



Speaking from Experience Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

Transcript for chapter 4 of 10: Changes

Delia and Cassandra: It's not the same person. People look at you and say, "What's the matter? You've got them. They're not dead." But, the person that you knew is dead. So, everyone's grieving and they have to be allowed to have that grief.

Peter and Carol: His whole personality had changed. Whereas, before the accident, he was very placid and easy to talk to, after the assault he was very grumpy. The slightest thing would... it was like living with a whole different person.

Igal, Anat, Illana: When she started to eat, in the first stages after the coma.

Igal, Anat, Illana: She didn't eat for seven months. She had a PEG [percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy], and she didn't eat from her mouth for seven months. It was after seven months that she began to eat from her mouth.

Igal, Anat, Illana: So, 90% of the stuff in the spoon ended up on the floor. With the tremor, she couldn't reach her mouth.

Igal, Anat, Illana: I don't have a tremor [shakes her hand and laughs].

Igal, Anat, Illana: This was very frustrating for Anat. A meal was taking two hours. Slowly, slowly, she sort of managed to contain the food. I think that by now, she is nearly perfect. It's just the water that is the most difficult thing for her to swallow, and she uses a straw.

Peter and Carol: I lost all memories up to the assault. Three or four days after the assault, I lost all memories. My wife has had to tell me brothers and sisters, who they were. I remember the professional people telling me that it was a temporary thing and that I'd get them back. It was 13 years later that I did get my memories back.

Anita: I met a friend. She came to me with another friend. We have a whole afternoon gathering, talking the whole afternoon. The next time we met again, in another occasion, I couldn't recognise that it was her. On the street, I recognised that her face was very familiar but I didn't know where I met her. So, often I have to ask, "I do recognise your face, but I can't remember where I met you".

Kerrie: My memory has actually been affected quite drastically and dramatically. That's because, before, I prided myself on having a particularly good memory; particularly for places and names of people. Whereas now, it's like will o' the wisp.

Anita: If someone wouldn't visit me to help me to do things, I have to manage by writing them down. Or, individually, each task to get someone to help me with.

Paul: I could express emotion, like cry, but now I can't.

Anita: It's very difficult for me to make choices. Even small things, like cooking or shopping, I can't make up my mind quickly.



Kerrie: One side-effect of my accident is that now I've become incredibly passive. Not that I was actually incredibly aggressive before, however, now you need to put a bomb under me to get me to do things.

Peter and Carol: I became extremely impulsive. Carol mentioned earlier that I'm quick to snap, but it's very hard to get motivated these days, whereas I was a very highly motivated person before the injury. Some days I just want to stay in bed all day. But unfortunately, I'm not allowed to [laughs].

Igal, Anat, Illana: Anat cannot sleep at night. She cannot sleep well. She will go to sleep at say 10 or 11 o'clock and *now* she wakes up late, like 5 o'clock in the morning. Before, it was earlier than that.

Peter and Carol: His balance was affected terribly after the assault. He couldn't stand still; he'd just wobble side to side. He was very unsteady on his feet.

Delia and Cassandra: There's a lot of things that you need assistance with. That's not really everyday life, as in, looking after herself.

Delia and Cassandra: While I was in hospital, my now ex, had to take over so many of the things that I did. Paying bills, things with the kids, and just general living. I remember that he had a lot of trouble handing any of that back to me afterwards. I don't blame him; he didn't know when I was able to take it all on board again.