brain as a system made of many pipes. The information being processed is the water running

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through the pipes. If too much water comes at once, the pipes can't handle it, and flooding occurs.

People with a brain injury can become overloaded quite easily. A crowded, noisy house with kids running around can be enough to achieve that. Sensory overload will very often start with a headache. As soon as this happens, the brain-injured person should take a break. Sensory overload can be caused by something as silly as looking for your favourite breakfast cereal in the supermarket's cereal aisle. There are so many different ones that the brain cannot process the information and shuts down. It is a good idea to try to avoid sensory overload as much as possible, as some people take days to get over it.

Fatigue

Fatigue is another very common complaint from people who have brain injury. It is not uncommon for people recovering from a brain injury to sleep eighteen hours a day, especially early on. Although fatigue decreases over time, it is a very persistent problem. Many people recover from nearly all other deficits, only to have fatigue prevent them from returning to work or to their previous lifestyle.

Physical fatigue versus mental fatigue

There are two types of fatigue: physical fatigue and mental fatigue. Physical fatigue is caused by doing some sort of physical labour, such as mowing the lawn or working in the garden. Just after a head injury, physical fatigue might be a problem. If you are relearning to walk, the amount of effort it requires to relearn to coordinate the muscles and build up strength is substantial. For most people physical fatigue tends to go away after six months.

What surprises people with a head injury is the mental fatigue. For example, you could spend the whole day in your yard pulling weeds and not feel tired from it, but an hour of work doing paperwork in your office will leave you exhausted. This is mental fatigue, and it tends to go on for longer periods of time. It can be

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a problem for many years. Mental fatigue is as if the brain has run out of chemicals and shuts down. Why does this happen? For people with a brain injury, it takes much more effort to get the same result. Whereas before the injury there were highways going to all the different parts of the brain, bringing and retrieving information, these highways were destroyed by the brain injury, and the brain now has to use small secondary roads to move the same information. It can still do it, but it takes longer and is more tiring.

Fatigue will affect your memory. It will also affect your mood. Some people with brain injury need to have two to three naps every day to help them cope with it. It is important to build up stamina slowly. If the objective is to get back to work, it might be wise to do some volunteer work first, just to build up stamina without the stress related to paid work. Exercise is also very good for the brain. Although the brain only comprises about 5 percent of the body's weight, it uses 30 percent of the oxygen in the body, and probably the same amount of glucose (which is the energy that runs our body). Fatigue is also very often linked to a lack of energy or stamina. Of course, if you feel tired all the time, you don't really feel like starting anything.

Anger and depression

People with a brain injury tend to be more easily irritated or angered than people who don't have one. People with a brain injury also seem to cry or become depressed more easily.

People will generally accept that a brain injury can change your thoughts and memories, but they usually find it harder to understand that it also changes your emotions. Well, it makes sense, actually. Emotions don't exist in a cloud that is following you. They are in your head, like everything else.

Anger in someone who has a head injury is different from normal anger. It tends to have a quick on and a quick off. You can basically be in a good mood until some small thing irritates you, and then you are suddenly very angry. This anger doesn't seem to last. You are angry for a few minutes, and then someone changes the topic of the conversation and the anger is gone. Another vari-

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ation could be that some little thing sets you off and then the whole day is ruined. You are not mad, but you seem to be in a bad mood.

Brain injury is an emotional roller coaster. Why is that? Rage, fear, and sexual feelings all come from very primitive emotional areas in the brain.

The front part of the brain helps plan and control behaviour. It's the part involved in saying NO. If that part of the brain is not working so well, the primitive functions tend to be more prominent.

This change in emotions may mean family members and friends start to avoid you, as they may be afraid of the changes they see in you. Family members can't really walk away from you, but friends can and often will. This is why so many people with brain injury have lost all their friends.

There might be a warning sign of the anger coming. If this is the case, it is a good idea to have a time-out as soon as this happens. Walk away from the stress-causing situation until you are calm enough to return to it without becoming angry again. Usually ten to fifteen minutes should do the trick.

Word finding

Word finding is another very common and annoying problem that many people with brain injury experience. They may talk normally, and their speech flows evenly and is easy to understand, but they have a very odd problem: they will know the word they want to say but just cannot come up with it. A variation of this problem is that when stuck on a word they will use another one instead. They might not even notice they have used the wrong word until someone points it out. Speech therapists will help work around that problem with various strategies.

Aphasia is another speech issue related to brain injury. Aphasia is the loss of the ability to use and comprehend language, a bit more serious than word-finding problems. Again, working with a speech therapist will help the patient develop strategies to cope with aphasia and learn to talk, read, and write again.

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Sleep disorders

It is quite surprising that so many people with brain injury suffer from fatigue, yet have problems sleeping. My sleep pattern was not affected by my brain injury. I had no trouble sleeping before, and I still don't have any trouble sleeping. To try to explain sleep issues to you, I have asked a friend of mine who is, unfortunately, an expert in this field. What follows is how he explained it to me:

“Prior to my brain injury I had what I would consider a normal sleep pattern. I went to bed at roughly 11:00 p.m. On weekdays the alarm would ring at 6:30 for work, on weekends I usually slept till 8, but rarely past 9.

Following the accident of March 9, 1999, I have no real sleep pattern at all. When I sleep at all, it is for two or three hours at most, which can come at any time of day or night. Such a sleep “cycle” as I have seems to be of a thirty-six-hour variety—for the first twenty-four-hour period I might get the four-hour maximum, then the next day maybe two hours, then the next day none at all. But this is a just a rough approximation of a pattern, hardly the rigid format I was accustomed to before the accident.

There are times when I will go for three, four, even five days without sleeping. I know, I know, I wouldn't have believed it myself, but it is a fact. There's a paradoxical effect in sleeplessness in which the body becomes so tired, TOO tired, in fact, to sleep. And the brain, it too can enter a kind of altered state of consciousness brought about by extreme fatigue and absence of sleep.

Sometime in late 2001 I was admitted to George Washington University in Washington, DC, for a sleep study. I arrived around 8:00 p.m. Electrodes were affixed to my scalp and various parts of my chest, and I was left in a dark room to fall asleep. I protested that I never fell asleep this early, even before my TBI. The technician seemed to have heard this complaint before but obviously had a job to do, and it didn't include counselling. I didn't do any real sleeping that night for my sleep study, even

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though I hadn't slept the night before and was in fact exhausted when I got there. Result: not only do I have very poor sleep quantity, but quality as well. The diagnosis was "idiopathic hypersomnia," a fancy way of saying "not sleeping, don't know why."

Meds, you ask? Taken them all. The only one that truly worked to get me to sleep is one I would never take again: Seroquel. It is a powerful antipsychotic that wiped me out so badly that by the time came to I understood why schizophrenics go "off their meds." I was a drooling idiot. I couldn't think, couldn't concentrate, and could barely walk. I told my doc I'd rather be an insomniac than this....Right now I take Restoril (temazepam), which isn't much more effective than Ambien or the rest, but neither does it have the nasty side effects."

Pain

Pain is another very common symptom of brain injury. It can be headaches, or other types of pain. Pain can be caused by nerve damage. I have heard of people being in pain for so many months that there was nothing left in them. Some people with brain injury have some kind of headache every day, and more than once a day. I will not go into details about the different types of headaches here, but just remember that there are many different types of headaches and, unfortunately, many types of other pains.

Vision problems

Vision can be affected in various ways by a brain injury. Some people with brain injury have constant double vision. In my case, I lost the left field of vision for both eyes. There is nothing wrong with my eyes, but my brain doesn't get the messages anymore. It is quite scary, actually. If I don't constantly scan on the left, it doesn't exist.

Epilepsy /seizures

What is epilepsy?

I know very little about epilepsy. I have always been a bit scared to witness someone having a seizure, as I would not know what to do. When my neurosurgeon told me that 5 percent of people with brain injury develop seizures, I replied that in that case, I would go for the other 95 percent. I have been very lucky and never had a seizure. I was taking anticonvulsants as a precaution for over a year, which were also mood stabilizers, but I have now been weaned for over two years and still have never had a seizure. I guess I dodged that bullet. Since I know so little about epilepsy, what follows is information I have gathered for you on the internet:

Epilepsy is a brain disorder in which clusters of nerve cells or neurons in the brain sometimes signal abnormally. In epilepsy, the normal pattern of neuronal activity becomes disturbed, causing strange sensations, emotions, and behaviour, or sometimes convulsions, muscle spasms, and loss of consciousness. Epilepsy is a disorder with many possible causes. Anything that disturbs the normal pattern of neuron activity—from illness to brain damage to abnormal brain development—can lead to seizures. Epilepsy may develop because of an abnormality in brain wiring, an imbalance of nerve-signalling chemicals called neurotransmitters, or some combination of these factors. Having a seizure does not necessarily mean that a person has epilepsy. Only when a person has had two or more seizures is he or she considered to have epilepsy. EEGs and brain scans are common diagnostic tests for epilepsy.

Is there any treatment?

Once epilepsy is diagnosed, it is important to begin treatment as soon as possible. For about 80 percent of those diagnosed with epilepsy, seizures can be controlled with modern medicines and

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surgical techniques. Some antiepileptic drugs can interfere with the effectiveness of oral contraceptives. In 1997 the FDA approved the vagus nerve stimulator for use in people with seizures that are not well-controlled by medication.

What is the prognosis?

Most people with epilepsy lead outwardly normal lives. While epilepsy cannot currently be cured, for some people it does eventually go away. Most seizures do not cause brain damage. It is not uncommon for people with epilepsy, especially children, to develop behavioural and emotional problems, which are sometimes the consequence of embarrassment and frustration or bullying, teasing, or avoidance in school and other social settings. For many people with epilepsy, the risk of seizures restricts their independence (some states refuse driver's licenses to people with epilepsy) and recreational activities. People with epilepsy are at special risk for two life-threatening conditions: status epilepticus and sudden unexplained death. Most women with epilepsy can become pregnant, but they should discuss their epilepsy and the medications they are taking with their doctors. Women with epilepsy have a 90 percent or better chance of having a normal, healthy baby.

What research is being done?

Scientists are studying potential antiepileptic drugs with the goal of enhancing treatment for epilepsy. Scientists continue to study how neurotransmitters interact with brain cells to control nerve firing and how non-neuronal cells in the brain contribute to seizures. One of the most studied neurotransmitters is GABA, or gamma-aminobutyric acid. Researchers are working to identify genes that may influence epilepsy. This information may allow doctors to prevent epilepsy or to predict which treatments will be most beneficial. Doctors are now experimenting with several new types of therapies for epilepsy: transplantation of foetal pig neurons into the brains of patients to learn whether cell trans-

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plants can help control seizures, transplantation of stem cells, and the use of a device that could predict seizures up to three minutes before they begin. Researchers are continually improving MRI and other brain scans. Studies have shown that in some cases, children may experience fewer seizures if they maintain a strict diet called the ketogenic diet, which is rich in fats and low in carbohydrates.

What follows, I have copied from a book called, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, by Norman Doidge. It is so well written and simply explained that it would be very hard to do a better job:

Balance

Quite often, people with a brain injury have some kind of balance problem. Depending on how bad their vestibular system was damaged, it can be quite bad. Balance is a sense that we don't even know we have until we lose it. It normally works so well, so aimlessly, that it is not even listed among the five that Aristotle described, and it was overlooked for centuries.

The balance system gives us our sense of orientation in space. Its sense organ, the vestibular apparatus, consists of three semicircular canals in the inner ear that tell us when we are upright and how gravity is affecting our bodies by detecting motion in three-dimensional space. One canal detects movement in the horizontal plane, another in the vertical plane, and another when we are moving forward or backward. The semicircular canals contain little hairs in a fluid bath. When we move our head, the fluid stirs the hairs, which send a signal to our brain, telling us we have increased our velocity in a particular direction. Each movement requires a corresponding adjustment of the rest of the body. If we move our head forward, our brains tell an appropriate segment of our bodies to adjust unconsciously, so that we can offset that change in our centre of gravity and maintain our balance. The signals from the vestibular apparatus go along

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a nerve to a specialised clump of neurons in our brain called the “vestibular nuclei,” which process them and then send commands to our muscles to adjust themselves. A healthy vestibular apparatus also has a strong link to the visual system. When you run after a bus, with your head bouncing up and down as you race forward, you are able to keep that moving bus at the centre of your gaze because your vestibular apparatus sends messages to your brain, telling it the speed and direction in which you are running. These signals allow your brain to rotate and adjust the position of your eyeballs to keep them directed at your target, the bus.

When someone with a damaged vestibular apparatus stands up without support, within moments they feel/sense/see that they are standing on a precipice, about to plummet. First their head wobbles and tilts to one side; then their arms reach out to try to stabilise their stance. Soon their whole body is moving chaotically back and forth, and they look like a person walking on a tight rope in that frantic moment before losing their balance—except that their feet are firmly planted on the ground, wide apart. They don’t look like they are only afraid of falling, but more like they are afraid of being pushed. When they try to walk, they have to hold onto a wall, and still they stagger like a drunk. Even when they have fallen, they feel they are still falling, perpetually, into an infinite abyss.

An unspoken yet profound aspect of our well-being is based on having a functioning sense of balance. When we talk of feeling settled or unsettled, balanced or unbalanced, rooted or rootless, grounded or ungrounded we are using a vestibular language. Not surprisingly, people with vestibular issues often fall to pieces psychologically, and many have committed suicide.

There are, unfortunately, many more symptoms people with brain injury need to deal with on a daily basis. For many, planning and organising is very hard, as is finding the motivation to start on a task and then stay focussed and keep going on it. Many

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people with brain injury have lost their maths skills to such an extent that it is impossible for them to remember the date. For many people with brain injury, it is also extremely hard to learn new things. Multi tasking is for most impossible, and they need to focus on one thing at a time. For many, anything that involves various steps is almost impossible, for example, following a recipe.

Well, for all of the above reasons, you will all understand by now that living with a brain injury is certainly not a picnic. The good news for all these people with brain injury, though, is that it might be a long road, but it also happens to be one way: forward only. We can only get better, unless the brain injury is due to a degenerative disease, which could be the case, too, of course.

The human brain is an amazing organ. It has an incredible plasticity and can change itself, enabling people with brain injury to recover and be able to lead a normal life. It is, therefore, important to keep hope and faith in your heart as you struggle to get back to normal and to exercise your brain as much as possible. It is important to remember that the principle, “use it or lose it,” applies to the brain. I certainly don’t want to lose it, so I am forever using it, or at least trying to. Also remember that neurons that fire together, wire together; hence, they create new pathways to replace the ones destroyed by the brain injury. The brain is a muscle, after all, so the more you use it, the stronger it gets.

I also firmly believe that the brain never stops healing. The day that I stop making progress will be the day I die—in the very far future, of course!

Emotional issues / mood swings

I do not believe that I have emotional issues or mood swings, so again, I have asked a friend to help me explain this to you. What follows is his input:

After his brain injury, my friend acquired what is called an emotional lability. This means he can cry over seemingly small things, although it doesn’t affect him as much now, almost twenty-seven

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years later. On the other hand, he hasn't cried at a funeral in almost twenty-seven years; yet he cried his heart out when he lost his best friend over a year ago, and he still gets tears in his eyes when he thinks about her. (By lost, I mean she stopped communicating with him.) For the first nineteen years he had his emotions pretty much under control. Only a few flare-ups—maybe three over the first nineteen years—during which someone would say something to him that he found painful, would he feel the anger welling up inside him. Try as he might, he could not keep it in. It could be anything. For example, someone might say, "Mind if I cut in," or, "I don't have blanks for your car keys."

Then around the nineteenth year after his brain injury, he started having flare-ups at work. He managed to deal with them by going to the employee-assistances plan for counselling. During this time his hours were changed from working six months on the day shift and six months on the evening shift to year-around evening shift. Also, he continued to experience mood swings, so he told his allergist, the only doctor he trusted and still trusts. He prescribed Paxil, which seemed to work. He began seeing a psychiatrist, whom he didn't like from the get go. During the first appointment, the doctor kept nodding off and answering his phone. My friend was on a low dose of Paxil. The doctor raised it.

My friend promptly started having trouble sleeping, so the doctor took him off Paxil and put him on a mood stabilizer. Again he was okay on a low dose, but when the doctor raised the dose; my friend started having trouble sleeping. So the doctor tried another mood stabilizer. This went on for two or three more meds, during which time my friend put on seventy pounds, increasing from one hundred forty-five pounds to two hundred fifteen pounds. The doctor finally switched him to Topamax, and he seems to do well now.

One night while my friend was at home, something came over him. He is a pack rat, and he doesn't like to toss things out. He was sitting with enough meds to knock out a herd of elephants. He panicked, realising he couldn't dump them in the trash because bums went though the trash. So down the garbage disposal they went. The next week he read that there were high levels of meds detected in many rivers by big cities. Oops!

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He settled on Topamax and was on about 300 mg a day. He has since found a psychiatrist with whom he feels much more comfortable. He has been trying different medicines for sleep, but none have really worked, so he is gradually lowering the amount of Topamax he takes 150 mg. To him, Topamax is a miracle drug. It has allowed him to work and stay sane.

Part of his sleeping problem may soon be solved. He did a sleep study, and it was determined that he has a sleep disorder. He will get to test out a CPAP machine for a week and see how it goes. Better sleep might mean better mood and stabler emotions, one hopes.

Weakness on one side of the body

Isn't it interesting that I waited till the end to tell you how my brain injury affected me? In my case, it's a bit more than a weakness, as I lost movement on one side of my body and woke up from coma paralysed on the left. Early in my hospital stay, a lifter was needed to move me from the bed to an armchair, where the physiotherapist told me to sit nice and tall. It was exhausting just to do that. After I was transferred to the rehab centre, I went from needing a lifter for transfers to having two people lift me, and then only one. I was in a wheelchair for a while, but I took my first steps with the physiotherapist quite early on, only about two months after the aneurysm ruptured. I had a quad stick and a therapist on my side and only took about five steps, but still, I walked. I was so happy, I had tears in my eyes. I used a quad stick for quite a while and was able to graduate to a walking stick after I had surgery to lengthen my left Achilles tendon in 2006. I walk unaided around the house now, but there is still very little movement in my left arm. I remember early on in the rehab centre that if I was on my left side and decided to roll to my right, if I didn't physically hold my left arm with my right hand, it would not come with me. It was quite scary. Now when I roll from one side to the other, my left arm follows me, so it is somewhat better. I have increased tone in it, so I regularly get Botox injections to help reduce it. I also have a dynamic neurological arm-and-hand

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splint called a “second skin” that keeps my arm in a more natural position and reminds my brain that I have an arm there.

Interestingly, there is nothing wrong with my limbs or joints. I have full range of movement in all of them, but only passive. The problem is with my brain, which doesn’t communicate with my left limbs anymore.

Living with only one working side of the body can be a bit of a challenge. Try getting dressed in the morning if you can’t lift one leg or move one arm. During the five months I spent in the rehab centre, I learnt to get dressed and undressed. Now I can say that I have adapted quite well. There is not much I can’t do with one arm only. I clean, wash, put clothes on the line, including queen size sheets, fold clothes, put them away, cook, and do all I can around the house. In the kitchen, I have a one-arm working board, and I would not be able to do all the cooking I do without it. Having a physical disability is certainly not a picnic, but on the other hand, I can still use my brain to find ways to work around it.

Why I Am Still Counting My Blessings

Now that you have followed me all the way here, let me share with you why I consider myself blessed many times over.

You realise by now that I do have a brain injury. How else would I know so much about it? Well, you are very right in assuming that. I do indeed have a brain injury, but unlike many, my brain injury is not invisible at all. Mine is pretty much straight in your face. It took me a long time to understand or even begin to understand why I was spared cognitively. I asked that question to my neuropsychiatrist once, and he replied that I fought for it not to happen. Not really satisfied with that answer, as I didn't understand what he meant, I asked him again the next time I saw him. What follows is the content of a letter he wrote to my GP following that meeting. I was satisfied with his reply and understood a lot better, so I asked him if he could e-mail me the notes he had been taking during our meeting, as I intended to use them here somehow. He replied that he'd write a letter. It follows and is addressed to my GP:

It was a wonderful moment to see Monica visit me independently today. She told me that Vince now works three days a week, and she arranges her own transport and goes about most of her business completely independently. She uses a walking stick. Most of the time Monica is busy either with domestic duties or exercises or working on her next book, *Counting My Blessings*.

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Monica marvels at how, despite her physical disabilities, she has been spared mentally. She still has marked left hemiplegia and left visual field defect.

Following her initial depression and initial treatment of Lamotrigine, which she stopped in December, 2006, Monica fought against depression herself. “My only drug is nicotine. I know it’s bad, but I like it.” She has no evidence of dysphasia but has a marked dysarthria: “My palate is not working very well.” Monica feels that her memory is back to normal: “My memory is so good it’s a weapon. I have never been good with faces—I was not good with faces before, so I’m not going to be good now. Anything I want to remember, I need to want to remember. There needs to be some interest.”

Because Monica has tended to use her logic at her pace in her way throughout her life, I think in conventional terms it is safe to say that Monica has been what we would tend to call a “left brain” person. In other words, throughout her life, Monica has tended to use logic as opposed to intuition in order to problem solve. For example, in maths class, Monica could recall frustrating the teachers because she would go about solving her math problems in a unique way. If the conventional way of solving an algebraic or geometrical problem made no sense to Monica, she would use her own stepwise logic. Monica would invariably arrive at the correct answer. When the teachers questioned this, she would proceed to demonstrate each step. It may not have been a logic anyone else used, but it was Monica’s logic [*twisted, just like my sense of humour!*]. Although it frustrated the teachers, they could not find fault with it because Monica could explain every step of her problem-solving exercise. This is very different from somebody who would intuitively see an answer to a problem but have no explanation as to how they arrived at the solution.

In many ways, Monica’s road to recovery has been remarkably similar. While initially feeling overwhelmed by the physical nature of the disability, Monica had to use her

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logic to go about her recovery in her own way. She had to work things out for herself. Once she had started to realize the enormity of the task ahead of her, Monica could not allow herself to be bombarded by the rules and demands of the rehabilitation team. Many of the demands of the rehabilitation team did not make sense to Monica.

It took a while for Monica to establish that her mental capacities were intact. Once Monica established that these mental capacities were intact, she had to deal with the scepticism of the rehabilitation team as to her insight into the intactness of her own mind.

Monica's next challenge was to build on the intactness of these mental capacities using her own twisted logic at her pace, despite the misgivings of the treating team and the treating team's attempts at redirecting Monica to what we felt would better suit her recovery. Fortunately, Monica's stubborn streak held out, and as she did in primary school, she stuck to her guns and used her own lateral thinking and laborious problem solving.

Monica has become yet another example of a patient showing the rehabilitation team that we need to understand the brain or the person who suffered the injury or the accident in the first place. A one-size-fits-all, protocol-driven approach to rehabilitation is not only meaningless, but counterproductive and potentially harmful.

Because of her exceptional "left brain" intelligence, Monica has been able to emerge from a devastating acquired brain injury, which has left her with the most frustrating physical and sensory losses, but she has remained as intellectually sharp as if she had not been injured in the first place.

In April, 2005, I suffered a ruptured severe brain aneurysm that almost killed me and left me with acquired brain injury on the left side of my body. My injury was in the right frontal temporal lobe, the right middle cerebral artery to be precise. My symptoms are mainly physical.

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I have come a long way since that fateful day in April, 2005. I now walk with a stick and a limp, but I still have very little movement in my left arm. On the other hand, I am blessed many times, as I don't have any of the symptoms I described earlier. Well, maybe not *none*, but I'm basically cognitively intact, and that's very lucky. I never lost any of the four languages that I speak fluently. I thought I didn't get depressed, but it does happen, even to me. I can remember one day a few months ago when I had no reason to be, but I was really down all day. Luckily, this is very much against my nature, and I kicked it away, but it would be easy to just fall into that trap and feel sorry for oneself. I also thought there was no anger in me, and there isn't, but I can, at times, feel the anger flaring inside me over little things. Luckily, my frontal lobe still stops me from acting on it, and it goes away as fast as it came along. Just a deep breath in, and it's gone.

Another blessing is that my memory wasn't affected. My memory is actually so good that it is dangerous. It was excellent before the brain injury, and it is still above average now.

I am also the same person I was before the brain injury. I have the same wicked sense of humour; I just move a lot slower now. Easy and fast are not part of my vocabulary anymore, but where there is a will, there is a way, and there is not much that I cannot do with only one working arm. Whereas I was able to leap before, now I limp. I haven't lost any friend following my brain injury, and my husband is also still standing by me. When we went back to Switzerland on a holiday in 2006, I knew some of my friends were a bit scared to see me again. I asked them why, and they said that they didn't know what to expect after a brain injury. Well, our trip there certainly reassured them all. When I said jokingly that I was just the shadow of the woman I used to be, I got the same reaction every time: no you are not! That woman is still very much there. I don't think she ever left.

Although I have a brain injury, I have a good life. I get out of the house every day, even if just for a walk to the kids' school, so I certainly do not feel isolated.

I do not have fatigue issues. I am a ball of energy. I keep busy all day long and I don't need to nap, but on the other hand, I

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sleep well every night. As some friends in the chat room tell me, I do more in a day than they do in a week.

I don't have any pains and never had any. The only pains would have been the terrible headaches I had for three days before the aneurysm ruptured, but I don't remember those, anyway.

I hope that I have been able, with what precedes, to explain to you a bit about brain injury, or to at least make you realise how common a brain injury is, how easy it is to get one, and what it means to live with one. The public awareness of brain injury is still very low, and it is important to change that so the world is better able to deal with people living with a brain injury, to understand them better, and to be more supportive.

TBI Chat

For over a year, now, I have been a daily visitor to Brain Injury Chat, a chat room aimed at offering support to brain injury survivors, caregivers, family members, etc. I have learnt so much there. I never thought of myself as a victim because bad things happen to good people. That's just life. Plus, this is not going to beat me. I will be stronger than it and beat it. By visiting that chat room, I have been able to understand a lot better what a brain injury is and how lucky I have been in escaping most of the symptoms I described earlier. I love you all guys. I think you are all wonderful and you have all become my friends. I am so proud of each and every one of you for moving forward on your road to recovery. It's because of visiting TBI chat that I decided to write this book. I knew there was another book in me, but you all inspired me to write this. Someone needs to let the world know what brain injury is and what it means for people who have it to live with it daily. Well, that person might as well be me. Since I have been spared those problems, I deem it to be my mission to try to explain them to the world. I know that the only way to understand brain injury is to experience it. I am experiencing my own brain injury and my own limitations. Mine, for some reason, are physical.

My road to recovery is certainly not a picnic, but I haven't lost any cognitive functions. As my neurosurgeon told me on a follow-up visit, there is nothing wrong with my intellect, and for that I will be forever grateful.

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I realised how lucky I am by regularly visiting the chat room. Most of the chatters have no physical issues, but their struggles are probably worse than mine. I admire you all. You keep fighting day after day after day to get better. I think you are all amazing. Thank you for being my friends, it means a lot to me. I have learnt so much with you all. Although my symptoms are different, you have given me more of an understanding of what brain injury means than most people have. I hope I have been able to write down that knowledge appropriately, so that I can now share it with the world.

What Advice Would I Give to Someone Who Has a Brain Injury?

This is a tough one because who am I to give any advice to anybody? I will, therefore not give any advice at all. I'll just share with you what I do myself.

First of all, I always keep hope and faith in my heart. I do believe that I am exactly where I am supposed to be. For what reason, though, I have no idea, but I would very much like to know, of course.

I always do my best.

I try to always see the positive side of a situation. I keep my sense of humour. It has helped me often.

I try to get some kind of exercise every day. After all, what is good for the body is good for the mind. I have healthy eating habits. I believe that the principle, "use it or lose it," is very important as far as the brain is concerned. I certainly don't want to lose anymore than I have already, so I'm forever trying to involve my left limbs. I also talk to them, and when I exercise, I put all my concentration in it. Neurons that fire together, wire together, after all.

I firmly believe in the amazing way the brain can reorganise itself to fix what has been damaged or find other ways to accomplish a task. I also believe that recovery never stops. Recovering from a brain injury is a long, tough road, but it's also one way: forward only. That's the good news.

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Try to learn as much as you can about brain injury, whether you are a survivor or a caregiver. I read all the books written by survivors that I could put my hands on. I spent hours on the Internet downloading information and finding out more. The more informed you are, the better you will find out how to cope with it. I'm prepared to try anything that will not harm me and might help. I do kinesiology every fortnight; I get Bowen therapy massages; I did acupuncture, theta healing, and spiritual healing; I even did neurofeedback therapy, but unfortunately, although we could see the changes on my brain maps, they were not noticeable on my person. Oh well, at least I tried.

I am now also participating in a ten-week stroke-yoga / meditation study. It can certainly not do me any harm, and it might help, so why not?

Facts and Figures

Brain injury is not a disease or something you can catch. Brain injury is defined as a loss of brain function. It can be caused by the following:

- accidents (road, work, or home)
- sports
- assaults
- shaking a young child
- poisoning
- drinking too much alcohol
- overuse of prescribed drugs
- use of illegal drugs
- petrol and chemical sniffing
- stroke
- rupture of a blood vessel in the brain
- blockage of blood supply to the brain
- tumours (cancerous or non-cancerous)
- infections
- meningitis
- encephalitis
- lack of oxygen
- near drowning
- severe asthma attack
- lack of blood flow to the brain (e.g. through a heart attack)

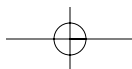
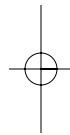
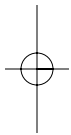
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Brain injury can have serious effects. A person who has an acquired brain injury often looks healthy and fully recovered; however, the difficulties they face are caused by permanent damage to the person's brain function. You may see effects such as these:

- memory loss—short-term and long-term
- difficulties in starting and completing activities
- poor concentration or being easily distracted
- inability to work as effectively or as quickly as one used to
- headaches
- fatigue—get tired very quickly
- chronic pain and discomfort
- anxiety
- depression
- hypersensitivity to noise, crowds, light, or temperature
- changes in sexual behaviour
- inappropriate and exaggerated emotional reactions
- difficulty sticking to the one idea for a long time
- problem solving and decision making difficulties

These changes cannot be fixed by having a good night's sleep, a change of lifestyle, or medication. For many people who sustain a brain injury, these changes may gradually improve. At the time of their injury, however, it is impossible to predict how much they will recover or how long it will take.

Some people may not be diagnosed until many years later or at all. In the meantime, they may experience serious difficulties in their lives. For example, unexplained difficulties with personal relationships, business failures, poor performance at work, or long-term unemployment may be related to brain injury.



Acknowledgement

I will start this by thanking all my friends in TBI chat. You are the ones who made this book come to the surface in me, after all. Without you I don't know what I would have been working on. I don't think I'm that good at fiction, but I really enjoy writing, so thank you for giving me the inspiration to share with the world what I have learnt about brain injury. Thanks to you all. There are a few people there whom I need to thank more specifically for their help in bringing this to a whole: Thanks to Jawmo for sharing with me (and the reader) your experience with insomnia. Thanks to Floyd for his input on emotional issues. Thanks to Stel for the input about sensory overload. Thanks from the bottom of my heart to Dr. Koopowitz for writing a foreword for me. I am very, very touched. Thank you, Vince, my better half, for proof-reading my manuscript. And thank you, reader, for following me all the way to the end of this. I truly hope that I have managed to give you an idea of what a brain injury is and what it means to live with one day after day.

