

Speaking from Experience Stroke in Midlife USA

Transcript for Chapter 6 of 9: Impact on work

Sachi –

The speed I was recovering in hospital, I thought oh, by this speed I would be back to work in 6 months at most, maybe 4 months. So I was quite optimistic and my manager was quite pleased, she was quite supportive, “Well, we can work from home and once a week, come to the meeting.” And that was great.

Cynthia –

My identification of myself as a working person has been...ya know, I am struggling with. I can talk but what can I do to earn money? And numbers, I’m not... I struggle with numbers and keeping spreadsheets going like I used to do, balancing checkbooks...I can’t do...I can’t balance my checkbook. Sometimes I can go along fine and then something happens and it falls apart and it ends up being just like...I don’t know...I just am not able to sit down and face certain administrative tasks that I used to be able to do.

Sachi –

Some colleague came and set up my computer, actually brought a computer and set up at home. I said, “Okay wonderful.” And I realized I was very tired and going to work, to the office for just a meeting, for about 2 hours or so meeting, I was exhausted although I had...my husband drove and he was waiting for me and picked me up, but I couldn’t speak when I got out from the office. I was so exhausted, I didn’t know how much energy it took and that was sort of depressing. It didn’t work the way I thought.

Trish –

I was terminated because I have a speech problem.

Dave –

Even though I was no longer going to be able to do the job I had and my company had to keep going forward because we were a little company in a big growth period, so they had to find somebody to do my job for me, I knew that. But they were really gracious in that they wanted to keep me. They brought me in as basically a staff person in the sales organization, to work on improving productivity of our sales organization so I could use all my experience having been in the field for most of my career and guide the sales organization from an operational standpoint where I could...I wouldn’t have to travel at all, I could work...I could kinda modify my hours so that I could get my therapy, I could get the rest I needed. So my company was really gracious in that regard.

Colin & Caroline –

I wasn’t working at the time I had the stroke. I’d been helping Colin...Colin runs...sets up start-ups. I was always helping him in the background with stuff at home, but I didn’t have a job, ya know a 9 to 5, get in a car and go somewhere job. So afterwards...anything that just involves sitting down and doing paperwork, I’ve still been able to help him with, but I.... I’ve got a much higher quality personal assistant than I could ever afford to hire.

Dave –

I’m also working with various groups in counseling current stroke victims and their families about what it’s like to go through a stroke. I think it’s the natural... me talking all the time which has been my career. Kind of comes in handy there. And that turns out to be such an amazing gift for me. I go into a rehab unit and talk to someone who’s in a similar dark place that I was in 5 years ago and if I can just get them to smile a little bit...ya know, if I’m just joking about the food, and I can get them to smile a little bit, it’s just such a gift for me. It just makes me feel great.

Carmel –

Lots of times I end up just listening to people talk about their fears after the stroke. But for a few people I have...I know that I’ve had a positive impact on them and I’ve gone in and say, ya know, “You still have a life, you’re alive, you’ve gotta do something with this, what do you want to do?” And look at it and say, “Okay what am I gonna do? I’ve gotta push to go do this and push to go do that.” And just let them know that the stroke is not the end of their life, that there

is the rest of their life to be lived and it's up to them what they want to make out of it.