



Speaking from Experience Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

Transcript for chapter 3 of 10: Waking Up

Delia and Cassandra: After the accident, I was unconscious for six weeks. Obviously, I regained consciousness; I have no memory of being in the Royal Melbourne Hospital, except for saying goodbye.

Anita: I have been in the hospital for altogether, four months. One month in the acute hospital, three weeks in Intensive Care, and then I went to the rehab for three months.

Igal, Anat, Illana: In Intensive Care, she [Anat] was there for how many days?

Igal, Anat, Illana: About a week or so, Anat was in Intensive Care. Then she moved to one of the Neurological units. She was under coma for a long time.

Igal, Anat, Illana: About three months.

Igal, Anat, Illana: About three months, Anat was in a coma.

Delia and Cassandra: I can remember, in my head, screaming at people when they came, “Why won’t you wake me up?! Please, just wake me up.” Nobody would.

Igal, Anat, Illana: I initially thought god was present in my coma, and that he or she told me that my family was to blame for this secularity or un-religiousness. I tried my hardest to really think, to believe, that I was crazy and my family was getting punished.

Delia and Cassandra: From the time of the accident to when I have a clear memory was about 10 weeks. Before the 10 weeks, between six and 10, I’ve got bits of memory, but I have no idea where or when they were.

Igal, Anat, Illana: First of all, the frustrating time in the hospital was all the secrecy. Like we are the furniture and we don’t understand too much, so why to tell us too much. We obviously wanted to know more.

Anita: At the time, the doctor still didn’t want to tell me much. I asked what surgeries have I had, that they have done on me, because I just felt that my whole body was so aching and so painful. It was sort of unbearable. The surgeon said, “I won’t tell you now, because you won’t remember anyway.”

Delia and Cassandra: I feel and I believe that you have to talk to someone when they’re unconscious, just like they’re answering you. For six weeks, I was very rude; I didn’t answer anyone [laughs]. 98% of my visitors were nurses that I’d trained with, and mum’s a nurse, and everyone that came in talked to me. I believe that’s why I am where I am today. Absolutely.

Igal, Anat, Illana: Most importantly for us, after Anat came out of the coma, was when would she go out, when will she start to eat. Why does everything take so long? They wanted to do everything very slow and very, sort of, safe and secure, which we can appreciate. For us as



parents, or for me as a father, I wanted everything to be done yesterday. I was anxious to see everything going forward.

Delia and Cassandra: The log books that had been kept for me while I was unconscious, which was the hardest thing I have ever done to this day, I think, is I made myself read through them. I realised where I'd been and where I was and where I wanted to go.

Anita: Sometimes I'll cry and other times I'll just self-hypnotize. I just tell myself, 'go to sleep, go to sleep'. I breathe myself into... like breathing away the pain. After a certain time, I'll make myself fall into sleep. While waiting for that for ages, that's the only way that I can get away, if I fall into sleep then I don't feel the pain.