

"The accident gave me a TBI...what is that?"

My story about my accident and rehabilitation, learning about my injuries, and accepting and living as the new "me."

Dina McPherson  
Columbia, MO



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“The accident gave me a TBI...what is that?”

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**My TBI Rehabilitation story:**  
Objectives  
• Discuss the basics of TBI and the impact it has on a person, their family, and the community: physically, mentally, emotionally.  
• Emphasize the importance of high quality treatment and rehabilitation on both ends: the health care side and the patient side.  
• Describe and address common “issues” people who have TBIs deal with—some expected, some unexpected.



# *My TBI Rehabilitation story:*

## Objectives

- Discuss the basics of TBI and the impact it has on a person, his/her family, and the community--physically, mentally, emotionally;
- Emphasize the importance of high quality treatment and rehabilitation on both ends--the health care side and the patient side;
- Describe and address continual "issues" people who have TBIs deal with--some expected, some unexpected.



# *First, a bit of background:*

Grew up in Sullivan, MO

Graduated High School in 2004 at 17 years old





2008, Graduated Mizzou  
BA in English-Creative  
Writing  
Minors: Psychology,  
Art-Photography





# 2008-2009, Taught HS English at Woodland HS (Marble Hill, MO)





2009!

- Resigned
- Returned to Columbia
- Studied in Italy (summer)
- Began working at Mizzou (Undergrad Recruitment)
- Applied to Grad School
- Bought tickets to Italy, again
- Purchased concert tickets:
  - Tim McGraw/Lady A



Florence



London



Cinque Terre



Rome



Venice



# Then, it happened:

## Woman hit by car, seriously injured

Friday, February 26, 2010 at 11:15 am [Comments](#) (34)

Updated: 4:21 pm, Tue Jan 22, 2013.

A 23-year-old woman was in critical condition today after being struck by a car on Providence Road early this morning.

Shortly after 1 a.m., the woman attempted to cross Providence from west to east near Stewart Road, but not at the intersection crosswalk, Columbia police spokeswoman Officer Jessie Haden said. Jacob T. Schneider, 19, was driving the 2007 Mercury Milan that struck the victim, who hit the hood and windshield and landed on the ground.

Doctors said the victim, who police believe is a University of Missouri student and employee, possibly fractured her skull and spine during the incident, Haden said. She was taken to University Hospital, where she was in the intensive care unit. Her name was not being released this morning because family had not yet been contacted.

A witness told police Schneider was traveling southbound on Providence and stopped at its intersection with Stewart, Haden said. When the light turned green, he drove through the intersection, and when the victim began to cross, he attempted to stop but could not.

Two 21-year-old passengers were in Schneider's vehicle, and no one in the vehicle was injured. Alcohol was not suspected to be a factor.

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announcing

Our west  
location by  
the mall is  
now open at  
403 N. Stadium





## *Friday, February 26, 2010*

- Work: didn't make it in-everyone assumed I overslept
- After Accident: phone was dead, so couldn't find family numbers
  - They found student/employee ID, and looked me up in MU Outlook
  - Phone number to Admissions was linked to my email
- Admissions checked voicemails ~8am
- In the meantime, Mark had to call our friends to get Derek's number, as well as my mom's



# *"Why don't you answer your phone?"*

The first words out of my brother's mouth when he got in touch with my mom after Mark reached him (despite living in Wildwood, cell service is not the best)

- She panicked, called Admissions and drove to MU
- My co-workers came to SICU, which is where my mom and Derek met up with them
- Updates were posted to Facebook to keep friends and family informed
- All they were told was to wait...





# *Laundry List of Injuries*

February 26, 2010

- Severe TBI
  - nonreactive pupils, GCS 3, multiple intracranial hemorrhage
  - Intubated
  - VP Shunt
  - large left subdural hematoma with shift (~5mm)
  - occipital skull fracture
  - cerebral edema
  - subarachnoid hemorrhage
- Left tibial fracture, Left fibula fracture

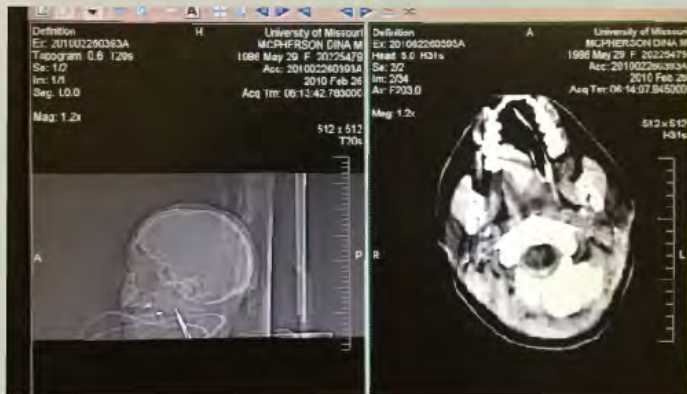


# My Brain

February 26

February 27

March 8





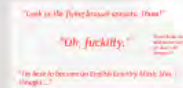
# While in the SICU...

## ...I said some funny stuff...

Every hour or so, staff would come and ask questions

- Name
- Age
- President
- Year
- Work
- Location
- and many others

Literary Discussion-Backtrack to 2009



Law and Order, my brother and my boss's coat



- I thought I was there to work
- My name changed hourly when they quizzed me
- I went backwards in time:
  - I was in HS
  - I was in college
  - I taught HS
- I went forwards in time:
  - I was married
  - I had kids

And it was obvious who I **cared about most**

- I was awfully **rude** to them
- My ex-fiancee came, and I was sincerely **nice** to him (*he simply thought I missed him*)
- All of my friends--I was not so friendly with them (*thankfully, they understood*)

Other Randomness:

- I told my mom to call my mom--fortunately, she played along
- I thought the Chemistry Advisor was my husband
- The staff had to empty my room, because I would answer their questions by pulling from the materials there (calendar, tv screen, etc.)
- I'd only listen to Darcy...my favorite nurse who braided my hair.

Within those two weeks:

- I developed a blood clot
- They debated replacing my whole knee, the break was that bad
- I argued...a lot
  - had to be put in restraints
  - gave the two "thumbs" up (*I just wanted water*)



Facebook Updates:





*"Look at the flying brussel sprouts, Thom!"*

*"Oh, fuckitty."*

*"What do we do with  
OUR patients after they  
are done with  
therapies?"*

*"I'm here to become an English Country Music Star, I  
thought..."*



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- Age
- President
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# Literary Discussion-Backtrack to 2009





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Lindsay P  
Timeline  
February

I give you double  
reaction to the d  
probably won't n  
definitely going t  
by to see you wh  
better. I've got n  
early this week.

Like Comment



Heather P

# Facebook Updates:



**Dina Marie**

February 27, 2010 · 🌐

I can give a small update so the confusion settles down...she's not in a coma and she's not paralyzed. She has a broken leg and her head has a little internal swelling which is getting better. But again, we still have a ways to go, so please stay patient. Shes the strongest girl I know, she's a fighter, and she's doing the best she can...Thanks again for your patience.

Like · Comment · Share

👍 Danielle Sewald Walker, Matthew Miller, Elizabeth Adams and 5 others like this.



**Kathy Thompson** Thank you for setting the rumors straight...My love to Dina!!

February 27, 2010 at 10:40pm · Like



**Maggie West Heidbrink** Prayers continue to go out for you dina! We all love you and know you will be strong through this!

February 27, 2010 at 10:42pm · Like



**Megan Weber** Love you all! Hugs...

February 27, 2010 at 10:44pm · Like



**Christie M Politte** My prayers and thoughts continue to go out to you Dina and your Family. Stay strong girl.

February 27, 2010 at 11:37pm · Like



**Joshua Medling** We are thinking of you guys here at basecamp!! our prayers go out to you all!! speedy recovery!!! 😊

February 28, 2010 at 1:09am · Like



**Janean Braun** Im thinking about you Dina!! Get well soon! 😊



**Derek Dunne** wrote on your Timeline.

March 5, 2010 at 12:27am 🌐

hey guys, this is Dina's bro Derek. She is still in the ICU due to innercranial swelling, she had surgery on her leg which went well, and she is doing a little better every day. Everything has been a miracle so far, and she is a very lucky girl to have so many good people praying for her... my family and I are very thankful for all of you...There arent words to express our gratitude at a time like this...All I ask is to keep her in your thoughts while she fights through this till the end.....Thanks again :)

Like · Comment



**Benjamin Saint James** wrote on your Timeline.

March 4, 2010 at 10:32am 🌐

Update pleaseeeee!



# ~Two Weeks later, Rusk

## My First Memory

- I "woke" to all standing around me (family, physicians)
- "You were in an accident...it gave you a TBI."
- What is a TBI?!

Coming from a person who had never even had a broken bone, I was confused. Then, I looked up what a TBI was: traumatic brain injury, which affects a person physically, mentally, emotionally, as well as his/her behavior.

This was difficult to wrap my injured brain around, so I simply did what the doctors and therapists told me to while at Rusk--also, because I didn't know what questions to ask.

## Rehabilitation clinic in Columbia

- Friends/Family bringing Olive Garden, Red Lobster, etc.

## First memory comes after a few days (mid-March):

- Dr. Wolf and Resident come in, making their rounds
- Accident (saw all of family)
- Car questions
- Leg(s)
- My Response.....



Dr. Wolf  
(medicine.missouri.edu)



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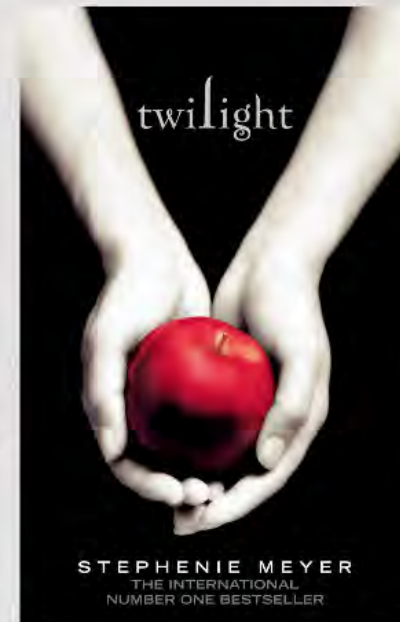




## *While at Rusk,*

Woke daily with food and an agenda of various therapies  
Ate...much more than while at SICU  
Realized a lot: Felt out of place at therapy sessions.

- Leg
- Hair (Derek and the wheelchair)
- Smell (Steph-Choc Chip Cake)
- Exhaustion-had to cancel therapies
- Reading



# Two weeks of...then, home on March 23

- Went from OT, ST, PT to just ST and PT
- The number of ST sessions was reduced
- PT was worst:
  - Tore MCL muscle
  - Balance was awful
  - Paranoid without wheelchair
    - (and I had/have trust/control issues)
- Everyone at Rusk was AMAZING!





## While at home... (April)

- Had outpatient ST and PT
- Mom returned to work, Grandma stayed with me
- Leg:
  - Still in black brace at this time, straight and went to partial weight
  - HATED CPM Machine
- Brain:
  - Twilight, book two, AWFUL
  - Returned to reading Oscar Wilde and Jane Austen
  - Personality: very irritable and frustrated (lack of control over anything, no independence)





# *My Friends, Family and Hometown- Amazing.*

Because of us all being out of work for so long, they thought it best to throw a benefit for my family and me.





## *May 24, 2010*

I returned to work, less than three months after the accident.  
(My co-workers were **AMAZINGLY** supportive.)

- GRADUALLY (two hours, then four, then eight--it took a long time to return to full-time)
- Dr. Wolf and Dr. Hart told me I would be exhausted
- Upon my return to Columbia, I took a neuropsych evaluation, Dr. Martin
  - Average intelligence; avg-hi academic->arithmetic, spelling reading; mild decline in processing speed and moderate deficits in learning and recall of unrelated verbal information and confrontation naming



# "Live like you were dying..."

Didn't remember any of Tim McGraw/Lady A concert, so went in June

After therapies, I

- Started paying attention to my personality, responses, cognition, etc. (aware of irritability, exhaustion, etc.)
- Felt as if I had to do as much as possible in as little of time as possible--just in case something may happen
  - Therefore, I made sure to do a lot that summer and fall.



Visiting  
Friends in  
Sullivan



Tailgating

Mom and her friend tried playing matchmaker ...

*"You look a lot different and being in a pool of your own blood, you now..."*



Muny, Fox, various  
concerts and shows





Mom and her friend tried playing matchmaker...

*"You look a lot different not laying in a pool of your own blood, you now..."*



# Fall Semester, 2010 (6months after)

- Attended Graduate Welcome/Intro Course
  - Thought I wanted to do pre-med, though...didn't work out
- Thought I was ready for two grad seminars--definitely not--withdrew, just like co-workers had predicted, but didn't tell me (they wanted me to try and supported me)
- Dec-Jan Intercession, took Bio 2002, "How the Brain Works" and Phil 2440, "Medical Ethics"
  - Both new areas, C and C+
  - For Christmas, mom bought me brain books!
- Decided to stick with/return to what I knew--English

So...

Met with English Grad Department Head  
• told him story of accident  
• surprisingly, he reacted positively and encouraged me to meet with Prof. Kerwin  
• Kerwin has published many pieces on Me Issues in Literature

So...

Met with English Grad  
Department Head

- told him story of accident
- surprisingly, he reacted positively and encouraged me to meet with Professor Kerwin
  - Kerwin has published many pieces on Medical Issues in Literature



# *Spring/Summer of 2011*

Met with Kerwin

- He suggested fiction writing, but agreed to advise me on my thesis--whatever I chose
- I began to look into English Grad Classes for the Summer Semester
- Found two graduate courses in Ireland/Northern Ireland--guided by Kerwin
- Office allowed me to go, especially since I didn't make it to Italy in 2010











## Summer/Fall 2011

- Earned As in both Grad English Courses in Ireland
- Returned to Columbia, work and enrolled in two more graduate seminars, earning an A and B-.....while training for my FIRST HALF MARATHON!
- Attended Missouri Student Veterans Association, or MSVA, Events with co-workers
- Began reading/getting interested in the texts mom bought



STL Rock'n'Roll 2:26



# 2012



- Really got into Running--which helped my brain work!
  - Also, it helped with irritability
- Therapies:
  - Had previously gone to Dr. Wolf at Rusk because of back pain and headaches after running
    - Turns out, left leg is ~1inch longer than right
      - Have to wear an insert
  - Also, back was messed up
    - Had to go to many outpatient PT sessions
- Still FT in Admissions

ErinCondri

PHOTO



mhedgie816, mandalou, 5180, lanutter  
dinance This month may be the death of me. Mentally and physically.  
lanutter I love your perfectly organized, color-coded planner! Wish I was this together!

#### Classes

- Took two more Grad English courses in Spring
- As
  - Still got exhausted from being busy (FT student/employee plus running), but slept more to pull through
- Studied in Ireland/NI for one course, Peace Studies, EY
- Fall, two more Grad Eng, B- and Incomplete (found out grandmother was sick)
- Applied for Fulbright...learned a lot







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ErinCond...

PHOTO

Plann...



mhadgie816, mandalou, 5180, larutter  
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#### Classes

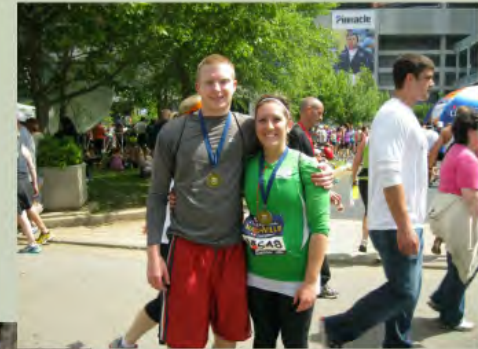
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# Running Events of 2012



## 10K and Half Marathon Runs



Prezi

ORDER PREZIS

My photo + photo



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## *When in Ireland...*

- MU Professor was originally from Dublin
- Went to lunch with her former classmates
- One man, Bernard, asked, "What is your thesis topic?"
- I responded, "Well, I would like to do something like my Senior Capstone paper, just with psychology or something pertaining to the brain, and not use Joyce. My mom bought a lot of Oliver Sacks and brain books for me. It's SO INTERESTING!"
- "Flann O'Brien's 'The Policeman.' I work in a mental health institute. It's perfect for what you want to do."
- So, I did and considered moving there to study the topic further

## *Fulbright and Fellowship Applicant for Northern Ireland*



- Fall of '12, during mock panel interview, law professor commented, "What you're saying, I like; however, what you have written in your statement of intent is much different."
- It was then that I learned there is a disconnect from what I think and what I write...so I now read as I write.

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# *Fulbright and Fellowship Applicant for Northern Ireland '13*



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# 2013

- Left job in Admissions after four years to return to Teaching
  - In exit interview at MU, Dr. Korschgen (Vice Provost of Enrollment Management) asked, "*What would make you happy for work? What would you like to do?*"
  - I responded, "I don't think it exists, but I'd love to organize fundraising runs for TBIs."
  - She asked, "Well, why don't you try it out?"
    - Went home and Googled, "TBI fundraising runs"





# Mt. Vernon, MRC 4th Annual

Dina,

Thank you so much for contacting us!! It is always fantastic to receive emails from survivors and to hear about the amazing success stories! We would LOVE to have you be involved in this year's awareness run in September. Charity and I were thinking it would be great to have you speak just prior to the start...and then line up to run the 10K. What a wonderful testimony that would be! Is that something you might be interests in doing?

John J. Klay

[\(417\) 766-1079](tel:(417)766-1079)

Sent from my iPhone

On May 5, 2013, at 2:27 PM, "McPherson, Dina M." <[mcpersond@missouri.edu](mailto:mcpersond@missouri.edu)> wrote:

Good afternoon,

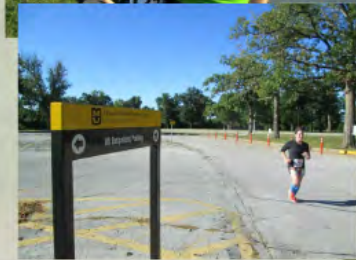
I am writing in regards to the September BIA Run and was wondering if there is anything I could do to assist?

A little over three years ago, I suffered a TBI from a pedestrian vs. vehicle accident on Providence (was





# Running Events, 2013





# After Mt. Vernon,

- it was my goal to recreate their run in Columbia.
  - So, I used the trusty Google App, "How to organize a fundraising run." John and Charity emailed excel sheet to assist.
  - I contacted former doctors to get support/suggestions
    - Met with Dr. Hart, who put me in touch with Maureen Cunningham
  - Carol Fleisher, Director of Veterans Affairs at MU, put me in touch with Steve Gaither
  - Friend, John Quade (President of MSVA) put me in touch with MUHC Development Coordinator, Lauren Benoit

11- Thesis Defended!



"Fantastic" novel was more realistic, if read  
via lens--mainly head trauma--using Oliver  
Twist, VS Ramachandran, E. Ann Kaplan,  
and textbooks from Prof Jeffrey Johnson  
again--funny how things turn out...





# May, 2014--Thesis Defended!

Flann  
O'Brien

'If we don't cherish the work of Flann O'Brien we are stupid fools who don't deserve to have great men. Flann O'Brien is a very great man'  
Anthony Burgess

The Third  
Policeman



"A JOURNEY IS AN HALLUCINATION:"  
FLANN O'BRIEN'S *THE THIRD POLICEMAN*

---

A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of the Graduate School  
at the University of Missouri

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
DINA MCPHERSON  
Dr. William Kerwin, Thesis Advisor

MAY 2014

argued this "fantastic" novel was more realistic, if read through a trauma lens--mainly head trauma--using Oliver Sacks, Eric Kandel, VS Ramachandran, E. Ann Kaplan and other neurologists and textbooks from Prof Jeffrey John Psychology--again-funny how things turn out...



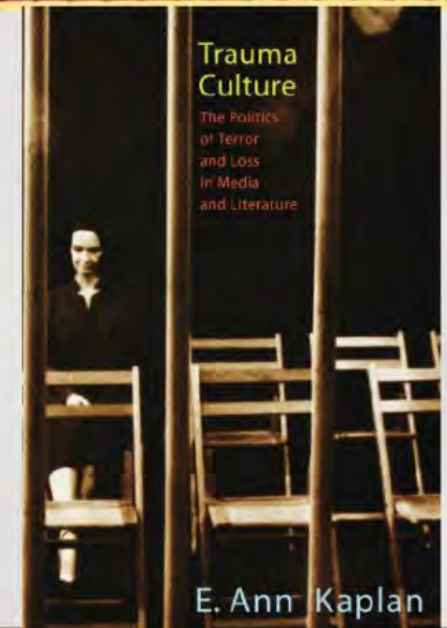
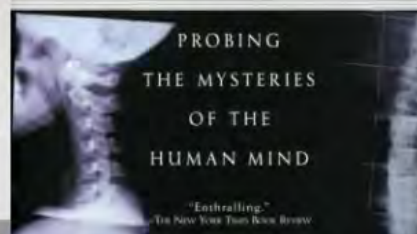
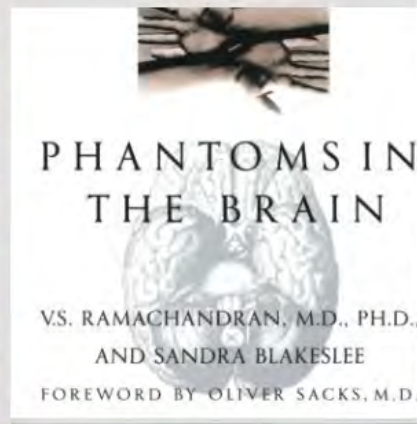
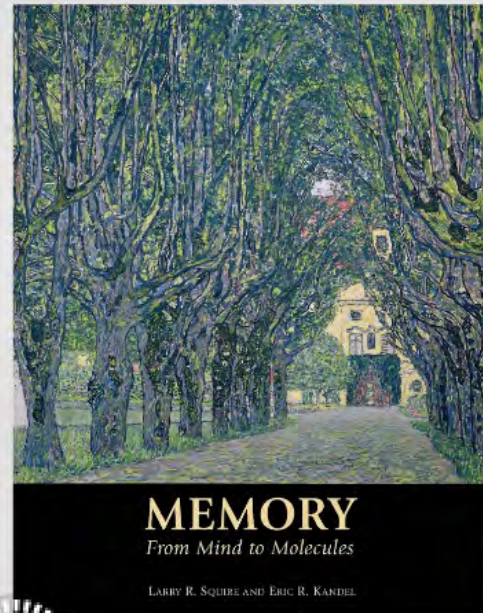
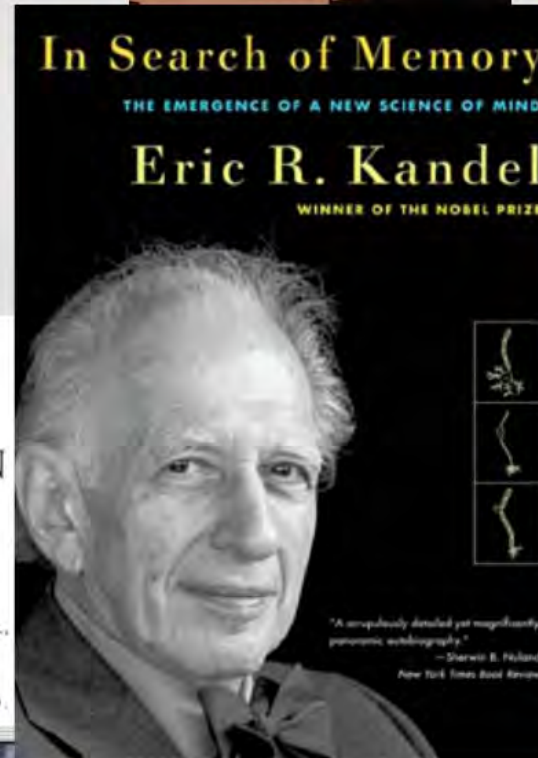
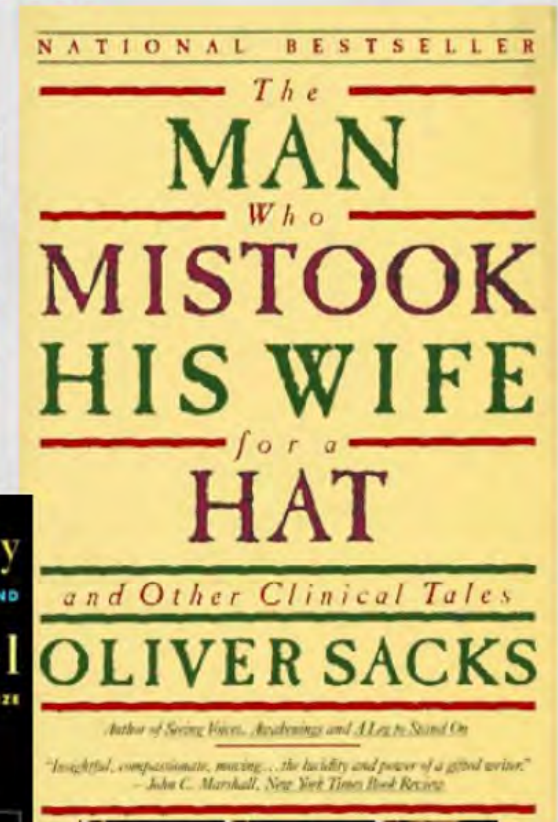
Prezi

bookmeblog.wordpress.com



# When reading those books...

- I learned I was VERY lucky!
  - Sacks
  - Kandel
  - Kaplan
  - Ramachandran





*when trying to  
plan run stuff,  
I had to buy  
make-up...  
and got to  
"share TBI  
stories!"*





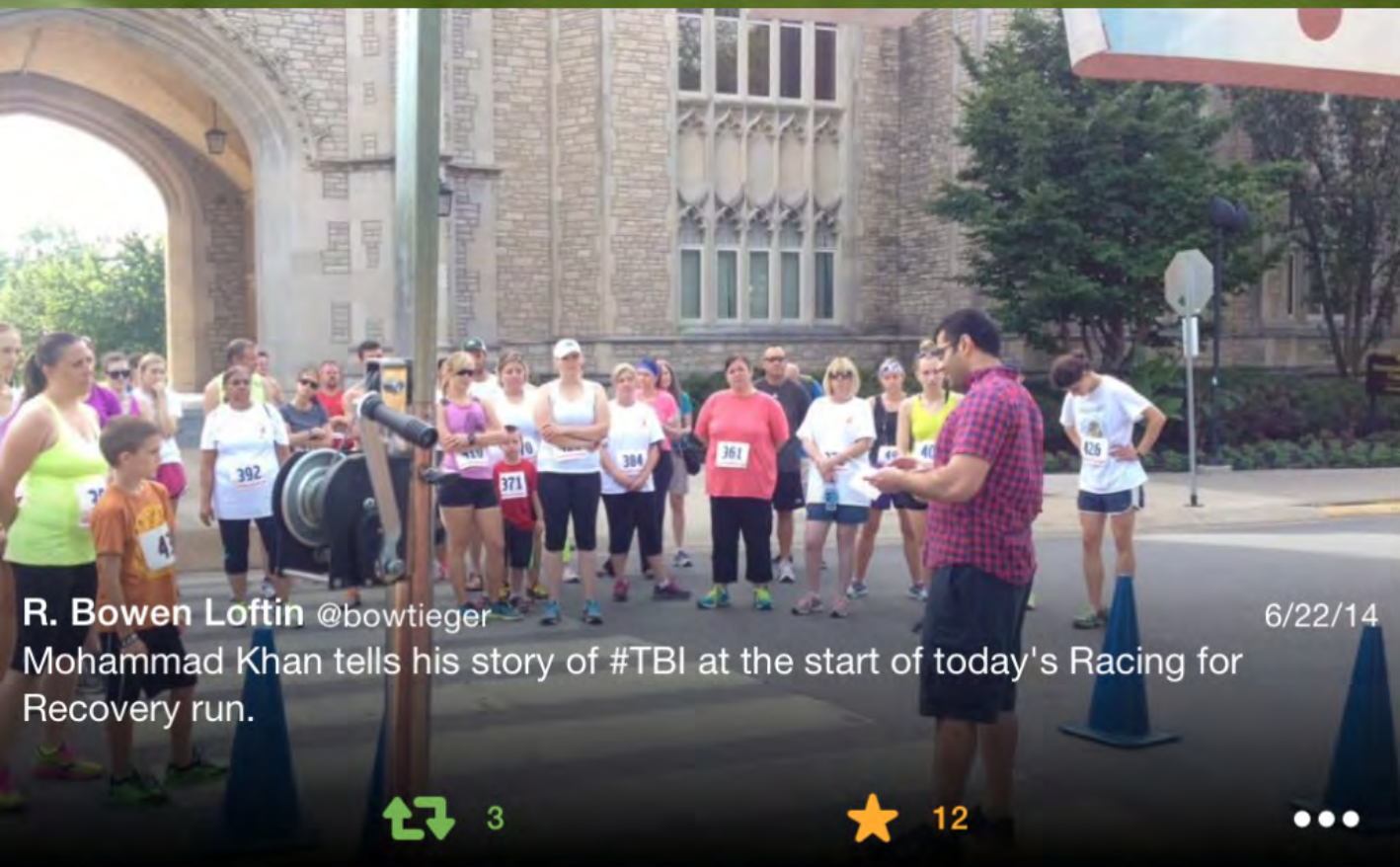
# After MANY emails and MUCH time,



**RACING FOR RECOVERY**  
**29:00am**  
Memorial Union  
University of Missouri  
Columbia, MO 65211  
**5K WALK/RUN**  
**June 2014**  
www.facebook.com/racingforrecovery / http://blog.hard.com/racingforrecovery  
**RACING FOR RECOVERY 2014**







R. Bowen Loftin @bowtieger

Mohammad Khan tells his story of #TBI at the start of today's Racing for Recovery run.

6/22/14

↻ 3

★ 12

⋮



**You do to help with TBI!**



Photo Credit: Justin Kelley/MUHC

# All in Red!



Photo Credit: Justin Kelley/MUHC



# Tour of MUHC Trauma, Sept 2014



< Tweet ...

 **MU Health Care**  
@muhealth

Joined @MOBIO today to help lawmakers learn how we improve health across the state:  
[muhccebolog.missouri.edu/lawmakers-lear...](http://muhccebolog.missouri.edu/lawmakers-lear...)



• *In short,*

• *I still have issues:*

• *Memory: use a planner*

• *Talking with others: I get words confused when I'm sleepy, so I simply plan around it (pretty difficult, though)*

• *Frustration/Irritability: I run and do yoga to calm down*

• *Education: I now know its importance and value it even moreso*

• *But, if not for the support I received from family, colleagues, and friends, as well as the stellar care at MUHC, I would not have made it this far.*

"I am eternally grateful for Darcy and the SICU staff who were there during the worst time of my life. They helped me better understand what it means to be part of the Mizzou family because that's how they treat everyone – like family."

McPherson, traumatic brain injury survivor



Grateful patient Dina McPherson and Darcy, University Hospital surgical intensive care



Prezi





“The accident gave me a TBI...what is that?”

My story about my accident and rehabilitation, learning about my injuries, and accepting and living as the new “me.”

Dina McPherson  
Columbia, MO

**First, a bit of background:**  
Grew up in Dallas, TX  
Graduated High School in 2004 at 17  
went to college

2008 - Dr. Christine Meyer  
Travis English Center  
Harris County, Texas  
MS in Physical Therapy

2010-2011, Physical Therapy at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, IL

2011-2012, Physical Therapy at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, IL

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Objectives  
• Discuss the basics of TBI and the impact it has on a person, their family, and the community - physically, mentally, emotionally.  
• Emphasize the importance of high quality treatment and rehabilitation on both ends - the health care side and the patient side.  
• Describe and address common “issues” people who have TBIs deal with - some expected, some unexpected.