

Ode to a Stroke, or a Life Altered

By Dick Taylor

December 26, 2013

I was moving forward at a pace,
In this life called the human race,
With strength and purpose and resolved,
And little thought to how we evolve.

How simple it has been to ambulate,
My legs stride out with a steady gait,
Effortlessly in motion with no command,
To walk, to run, to sit or stand.

My arms reach and carry,
And hug and tote,
And accomplish tasks,
As if by rote.

And oh! My hands!
They grasp and cling and digitize,
Fingers point, Aha!
As I discover and realize.

How astonishing our bodies,
Intricate machines to behold,
Easily functioning,
Without being told!

Until.....that nightmarish instant,
Unforeseen, unexpected, unwarranted, unfair,

When an explosion of cranial havoc,
Renders me motionless and unaware.

I look at my lifeless arm,
I tell my hand to grip, to clasp,
And wonder why it won't respond
Nothing works, "my God!" I gasp!

Minutes ago I was hearty and hale,
Now I lie here, wane and pale,
Feeling alone in my solitude,
Facing uncertainty and rectitude.

But...life goes on, I will survive,
I am told to work, I am alive,
Does anyone know how angry I feel,
Depressed, in pain, a long time to heal?

My life has been altered,
Run down from behind,
I could not see it coming,
So disabling and unkind.

So...where do I go from here?
How do I rebuild my whole?
When imbalance and weakness,
And heartache assault my very soul?

God answers these fears directly,

He dispatches people who care,
Angels to push and train and
Encourage me in my physical repair.

Time and patience and persistence,
Offer recovery I am sure,
And Faith that I will mend,
Determined to find my cure!

These thoughts are dedicated to the amazingly resilient people who attend the Stroke Survivor Meeting monthly at the Emory Rehab Center in Atlanta; as well as the dedicated Angels that provide the therapies and hope for our future wellbeing. May God bless us all!

Dick Taylor Sharing “Ode to a Stroke”

<https://youtu.be/vY0tKBGc8YU>

A Victim No Longer... About an Ode

Dick Taylor, Thursday, July 31, 2014

I write poems in ode form as a hobby. Thoughts and words stick in my mind, and they remain there until I can release them on paper, in writing.

How does this peculiar habit of mind relate to the stroke I suffered September 16, 2013? When my speech therapist, Rita Lor, learned of my writing she asked me if I thought I could produce a poem expressing my personal stroke perspective for the

rehab center newsletter. The result was my “A Life Altered or Ode to a Stroke.”

Oddly, I had entered the Emory Hospital Midtown Hospital on September 16, to undergo much needed hip replacement surgery at 7 am. All went well, and I was scheduled for release the following day. Around midnight I was caught unawares by a stroke that affected my entire left side! I spent five days in the hospital stabilizing and testing, before I was summarily tossed on a gurney and dispatched to the Emory Rehab Center on Clifton Road. I believe strongly that God sent me there.

Can you imagine hip surgery and a disabling stroke occurring on the same day? It goes without saying that coping with both became a daunting challenge for me. And, I was mad!

This was the environment, my mind set, as I hoisted pen to write what I intended to be an upbeat, positive feel good poem with a motivational flavor. The finished product shocked me, because it reflected me in an angry light, more confused and afraid than strong and hopeful; not the outcome I was seeking!

However, upon review, I concluded that my “Ode to a Stroke” was, in the end, truthful and realistic; something fellow stroke survivors could and would embrace. I had finished the poem promoting hope, determination and perseverance; traits representing the challenges faced every day by people with stroke.

Throughout my ordeal the commitment of nurses, doctors, techs and administrators to my care has been inspirational and healing. The nurturing and training administered by my physical, occupational, recreational and speech therapists over the ensuing months has given me renewed strength. Together, they saved my life, A Victim No Longer; and they continue their work

daily to improve the condition of the stroke afflicted.

A Message to Therapists

<https://youtu.be/0DNCpNwG2BQ>

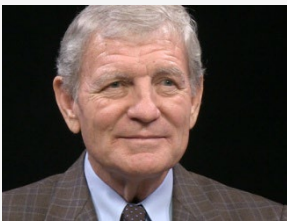
Sharing the Journey

https://youtu.be/7RBL_LgG8pc

From Hopelessness to Hope

<https://youtu.be/0gFUJPxdyLE>

About the Author



Dick Taylor was born in Jackson Mississippi, July 27, 1947. He was raised in a Navy family and traveled around the world until college, where he met his wife Nina. They were students at the University of Illinois and married shortly after graduation in Chicago. They have raised two fine young men and one exceptional daughter, spending most of their lives in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Taylor has enjoyed a career as an entrepreneur in the automotive industry, owning two different car dealerships, an aftermarket company and a sales training enterprise that served Chevrolet Motor Division and retail dealers for many years. Currently he is now semi-retired in Atlanta, living near his daughter and her family. Mr. Taylor has written poems as a hobby for many years, as a form of personal reflection and relaxation. His topics have covered a wide variety of subjects, from a deeply reflective ode to his father, to simple every day observations, including park benches and sweet gum trees.