

Blessed To Be Alive!

Tom Bliss

The fall I had in May of 2010 was a blessing in that I saw for the first time how temporal and fragile LIFE is. The 14 foot fall onto concrete is something I still (Thank God) don't recall - in fact there is a 6 hour blank of that day in my life. As Missy says I missed a very exciting and expensive air lift ride to the hospital. While in the hospital, they had to do extreme surgery and rebuild my left wrist and arm. As a result of my hip fracture I was kept to a wheel chair for several weeks. It also became evident that my severe concussion led to poor memory which I still deal with today. Later, that year I discovered that I also suffered from herniation in my L3, 4, & 5 vertebrae, which along with other things, the trauma doctors did not identify.

As I consider this award it is hard for me to compare myself to Sue or others, since I don't know what obstacles they really had/have to deal with. Whereas, there were and are times of fear in not knowing what my true limitations are, I keep striving to move beyond where I currently am. I am thankful to the Lord, when I am told by doctors that I am a miracle and should have been paralyzed or killed. I embrace my miracle and deal with my aches, pains and limitations. Often I am around others who have issues that they are struggling with, and I encourage them to not give up. Whatever they're facing with God's intervention they can experience with hope. My aim is to always give my best effort.

Being a swimmer in good condition is one of the things the doctors attributed to my physical resiliency and quick recovery. With that encouragement, I sought to get back in the water in spite of the aches and pains. The very first time I got in, was very painful, so much so that I could not even take a pull with my left arm. Freestyle was a little more forgiving and so I focused on it. After a few weeks I was able to do a little back stroke with just some moderate pain. It was tough since I couldn't straighten my arm and to this day I still can't. However, swimming is definitely my physical salvation, since I can only stand or walk for a short time. While I teach I move to strategically placed chairs in my classroom, to find relief. To fight off the doctors' constant surgery directives I find every opportunity to be in the embrace of the water and do my workouts. It is what gives my core the strength to hold me up when I can't be in the water. Now I think I should just live in the water and be a fish!

There are times, with my blessed progress, that I sometimes get frustrated that I can't do more. The Lord quickly reminds me from where I have come and I get back on my knees and thank Him for where I am! Some have been surprised that I am not bitter or angry due to my limitations and I quickly respond that I am grateful for LIFE and that I am still here to experience it!