



Mission: A newsletter for individuals with Aphasia and for the community

Created by: Individuals with Aphasia –

– Supported and encouraged by the University of Washington Speech & Hearing Clinic

## Healing Takes Time

by Stephen

When I was young I was interested in helping other people. Like I had problems, but I focused on helping other people. I was taught to love your neighbor as your self. When I had the stroke in 2007 my life changed completely. I could not read, talk, or work. But the biggest problem was my relationships changed.

When I was 15 years old someone told me about the word "relationship." I did not understand what that was. Eventually I understood that I did not have any relationships. The rest of my life was building healthy relationships. As a pastor and a counselor building relationships was my life.

In 2007 I had a stroke that lasted a few days. When I opened up my eyes my stroke was finished. I figured out in a few months that I am experiencing an on going trauma. Eventually all of us will experience a trauma. I hope I can help people heal from their trauma.

**1. A trauma is like being shocked:** In life many people are traumatized. Some people can heal quickly from a trauma. Other people who already have problems in life will heal more slowly. When I had the trauma I got strong as a person. I was not ready to deal with this life of being sick. I was in denial. It took me one year to slow down and realize what happened. I am learning each day how to heal myself and how to help heal from my families, my doctors, and my friends.

**2. When you have a stroke it affects everyone:** I noticed right away that people were upset. But I did not realize that people were afraid of my experience of trauma. Each person was changed and hurt, but most people would not talk about their experience. I think most people will hide from

(Continued on page 2)

### Inside this Issue:

### Page

Healing Takes Time	by Stephen 1
Stroke of Insight	Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor 1
This Issue	4
Our Support Group	4
The Clinic	4
The Newsletter Staff	4
Contacting the Clinic	4
Next: Interview with a member of our group; Book review; more Recommendations	

*Many people who suffer injuries cannot satisfactorily understand what has happened to them, or injuries' impact upon us. Those with stroke (a BRAIN ATTACK) can find their situation even more confusing and are **in search of** an explanation—an insight. –ed.*

Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor's

### "Stroke of Insight"



"When she was a young girl, brain scientist Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor became fascinated with the functions of the human brain. Jill, one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people of 2008, has a brother with schizophrenia, and his brain disorder led Jill to dedicate her career to studying severe mental illnesses as a Harvard-trained neuroanatomist (*one who studies the structure of our nervous system –ed.*). While she worked to uncover the differences between the brains of people born with mental illnesses and those who were not, something remarkable happened to Jill's own brain—it went silent.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 1)

their pain. But people who want to heal need help on how to communicate with their feelings.

### 3. Strokes hurt families and friends:

My family helped me a lot. They helped me go to the hospital, and they let me stay at their house for one month. Some of my friends could not handle me having the stroke. When I got better they started showing up.

**4. Disappearance:** When people cannot deal with pain they will disappear. This disappearance is scary. You expect that your families and friends will show up. But what happens is they are afraid. My younger brother has not shown up at all since I had the stroke. People will say that they are busy. It's interesting that they show up when they are ready. Not when you are ready. When you have a stroke you have to be strong even if you feel weak and sick. I think most of my friends and family need more help than I do. But when people disappear it is scary.

**5. Lost and Found:** When I was ten years old my friend and I were lost for a few hours. My mom was mad. But I was excited to be lost. When I went to different countries I was to meet different people and different places. When I went to Africa and Brazil and could not talk well it was the best experience I had.

When I had the stroke I realized that I never really had an experience of being lost before. Your mind stops working, your feel afraid. You wonder if your mind will work again. You can't read or write, and it is hard to even say the right words. As I listen to people learning to heal from the stroke I know that some people can read hardly at all. I think many people who have a stroke are hidden. I wonder if they feel they have a life at all. Most people need a life even if it is difficult.

Since I had the stroke I feel lost a lot. I realize that I also feel alone. You have to be strong even when you feel weak. As a pastor I realize that my way of thinking is very narrow. Most of my life was helping other peo-

ple. I was not good at letting others help me. I don't like feeling lost at all. But sometimes is the only way to get well.

**6. Healing:** I think when you had a stroke you did not know what would happen. You just hoped you would stay alive. Eventually you realized that you need help. I could not find the class for reading for the hospital. It was too expensive. So I got my friends and my family to help. But people were too busy to help me read. Eventually only one person helped me work on reading. He was an old friend and a pastor. Then I found a school in the University of Washington that helped me. They have helped me a lot.

It is hard to learning to read at 60 years old. It is the hardest thing I have ever done. People realize that I can't read and then can not deal with that. But my life is about communication.

Even when I was sick I realized that healing was real. In my life I did not see it yet. After a few months I was doing better. Right now I have to feel the difficult feelings to get better. When I was ten and fifteen years old everyone went to the churches. Now most of my friends never go to the church. I have found healing and trust in God. I know that I am open enough to see what other people believe in.

This is the way I got used to living.

I could not change if I wanted to. <<

---

*In spring, Stephen made his first presentation to our group. He agreed to have it printed, and it was inserted into issue #26 **just as he wrote it.***

*We were delighted to see Stephen expand on that previous article: the spelling and wording are improved, and the group's response in the meeting was enthusiastic. It caused much individual responses and group discussions related to their personal feelings. The group requested that Stephen's presentation in this quarter be placed in this issue—and here it is. It shows the kind of improvement, slow and steady, that each of us set for our goals. Again, we believe this is just as Stephen wrote it. -ed. <<*

(Continued from page 1)

On December 10, 1996, at age 37, Jill awoke with intense pain behind her left eye—a blood vessel had exploded in the left hemisphere of her brain, and within hours, Jill could no longer walk, talk, read or write. She was suffering from an arteriovenous malformation (AVM—the blood from an artery bypasses the normal small capillaries and goes through a larger, fragile blood vessel directly to a receiving vein –ed.) —a rare type of stroke. While Jill struggled to phone for help, she was aware that the left hemisphere of her brain was shutting down, taking with it her language, organizing and other analytical skills. Without the dominant left side of her brain controlling her thoughts, Jill says her mind went silent, leaving only the right side of the brain functioning. Through the right side of her brain, Jill says her consciousness shifted away from reality—and the trauma her body was suffering through—and into a place of inner peace and Nirvana.”

---

*Dr. Taylor is the National Spokesperson for the Harvard Brain Tissue Resource Center (Harvard Brain Bank).*

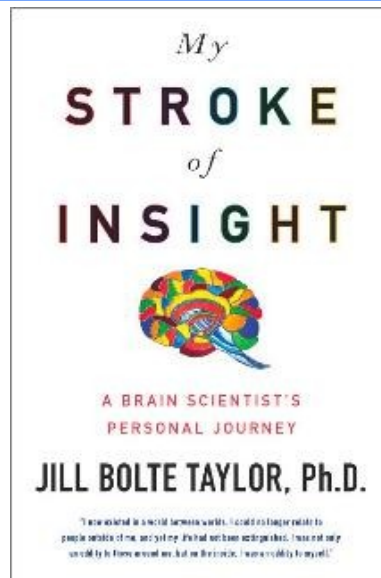
*It took her eight years to recover from the stroke, through relearning of many forgotten abilities. She reacquired her scientific training and began speaking and lecturing on brain research and her stroke.*

*The TED organization annually invites the world's most fascinating thinkers and does to identify "Ideas Worth Spreading". Dr. Taylor was invited to speak at the February 2008 conference. It was recorded and is available as a video.*

*This led to an interview with Oprah, in April, 2008, in her Soul Series on Spirit and enlightenment. This interview is available on Oprah's website as a video with references.*

*In May, 2008, Dr. Jill published her book, "My Stroke on Insight: A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey". (Ted is preparing a review of this book, which should appear in the next issue.)*

*Dr. Jill made the 2008 Time annual list of the world's most influential people.*



*Why did this person make our newsletter? Nancy obtained a copy of Dr. Jill's presentation video and showed it to our group. It captivated us and has caused us to think about ourselves and our potentials in different challenging and helpful ways.*

*The initial part of the article is excerpted from the*

*Oprah-Taylor interview. Other parts of the Oprah interview include "Recommendations for Recovery: Forty Things I Need Most". They all seem perfectly appropriate for stroke survivors like ourselves, and the first 10 of them are shown below:*

1. I am not stupid, I am wounded. Please respect me.
2. Come close, speak slowly, and enunciate clearly.
3. Repeat yourself—assume I know nothing and start from the beginning, over and over.
4. Be as patient with me the 20th time you teach me something, as you were the first.
5. Approach me with an open heart and slow your energy down. Take your time.
6. Be aware of what your body language and facial expressions are communicating to me.
7. Make eye contact with me. I am in here—come find me. Encourage me.
8. Please don't raise your voice—I'm not deaf, I'm wounded.
9. Touch me appropriately and connect with me.
10. Honor the healing power of sleep.

#### **Internet Contact links:**

- [http://www.oprah.com/article/spirit/inspiration/pkgoprahssoulserieswebcast/20080512\\_oaf\\_oss\\_jboltetaylor](http://www.oprah.com/article/spirit/inspiration/pkgoprahssoulserieswebcast/20080512_oaf_oss_jboltetaylor)
- [www.mystrokeofinsight.com](http://www.mystrokeofinsight.com)
- [www.TED.com](http://www.TED.com)
- [<<](http://www.drjilltaylor.com/index.html)

**This Issue:**

Stephen took 4 or 5 hours over four days to write his new article (on page 1). He says that before his stroke it would take half an hour. That is discouraging, of course. On the other hand, he feels that his writing and presentation of the article has improved over his previous article and doing the writing clarifies his thinking.

Dr. Jill Taylor's video presentation of her stroke were emotionally and intellectually gripping for our support group and is why it is in this issue (on page 1.) Ted is preparing a review of her book, "My Stroke of Insight" for our next issue. <<

**Our Support Group:**

In each new school quarter we face new challenges and new opportunities. We progress; occasionally we lose a bit, but also gain more than we lose. Sometimes the people in the group change; each quarter we gain delightful student Angels, that guide and inspire us. Then we lose them to their graduation and to their broader world. We sadly lose their comforting support, but with quiet pride, we watch them leave us with their concerns, hopes, questions—and knowledge.

This quarter we have enjoyed and thank the presence and help of:



**Jessica and Kelly**

We have learned that the effects of brain attacks can reach to speech and hearing disorders. But, brain attacks can go much farther than that, and cause very different mental and physical disorders. <<

**The Clinic:**

A **Stroke Center** could help address a stroke survivor's social, physical, and mental needs. These are beyond their speech and hearing problems, normally handled.

Such a center probably should include resources and assistance for people with such problems and their caregivers. It should provide academic education and practical and clinical training for students. And it should also conduct clinical research in that field.

**But, who would it serve? What would it be like? What programs and services would it offer?** Any inputs would be appreciated. Please consider and respond.

Contact **Nancy Alarcon, Dr. Diane Kendall, or JoAnn Silkes** at the Clinic. <<

**trau·ma:** n. *pl. trau·mas or trau·ma·ta*

1. A serious injury or shock to the body, as from violence or an accident.
2. An emotional wound or shock that creates substantial, lasting damage to the psychological development of a person, often leading to neurosis.
3. An event or situation that causes great distress and disruption.

—American Heritage Dictionary, 4th ed

**Newsletter Staff:**

**Publisher & Chief Editor:**

Nancy Alarcon, M.S., CCC-SLP  
Clinic Director

**Writer's Guild Editors (with aphasia):**

Bob Anderson  
Ted Paluchowski

**University of Washington  
Speech and Hearing Clinic**

4131—15th Ave, NE  
Seattle, WA 98105  
Phone: (206) 543-5440  
Fax: (206) 616-1185

**<http://depts.washington.edu/sphsc/clinic>**

Visit our web site to:

- learn more about our services; and,
- to access past issues of the Writer's Guild quarterly newsletter:

**"In Search Of ..."**