

## 0 Foreword

The following chapters give a brief account of the events and experiences that occurred during my stroke and subsequent recovery and rehabilitation. Most of this was started while still in the St. Albans City hospital. I have worked on the chapters as I remember the incidents and events as thankfully my memory was not affected. Sometimes I even think that my long term memory has actually improved as I often remember events quite clearly of my fulfilling life.

It was one of the first nights in Hemel Hempstead hospital that I had a choice to either be a victim or else a victor. I decided I would not be one of the 250,000 people in the UK that that are severely disabled as a result of a stroke. So I choose to trust the Lord. I know how strong I can be with the Lord beside me and I knew, see Romans 8 v28. I believe that there must be some good that will come out of this horrible experience and so it came to me to write a short book, to tell of my experiences. I will hopefully inspire other stroke patients and help them understand the process of a successful recovery.

From that day onwards, I took careful mental notes of events and my thoughts using keywords. Unless it is God's will, I will not easily accept anything other than a complete 100% recovery. It is really quite simple. I need to be focused, stay positive, work hard, trust the Lord, be patient and be a victor throughout my recovery. There has never any doubt in my mind that I will someday have a successful recovery as I know that anything is possible for God (Matthew 19 v26). He created me with a perfect body and will therefore restore my body to the same perfect state (Acts 3 v21). It will be only a matter of time. I knew that my faith and patience would be severely tested in the months to come. I needed to be strong, patient and trust the Lord to heal me in His time and if it is His will hopefully while I am still on earth.

I also realized that no-one else besides my Father in heaven is going to see me through this ordeal and that the various therapists and 'angels' that I would meet along my journey would merely be a guide to me. The real hard work would come from within and that no one would be invited nor come to a 'pity party'.

I was encouraged by one of the Occupational Therapists at the Holywell rehabilitation unit to keep a daily dairy of events during the first few weeks. I had some difficulty in seeing the computer screen and so I got confused or distracted easily, with a result that the diary became confusing. I then decided to scrap the idea and revert to my original idea of writing a book as I thought that it is actually irrelevant when the events occurred but my thoughts and experiences have more relevance.

I have on odd occasions continued to work on the book. One of the effects of stroke is being extremely emotional. I can burst into tears at any opportunity and

especially as I reflect on the past few months as I recall my memories. As I sit here and write this book, my tears are tears of joy as I realize how blessed that I am that I am still here to tell this tale. I am sobbing as I write this. Hopefully I bring to others the desire to accept our God and Creator and to fully trust Him as I have done and continue to do. Our God is good indeed and He has certainly led me and given me the strength on the path to a full and complete recovery and He remains at my side. Although I realize that there have been some cognitive effects following my stroke, I often give thanks for me not having been affected drastically in that I feel I still have a sound mind and have the capability to write this short account of my journey.

At the start I must also say that I am extremely grateful to the NHS (National Health Service) and their staff, for my recovery and for taking extremely good care of me during this dreadful journey and I am awed at the facilities in the NHS hospitals here in the UK. I am glad to be in the UK and I am extremely grateful for my treatment here.

If however, anyone from the NHS should read this however, my only hope that any criticism will be seen as constructive and that valuable lessons may be learnt to improve the good service a little. I know that the NHS often comes under unnecessary and unfounded criticism.

This account is therefore not intended to offend anyone but merely to give a realistic account of what I actually experienced to the best of my memory and knowledge.

Initially, I will only make these writings available on line which gives me the flexibility of being able to add to some of the technical chapters as I make healing progress and learn more. From the controlling end of my website I can see if any of my chapters have been accessed so slowly get an indication of what people find interesting. The possibility of putting my writings to a book always remains a possibility.

Please enjoy reading the following short chapters and hopefully be inspired as life does not end with a stroke.

Willem Hofland  
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