1) Brain injuries don’t happen to people. Brain injuries happen to families.

2) The person living with a brain injury is a different person than previous.

3) The person living with a brain injury often loses their sense of identity, until they have adjusted to their new “self.” The adjustment process can take up to two years before they “start” to feel comfortable with who they now are, and often times longer to accept their new “self.”

4) Persons with a brain injury grieve their loss of “self.” Family members and friends grieve the loss of the person they knew and loved previous to their brain injury. Each person grieves in their own way and individual time frame.

5) A person who is in a state of “crisis” can become self-centered and focus mainly on their personal loss and how it affects their life. Because their personal loss was so great, the person who suffered the brain injury can fail to recognize that family and friends also suffered a loss. Family members and friends might feel guilty whenever they focus on their losses, because the loss of the brain injury survivor was so much greater.

6) Often self-esteem and self-worth are based on our abilities and accomplishments. When we lose our ability “to do,” or when we mess up most things we try to do, we feel like failures. We begin to think that our loved ones would be better off without us, because we don’t want to be a burden nor an embarrassment to them. This is our perception, not theirs. When we learn how to separate “who we are” from “what we do,” we can laugh at our shortcomings and accept our flaws, instead of making fun of ourselves with put-downs and damaging our self-esteem.

7) Belief in God and belief that the person living with a brain injury survived for a specific purpose provides a strong catalyst for acceptance and speeds recovery for survivors and loved ones.