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A visit or a call from a friend can heal you. You can also heal a friend in this same way. Is there someone you've been wanting to contact but haven't made time for? Today, make the time.

—Caroline Muss and Peter Occhiogrosso

Stroke Prevention

By Sandy Simon, Stroke Victor

Stroke is one of the most terrifying, debilitating illnesses one can suffer. It can kill; it can paralyze someone for life, wreak havoc on one's emotional stability, and destroy self-esteem. It can impair a person for the rest of one's life whether five, ten or thirty or more years. Many people die of stroke each year.

I suffered a life-threatening, life-changing stroke, an aneurysm, when I was barely fifty-six years old. The doctors told my family if the bleeding didn't stop in thirty minutes, I would most likely die. If I didn't die, they said I would never move my left side again, walk again, speak again or make a decision again. That was in 1993. I did become paralyzed on my left side with difficulty speaking and swallowing.



- ◆ The average amount of time in America it takes for a stroke sufferer to get to the hospital is twelve hours. Yet, tPA **MUST** be administered within three hours, preferably under one hour from the onset.
- ◆ Only one out of three hospitals in America has a stroke protocol.

- ◆ Only 18 out of 100 U.S. hospital Emergency Rooms have a standard procedure for determining quickly if someone is suffering a stroke—and what kind.

Here's good news:

The U.S. government recently passed a bill, signed into law last year called "Stop Stroke Act Now." It provides \$50 million in grants to the states, if they pass a Companion Bill (Florida was the first, last year [2004]; Rhode Island did also [2004]; other

states are proceeding. Grants to the various qualified states will underwrite costs for:

1. Selecting regional stroke center hospitals that will have the stroke team, tPA, ER procedures and neurologists available 24/7.
2. Train all EMTs throughout the state, enabling them to treat stroke, relate to the hospital, and go to the correct hospital and save the sufferer much more beneficially than today, especially in rural areas.

3. Provide for education, training, and rehabilitation.

Modifiable Risk Factors:

- ◆ Smoking
- ◆ Hypertension
- ◆ Lack of Awareness of Stroke Symptoms
- ◆ Excessive Alcohol consumption
- ◆ Lack of exercise
- ◆ High cholesterol
- ◆ Diet/Lifestyle

Nonmodifiable Risk Factors: (Early Warning, Potential Victims)

- ◆ Family History of Diabetes, Heart Disease, or Stroke
- ◆ Race
- ◆ Genetics
- ◆ Gender

Stroke is horrible, avoid it!

For more information, read my book, *A STROKE OF GENIUS, Messages of Hope and Healing from a Thriving Stroke Survivor* (\$14.95 for paperback, \$24.95 for hardcover), or go to: www.Sandysimon.com for questions and answers. Fax: 561-243-6344. Send your check and add \$3.00 S & H to Sandy Simon, 777 East Atlantic Avenue, Suite C-2 * PMB 262, Delray Beach, FL 33483 or go to your local bookstore: Books-A-Million, Delray Beach or Hand's Book Store, Delray Beach; Amazon.com; Ebay.com "Stroke Therapy."

Here's what you can do:

1. Learn what to do in case of stroke.
2. Learn how to identify a stroke: Use the **FAST** system to test the symptoms:
 - **F** = Face...if it is irregular, one-sided deformed.
 - **A** = Stretch both arms to the side. If one side doesn't work—likely it's a stroke.
 - **S** = Smile...if the mouth goes to one side, it could be a stroke.
 - **T** = Treatment ...**CALL 911 NOW. Do not hesitate.**

Much has been gained since that time. I now can walk, I can use my left side, I do speak and I make lots and lots of decisions. I learned to play golf again, using my right arm only, I walk about a mile a day, speak publicly more than 50 times each year, and I mentor stroke survivors across the country.

Other advances with strokes have taken place as well. Here are some facts:

- ◆ 80% of strokes can be prevented.
- ◆ 750,000 Americans will suffer a stroke each year.
- ◆ Twice as many women die from stroke as from breast cancer.
- ◆ Stroke is the #3 killer in America and #2 worldwide.
- ◆ Stroke is the #1 crippler of adults.

tPA, the single FDA-approved medication for ischemic stroke (blood vessel blockage) can dissolve the clot and rush blood and oxygen to the brain within minutes, yet only a small percentage of stroke sufferers are even administered tPA because of the following:

- ◆ Most people don't know they or their companion is suffering a stroke.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Elton John



He works efficiently, zeroing in at the heart of the matter quickly. He expresses himself easily. He sets goals that are within his ability to achieve and takes great pride in his work. He is intelligent, a quick thinker, and tactful in dealing with others.

The "E" of his first name is significantly larger than the "J" of John, revealing that his given name has more importance to him than his family name. He is imaginative and discrete, and feels that he "march-

es to a different drummer" than other people.

Mimi Levin, a handwriting analyst, lectures in the Palm Beach County area and does in-depth personality profiles, compatibility screening and personnel screening. Mimi is a Certified Grapho-analyst. She can be reached by writing to her at 5451 Verona Drive, Boynton Beach, FL 33437.



Mimi Levin

Thinking Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is unique among American holidays. It applies universally no matter what ethnic, social, political or religious group



someone may belong to. It does not matter where you were born or how long you have been in America. We all recognize the value in pausing our busy lives long enough to give thanks for the blessings we enjoy. It does not matter whether that thanks is directed to a supreme being or another human being; everyone has things to be thankful for. That, in addition to a bountiful meal in the company of those we hold dearest, makes this November holiday special for most.

For some, though, this will not be an easy day. Those who have recently lost someone beloved, either through death, separation or divorce, may find it difficult to focus on the blessings. Those who find themselves far away from friends and family may long to be with them. It is for those people that the spirit

of Thanksgiving can offer some comfort.

By consciously looking for the many reasons to be thankful, some respite from the problems of the current circumstance may be found. The old song lyrics, "If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with" can help us appreciate all of the people we interact with every day in the here and now because "these are the good old days."

We have an opportunity every day to create special memories and experiences for which we will always be thankful. If you haven't done it already, commit to either extending or accepting those Thanksgiving invitations. If your family is not with you, join someone else's family. If your family is present, invite someone who might be alone. Come Friday, you will be giving thanks for Thanksgiving.

Cheryl Godbout is the Community Development Director for the Dignity Memorial Funeral and Cemetery Providers in South Florida. For information on any of the Dignity Memorial Community Outreach programs, please call (561) 585-0555 ext. 219.



Cheryl Godbout

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