

Sharing OUR Recovery

A quarterly newsletter dedicated to support victims, survivors, caregivers and loved ones of motor vehicle collisions.

FALL EDITION 2022

ISSUE 20

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Editor in Chief - Dawne McKay

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Connecting Crash Survivors
One Step at a Time

Embracing the New Season

Autumn doesn't need a clock or a calendar because it's always a delight to see. As the days start to get shorter, crash survivors are bracing themselves as they know winter is just around the corner as it's always more difficult for us to embrace this change. As you start to turn another chapter in your recovery journey, I hope you are able to get outside and embrace what the leaves are about to show us.

I recently had a conversation with someone that was impressed with the Crash Support Network's website and they asked me "Where do you get your content and how do are you able to get crash survivors to share their story?" What a great question! The Crash Support Network is always on the lookout for content and we are thrilled when a crash survivor wants to share their story. If you are interested in sharing your recovery journey, please send me an email at info@crashsupportnetwork.com and we will publish your story on our website at no cost to you. You don't have to be a writer as we know how important it is for crash survivors to have a voice. You can even write it anonymously! Stories are powerful. They move us, inspire us and motivate us.



In our 20th Issue, a Personal Injury lawyer explains what you should do if you are involved in an uber crash, we will also introduce you to a strong woman who started a podcast to share her recovery journey, a Physiotherapist outlines how to manage an acute injury, and our Guest Crash Survivor Blogger is thankful for his wife as they face his catastrophic injuries together.

The Crash Support Network is so thankful to our sponsor for their continued support. Sponsors are not only helping survivors find their way as they recover from a motor vehicle crash, they are also allowing us to maintain our advocacy work and provide this valuable resource.

As always, we are thinking of every individual that has been affected by a motor vehicle crash and we hope that our *Sharing Our Recovery* newsletters bring you some comfort to know that you are not alone in your recovery journey. Don't forget to look for us on social media and follow our inspiring posts and informative articles with our highly engaged platform!

- Dawne

Woman Creates Podcast After Near Fatal Crash

Submitted by Johnita

“With this type of injury, you’re looking at nine to twelve months of recovery.” I heard the words coming from the mouth of the attending surgeon at Roanoke Memorial Hospital but it didn’t register completely. “Sure, Doc I’m ready, but can you save the leg?” That exchange was the beginning of what I would come to learn was a lifetime journey of recovery following a near fatal accident involving me and my family.

What began as a nine to twelve month journey evolved into a perpetual trek. I recently marked five years since that life changing day with recovery evolving into life long rehabilitation. At the beginning of the accident, when the doctor spoke those words, I was ready to recover. Energized to fight for my limb. Enthusiastic to do whatever it took for however long required. It’s easy to be enthusiastic as the beginning of the fight but by the 8th or 9th round, it’s more difficult to muster up the energy. So how does one gain the strength to continue to fight through recovery?

“It’s easy to be enthusiastic as the beginning of the fight but by the 8th or 9th round, it’s more difficult to muster up the energy.”

You Have to Find Your Motivation

There’s no one answer or right answer to that question. It comes down to the things that motivate you. Maybe you are a person of faith. Perhaps you have a supportive friend group. It could be that you have a tight knit family. Some people like to go within for self-motivation. Hopefully, all of the above apply. Personally, I’m fortunate to fall in the last category. During my recovery, I relied on all of the above mentioned categories, individually and collectively. As I progressed through recovery and experienced setbacks and disappointments, I shunned my faith. During those times, my family stepped in; particularly my very supportive husband, to lift me up.

When I went through a deep depression at the thought that I’d never be the person I was once was, my sister friends sent encouraging words and songs that motivated me to get out of the bed. When I was bed ridden, my favorite aunt and cousin entertained me with balloons and laughter. When I started rehab and experienced the pain that accompanied learning to walk again, I pushed myself through with motivational self-talk. When I returned to my faith, self made sticky notes placed strategically throughout my home was just what I needed. You have to find what works for you! You’ll be



surprised at the things that uplift you to continue fighting for your recovery and healing. One time, my stepdad, a man of few words, talked to me for 45 minutes! I was so shocked that he chose to pour that many words of encouragement on me. Another time, one of my sister friends came over and sat next to me while I completed a difficult task.

My accident was catastrophic but accidents of any size, big or small, can be difficult. Lean on your support system. Lean on your loved ones. Lean into your recovery and rehabilitation and fight for your healing!

Johnita shares her survival from a catastrophic car crash and has created a podcast “Waiting is the Hardest - W.I.T.H.” This podcast shares the story of how she survived twice; first from her physical injuries and then from the emotional turmoil resulting from her accident, healing, and recovery. This podcast is for anyone who has faced or is currently facing an insurmountable challenge and is struggling to cope. To follow Johnita’s recovery journey, we encourage you to follow her on instagram at [waitingisthehardest](#) and listen to her podcast at [waitingisthehardest.buzzsprout.com](#).



What Happens if Your Uber Gets Into a Crash?

Submitted by Ross Mirian, Personal Injury Lawyer

Legal
Piece



A vast majority of crash survivors recovering will find themselves suddenly looking for other means of transportation. Many may no longer feel comfortable behind the wheel and many are not physically able to drive anymore.

How Does Uber Work?

Users simply have to enter their preferred pickup location and time and they'll instantly be presented with a plethora of ride options that are within close proximity. To make the app even safer and more convenient, developers recently added a feature where trusted contacts can track your ride using the GPS system on their phones. While that's an impressive feat, there's still a lot of risks involved in using Uber. For instance, what happens if your Uber gets into a collision while you're a passenger? Many people don't consider this as a possibility before climbing into the backseat of another person's vehicle, but it's something many deal with all the time. What should you do if you find yourself in this precarious situation?

When Uber first exploded onto the scene, insurance companies lumped the ridesharing mogul and their drivers into the same category as taxi drivers in that they were viewed as a commercial risk. Uber initially treated its drivers as independent contractors and didn't want to claim liability for anything that happened while they were on the job.

Insurance Companies and Uber

From the beginning, Uber drivers were required to have personal auto insurance in place. But since personal auto insurance doesn't

extend to commercial uses in most cases and with the mounting risk factors piling up against ridesharing services, Uber had to make some serious changes to their stance. Add on the fact that the overwhelming majority of Uber drivers only work for the company part-time (typically less than 15 hours per week) to supplement their incomes, this arrangement was more than a little unfair and nonsensical.

To correct this issue, Uber instated a much more reasonably automatic insurance policy for its Ontario drivers in 2016. While drivers are still required to have personal auto insurance in place because it's illegal to drive without it, they're also covered by Uber's comprehensive policy while they're on the job.

As an Uber passenger, here's what you should know.

If your Uber driver is offline and gets into a crash during their private time, then their personal auto insurance policy automatically goes into effect. Obviously, that's of no consequence to you as a passenger, but it's worth noting if you ever decide to become an Uber driver in the future. Uber also offers between-trip coverage to drivers while they're logged into the app and waiting for ride requests to come in.

Most importantly to passengers, in the event that your Uber driver gets into a collision while transporting you to your destination, you should know that their automatic coverage extends to you as well. In fact, Uber has a \$2 million policy in place that "protects vehicle occupants who are injured in a collision by a hit-and-run driver, an uninsured driver, or a driver without sufficient insurance".

As a Passenger - You Have Legal Rights

Regardless of whether or not you suffer a physical injury, getting into a crash while participating in a rideshare program can be unnerving. You should know that as a passenger, you have legal rights. Additionally, you should contact Uber immediately following the incident through the 'Help' feature on their app to inform them of the collision. Alternatively, you can also try reaching out to Uber through their social media accounts to get their attention and obtain more information on the proper course of action for filing a report. That way, the company can't claim ignorance in the event that you decide to open up a court case and you'll have all forms of communication in writing. Their policy is designed to cover the cost of any medical issues you may incur as a direct result of the incident as well as legal fees if you decide to pursue a lawsuit against your driver or another motorist.

While it is almost impossible to know the exact outcome of a claim, an experienced personal injury lawyer will always be able to guide you through this difficult and often confusing time.

For more information on Mirian Law, please visit mirianlaw.com.



Managing an Acute Injury After a Crash

Submitted by Gloria Gilbert, Physiotherapist



Why is this different than any other type of injury?

At some point in our lives, many of us will be injured – an unexpected accident.

- We stepped off a curb or lunged for a tennis ball and sprained our ankle;
- We fell - and broke a bone;
- We were holding onto the overhead strap of the bus, and hurt our shoulder when the bus suddenly lurched.

And, even though these injuries may need some investigation (*an x-ray, a visit to the doctor, rest*), over time and with management directed at settling down the acute symptoms, we gradually recover and are able to return to all our pre-accident activities. Being injured in a motor vehicle crash (MVC) often involves a much more complicated recovery.

An MVC- can mean:

- Being injured when we are in a car;
- Being injured when we are on a motorcycle or bicycle or any other moving vehicle;
- Being hit by a vehicle when we are a pedestrian.

There are many factors that can affect the type of injury we sustain:

- where we were sitting in the vehicle (driver, front or back seat passenger);
- the speed of the vehicle we were in and/or the one that may have hit us;

- the position our body was in - on impact (*head turned to one side, picking something off the floor, looking behind you to talk to a person sitting in the back seat*)
- If there were young children or any at-risk individuals in the vehicle, the emotional effect of the crash can be significant even if no one was physically injured.

The main difference between a more 'straight-forward' acute injury (*like a sprained ankle*) and a MVC is that it is possible that different types of injuries occur 'at the same time'.

- soft tissue injuries- to muscles and joints;
- damage to internal organs;
- internal bleeding;
- fractures or 'hair-line cracks' in bones;
- a traumatic brain injury (TBI) – the 'force' of the impact causes movement of the brain to occur within the vault of the skull.

And these injuries can happen even if you do not SEE anything different on the surface of your body.

A Few Words of Caution

- after the crash, you will be 'happy that you survived the crash' (*and may dismiss other symptoms you are feeling*).
- many people will experience an immediate but short-term loss of consciousness (a few seconds) and then suddenly feel like they are O.K. These feelings can suggest you have had some type of brain trauma.

Management Immediately After a MVC:

Whether an ambulance is called or whether you think you are fine to drive home on your own- it is best to:

- Call the police. Report the collision. Do not just exchange insurance information with the person in the other vehicle (even if pressured to do so). It is important to have an accident report documented.
- Call an ambulance. Contact your family doctor and go to the Emergency Department (ER) of your local hospital (*preferably by ambulance or being taken by another driver*).
- Explain in as much detail as possible what has just happened in the crash.
- If you are feeling lightheaded, nauseous or off balance, it would be best to get an MRI of your brain. The physical effect of a TBI is usually 'invisible' a few days post trauma BUT if a brain scan can be obtained immediately after the accident, it may demonstrate some changes to the brain structure that were caused by trauma.
- Start being ASSERTIVE immediately about what just happened to you and what you are feeling. Do NOT let



- anyone else tell you that you are fine if you do not feel that way.
- However, it is likely that, unless you are unconscious or have observable trauma, you will be discharged home from the ER.
- If you are not able to be assessed in an ER, ensure that you see a health practitioner, preferably your family doctor as soon as possible after the accident. It is important to have the report of the accident documented in his/her medical records should you need treatment that may be paid by your auto insurer.

When You Are Home:

- The most important time to begin your recovery is to **start immediately** after the crash.
- Ask for help is the most important first step.
- Take time off work- for a minimum of 10-14 days. (*you may need to contact your employer, and/or have your doctor complete specific forms.*)
- Ask other family members or friends to manage your housework, child-care, food preparation (*wouldn't you do the same things for them?*)
- By paying attention to how you are feeling, your body will tell you what to do- and when to do it.

- Use ice or heat to settle the immediate discomfort, change position often, support yourself on as many pillows as you need to rest, take the occasional pain pill- to ensure you get some sleep.

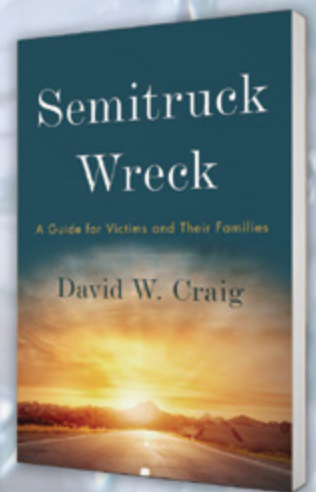
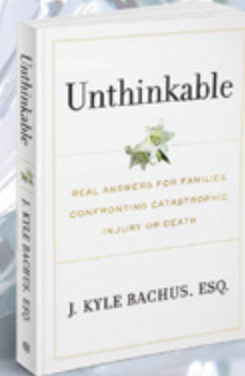
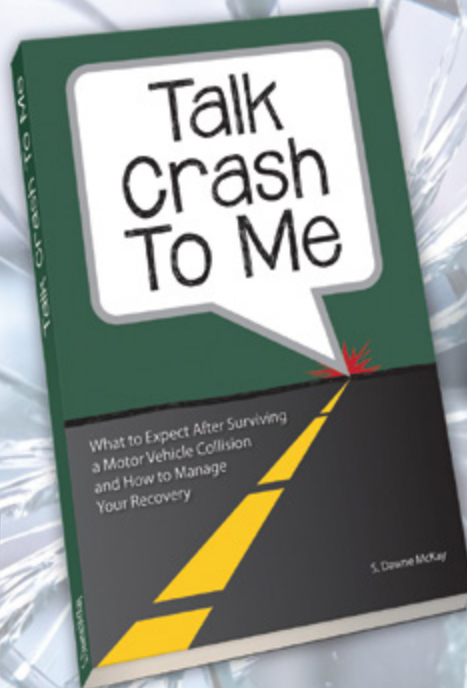
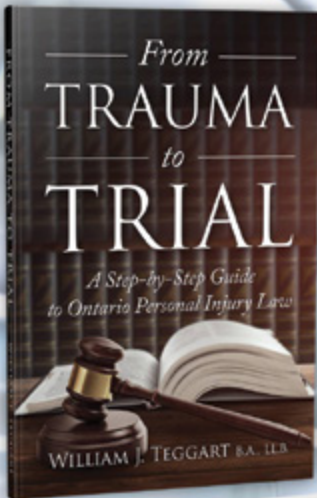
“The most important time to begin your recovery is to start immediately after the crash.”

- As the injury pain settles, move more often, stay up for longer periods of time, work at household tasks for short periods of time- but **listen and pay attention** to what your body is telling you to do. Stop or take breaks, as needed.
- Be cautious about taking drugs like muscle relaxants and anti-inflammatory medication immediately after ‘new trauma’. It is best for your body to heal on its own- and in its own time.
- If you take prescription drugs for any pre-accident conditions, speak to your family physician before you take any other drugs for pain or discomfort post- accident.

If you continue to experience pain or other symptoms that you did not have before the accident, it is time to move onto the next phase of your recovery and rehabilitation. Find the right health professional to help guide you through the next steps.

For more information please visit www.dontgototheouch.com.

Recommended Books to Read After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Crash





Am I still a Writer? *Who am I?*

Lately, I've been thinking about resiliency. What it means. What it means to me. What makes one person resilient and another less-so. As I thought about this, and other things found down the rabbit hole, I stumbled across my existential crisis: *Who Am I?*

I am a husband, a father, a friend, a son... and I am disabled. Hold on, check that.

The term disabled has never really bothered me personally – just grammatically.

Husband, father, mother, wife, son... they are all nouns. Disabled is an adjective. I am not an adjective.

My wife Lesley (who works with children with special needs) has drilled into me – *“you are not a disabled person; you are a person with disabilities...”*. Person first. Whatever term you use, though, there's nothing unclear about how my life has changed.

- I have lost a leg and will always need a wheelchair.
- The leg I still have has a drop-foot and no feeling below the knee.
- I am blind in one eye.
- My elbow, wrist, pelvis, and hips set off metal detectors at the airport.
- My spleen is gone, which means... I have no idea what that means...
- My left arm is about 80% normal thanks to a prosthetic elbow.
- My right arm is like a professional wrestling referee - it shows up, it looks like it should do the job, but ultimately it disappoints.

Some of us define ourselves (at least in part) by what we do. And what we do is partly defined by how we do what we do. The tools, the rituals, context, perspective – all contribute to what we do, and

by extension who we are. Until (approximately) 1495 days ago, I was a writer. But I can no longer type, at least not with any urgency or accuracy. So, am I still a writer?

It's easy to dismiss the question and say writing is an exercise of the mind and the heart, not the hands, but would you make the same argument to a painter, a designer or a musician? You could argue being a writer is just doing the same job in a different way, but could you say that to a plumber, carpenter or a construction worker? You could also cite examples of people like Stephen Hawking, who made massive contributions long after his body had failed him, but would Michael Schumacher or Lou Gehrig support that same case?

It's All About Community

On the surface, it's simple – I'm a writer. I will always write. I will adopt new (at least new to me) tools, like dictation software, and use the new perspective this journey has given me. But I'm not doing this alone - no matter the strength of one's individual resolve, resiliency is an exercise of community. Community is where we reignite our passion, remind ourselves who we are, and where we remember or discover our purpose. Yup, for better or worse I am a writer.

“How's Andrew?”

“How is Andrew doing?”

“How are things with Andrew?”

More often than not, these are the questions that greet my wife Lesley whenever she ventures more than a few feet from my side. There are exceptions, the few who recognize the indirect impact of a traumatic event, but these questions are by average the rule. And they are fair questions because Lesley's also been forced to ask herself, ‘who am I’? This identity crisis isn't restricted to survivors. Those closest to us find their roles changing too.



I Would Be Lost Without Her

As warm and caring as Lesley is naturally, 'caregiver' is a new role for her, one she'll likely have for the rest of my life – because I need a little help with a lot of things. This is the most diplomatic description of my current situation. A more accurate description is that I would be completely and utterly lost without her. This statement has been figuratively true for the thirty-some years we have been together and has become literally true this past half-year.

- I can dress myself, sort of. I struggle with belts and buttons and laces, as well as getting to the laundry room to clean my clothes. So, if my clothes are washed, prepped, and laid out for me, yeah, I can dress myself.
- I can cook for myself, sort of. Opening jars is a challenge, as is chopping vegetables. Hot pots and pans on the stovetop are a perpetual danger, as I don't feel temperature in my hands... So, if everything is reachable and simple, yeah, I can cook for myself.
- I can go out on my own, sort of. I can call a taxi and go almost anywhere that's accessible. Unless of course there are obstacles like construction, weather, curbs, thick carpet... so, yeah, I can go out on my own.


Time and money will address some of these barriers, and I am getting stronger. But the current list is long and wide - showering,

cleaning, taking care of the dog, shoveling the walk, getting groceries, taking out the trash. All of this on one set of fit and capable shoulders, Lesley's. When we go out, she collapses the wheelchair, lifts it into the car, drives, lifts it out of the car, drops me off, parks, rinses and repeats – all with boundless energy and a smile that still melts my heart. I can count on one hand the times she's shown frustration, and yet I know it must be wearing. She didn't sign up for this. She should be living the life she has earned – travelling, cycling adventures, dancing, seeing live music... instead, she must feel like a medical caddy...

We agreed to richer and poorer, not dismembered and discombobulated. Those closest to us are as impacted as we are, if not more, and are yet far less supported. There are endless support resources for trauma victims, not-so-much for caregivers. I thank God she is as strong as she is.

The next time you encounter one of these heaven-sent angels, perhaps you could take a moment to ask, "How are you?"




Andrew Lawlor is a survivor of a catastrophic motorcycle crash and continues to share his journey through ongoing contributions to our Crash Survivor Blog. For more information on Andrew's journey please visit: [The Catastrophic](#)



A story of one woman's survival and healing from a catastrophic car accident.

This podcast is for anyone who has faced or is currently facing an insurmountable challenge and is struggling to cope.

This story will debut **June 28, 2022**, on the five year anniversary of this life changing event.

Listen on  Apple Podcasts  Spotify 

Thank you!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ross Mirian, Managing Partner at [Mirian Law Firm](#) for purchasing a quantity order of my book, "Talk Crash to Me" and for his continued support as a sponsor of the Crash Support Network. Choosing a personal injury lawyer is one of the biggest decisions that you will make as a crash survivor and Ross understands how beneficial this book is to his clients as they start their recovery. "Talk Crash to Me" is available for purchase on [Amazon](#) and continues to receive endless positive feedback from so many survivors.



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We couldn't have done it without your support!



By sponsoring the *Sharing our Recovery Newsletter*, you are supporting the continued growth of this valuable free resource for crash survivors.

Would you like to be part of *Sharing Our Recovery*?

Articles/Stories:

We are always looking for articles or stories, and we would love to hear from you!

Want to share?

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Our Mission is to provide online support, resources and to raise awareness for survivors that have been affected by a motor vehicle crash.

Meet Dawne McKay – Founder

Dawne McKay is a survivor of a horrific motor vehicle crash and is the creator and editor of *Sharing our Recovery* as well as the Founder of the **Crash Support Network**. Dawne is not shy about what happened to her because she has become an advocate for other crash survivors. She had to go through her own struggles to create a community of courageous survivors who continuously fight everyday. Dawne resides in Ontario, Canada and manages both the *Sharing our Recovery* Newsletter and the **Crash Support Network Group** virtually from her home. The Crash Support Network Group consists of members from all over the globe and her highly informative one-of-a-kind website is attracting thousands of visits a day.



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