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Beyond Depression, Finding Resilience

A few years ago I wrote a blog about Depression, Suicide and Brain Injury which we published here on NeuroNotes. That blog has received a significant number of responses from our readers, many of those responses we have posted to that blog. Other responses were a deeply personal nature and we responded to those personally when possible. All of the responses have served to establish that there is a process which most people move through following injury and many individuals learn to accept who they have become as a result of the injury and to learn to accept and like the new person they have become.

In my work, I am drawn to learning about what happens to people after brain injury. That includes how they return to their social roles and their relationships with loved ones, family, friends and others in their communities as well as the problems they may encounter on that journey. Our social roles are complex structures that continue to evolve and change throughout our lives. Brain injury exerts an usual force on a person's life and introduces elements of change in a dramatic way. People who have resilience tend to respond better to change and can move forward in their lives. Recently I interviewed Laurie Rippon, a person who embodies resilience, for NeuroNotes. In our interview Ms. Rippon spoke about the process of change and in finding herself. Ray Ciancaglini, a retired professional boxer, also contributed to NeuroNotes with a multi-part interview in which he addressed the process of responding to the changes caused by his injury and re-establishing a life direction. Ms. Rippon, Mr. Ciancaglini and many others I have interviewed on subject of resilience share qualities which are readily identifiable.

How a person finds their resilience and puts it to work is the challenge. There are components of resilience which are trait-based, intrinsic aspects of a person's psychological makeup. Other aspects of resilience involve the application of certain skills and strategies and strategies. Some of those skills and strategies can be learned or enhanced. The combination of traits and skills serve people well when they address life changing events.

What also has emerged from studying resilience is the significance of the roles other people occupy in the person's life. Resilience requires efforts from all involved and what has become evident is the importance of maintaining effective and supportive relationships. Many of those individuals I have meet who exhibit a high level of resilience also have relationships in their lives which provide support, recognition and opportunities for growth.

In studying depression and suicide following brain injury I came upon resilience as an element which can produce change. Much as the blog on depression and suicide brought many responses, I hope that the topic of resilience brings an even greater number of responses.

<https://traumaticbraininjury.net/2017/05/04/beyond-depression-finding-resilience/>