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Paul Berger & Stephanie Mensh's Stroke Survivor  
NEWS & ATTITUDE FOR YOU - FEBRUARY 2014

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<http://twitter.com/#!/PauleBerger>

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Please FORWARD this newsletter to your friends and  
colleagues who would benefit from these tips. Click it  
forward to people in your stroke club, volunteer groups,  
place of worship, community services and neighbors, too!

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1. NEWS: RESEARCH on Stroke Recovery & Rehabilitation:  
Speech on Both Sides of the Brain

Two sides of the brain are activated to produce speech,  
according to a recent study that located speech centers  
using electrodes implanted on the brain. Researchers  
separated "speech" from "language" by having the study  
participants hear and repeat the non-words: "kig" and  
"pob."

These findings differ from prior studies which concluded  
that speech and language were mostly generated on one side  
of the brain. The researchers from the NYU Center for  
Neural Sciences and NYU Medical Center conducted the study  
on patients undergoing treatment requiring the implanted  
electrodes, which provide a much more precise view of brain  
activity than other studies on speech and language which  
use external electrodes on the surface of the skull or  
neuroimaging.

Understanding the separation of speech and language could  
lead to improved rehabilitation.

To read the NIH-Medline news story:  
<http://tinyurl.com/Speech-2-Sides-Story>

To learn about the research center:  
<http://ecog.med.nyu.edu/overview/>

To read an abstract of the study in the January 15,

2014 issue of the journal "Nature":  
<http://tinyurl.com/Speech-2-Side-Abst>

For additional resources to help you find information on medical, health, rehabilitation, recovery, self-empowerment, and more, we have collected our favorite links at: [http://www.strokesurvivor.com/resource\\_links.html](http://www.strokesurvivor.com/resource_links.html).

Do you wonder how I look & sound? Meet me at my video page:  
<http://strokesurvivor.com/video.html>

## 2. PAUL'S TIPS FOR SURVIVORS: Pet Therapy

Pets can help you recover from your stroke and feel better. I didn't have a pet as a kid (my Mom had a parakeet & my brother a chicken for a short time). My first pets were two kittens that Stephanie & I adopted from the county shelter about two years after my stroke. We picked easy names for me to say with my aphasia: Sam and Mack.

When Sam died, we went to the shelter's adoption day at a local library. I held a little gray kitten in my lap for 45 minutes, he was the one for me. Smokey is now 19 years old (Mack died a few years ago).

Having a pet helps me in many ways:

- \* As I was relearning to write, I wrote my first paragraph about Sam and Mack.
- \* I have learned to feed them with one hand. I feel good taking care of them.
- \* I talk to Smokey and he talks to me and we understand each other. He doesn't correct my grammar.
- \* Smokey asks me to pet him. He loves me as I am, with all my problems. Smokey has problems too, he has lost his hearing and has arthritis.
- \* Over the years, the cats have made me laugh at the funny things they do. They kept me company when Stephanie traveled.

Some people sleep with their pets. We don't because Smokey wanted to wake us up very, very early to feed him. Now, when we wake up and open the bedroom door, Smokey is waiting. He meows, "Good morning, and I am hungry," and walks to the kitchen expecting Stephanie to follow and feed him.

After he eats, and I have finished my shower, Smokey jumps onto the bed. He waits for me to brush him. The arthritis in his back makes it hard for him to groom himself. He purrs and rubs my arm with his head.

He sleeps most of the day in different places: on our bed, under a chair in the corner of the dining room, and on the sofa. Later in the day, he walks into my office to tell me he is hungry. He meows and I talk while I make his dinner. I put a scoop of dry food in one bowl, and 1/4 of a can of canned food in another bowl. I have a little trouble opening the pop top can with one hand, so most of the time Stephanie will leave one opened in the fridge. I chop up the food so it is easier for him to eat.

Sometimes, Smokey sleeps through his dinner time. When he was younger, if you touched his metal food bowl, he would run into the kitchen. He's old now, and can't hear, so I put his food in his bowl, and carry it to where he is sleeping. He wakes up, and after a few minutes, will follow me to the kitchen.

When I go to the basement to walk on the treadmill, I clean his litter box. I use a litter scoop and a dust pan. The trash can has a foot pedal so I can open it with my foot and dump the dust pan with one hand.

When we are watching TV in the evening, Smokey will jump on the sofa between me and Stephanie, and ask us to pet him. I enjoy petting him. His soft fur and purr relaxes me. When he rubs his head on my face, it feels like a kiss.

Some people like dogs, or birds, or guinea pigs, or rabbits. Cats and some dogs are probably a little easier to care for if you have had a stroke.

If I can do it, you can do it, too!

Resources:

To adopt a pet, talk to a veterinarian, state or local animal rescue organization or pet store:  
<http://www.petsmartcharities.org/adopt-a-pet>

To laugh and learn about cats, "My Cat From Hell" TV show: <http://tinyurl.com/Cat-frm-H-TV>

DOGTV: <http://dogtv.com/>

Animal Planet: <http://www.animalplanet.com/>

Tell me about your pet. Do you have a tip to share with others? Send it to me at [Paul@strokesurvivor.com](mailto:Paul@strokesurvivor.com) and we may include it in next month's newsletter.

Other insights and tips for coping with life and taking control of your recovery after stroke are available on my website at <http://www.strokesurvivor.com>.

\*\*\* Looking for even more inspiration & solutions for survivors? Read, "Conquering Aphasia & Stroke TODAY! Vol. 1: Paul Berger's Guide for Stroke Survivors"  
<http://tinyurl.com/ConqAphasia-Stroke-Vol-1>

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I'm a stroke survivor working hard to give you tips, solutions & motivation for a better life. If you like what you see, buy me a cup of coffee (or 2 or 3) and I'll send you a special thank you!  
\* 1 cup: <http://tinyurl.com/1-coffee-for-Paul>  
\* 2 cups: <http://tinyurl.com/2-coffees-for-Paul>  
\* 3 cups: <http://tinyurl.com/3-coffees-for-Paul>  
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3. STEPHANIE'S TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS:  
Feeling Affectionate

There are lots of emotions that come with living with

stroke, for the survivor and spouse, family and friends. Often, the negative feelings are overwhelming: anger, frustration, fear, helplessness, anxiety, despair. To return to a more normal life, to recover a balance, it's important to experience the positive emotions, too, like laughter, love, friendship, happiness, security, and a sense of self-worth.

One way to attack the negative feelings is to take a breath, and respond differently. Lighten up. Laugh. For example, Paul recently was fitted for a knee brace. It is very lightweight, with metal supports and hinges that bend at his knee. But when he walks across the room, it squeaks loudly, like he has a bird in his pocket. Instead of being embarrassed or frustrated, we laughed and I said I'd have to find his oil can, since he sounded like the Tin Man in the Wizard of Oz. We'll sing, "If I only had a heart" until the orthotist can show us how to lubricate it.

Giving and receiving positive emotions, like affection has been scientifically proven to provide physical as well as emotional benefits. While caregivers sometimes feel like they are expected to give, give, give, both the stroke survivor and caregiver should take turns in initiating positive feelings. It's not so hard to show affection, whether you've had a hard day or you have stroke-related limitations.

Three types of affectionate communication were studied. Sharing affection resulted in actual reductions in certain hormones, blood pressure and other physical symptoms of stress:

- 1. Verbal statements, such as saying, "I love you," or "I care about you"
- 2. Direct nonverbal gestures, such as holding hands, hugging, or kissing, and
- 3. Social support behaviors, such as listening to each other.

When was the last time you held hands while sitting on the sofa watching TV or at the movies?

Resources:

To read the article, "Affectionate Communication is Good For You," in Communication Currents, published by the National Communication Association:  
<http://tinyurl.com/AffectionStudy>

If you're not a touchy person, try this blog:  
<http://tinyurl.com/Not-touchy-blog>

For more tips & inspiration for caregivers, please visit:  
[http://www.strokesurvivor.com/articles\\_and\\_tips.html](http://www.strokesurvivor.com/articles_and_tips.html)

\*\*\* Looking for even more inspiration & solutions for spouses and families? Read, "Conquering Aphasia & Stroke for Caregivers, Vol. 2: Stephanie Mensh's Guide for Caregivers"  
<http://tinyurl.com/Stroke-Caregiver-E-book>

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"How to Conquer the World With One Hand...And an Attitude"

\*\*\*\* 2014 \*\*\* Celebrating 15th Anniversary! \*\*\*\*  
!!! First edition released in 1999 !!!

\* This timeless book remains an international favorite! \*

A few weeks ago, Julie B. wrote: "Wonderful!

I just completed your book "How To Conquer The World With One Hand...And An Attitude." What a wonderful and inspiring book! It gave me hope. It also helped me deal with my fears and feelings and helped me understand what my husband is going through.

My 31 year old husband had none of the risk factors for a stroke. He was also at the gym when his stroke occurred. His stroke has affected his balance and he has some aphasia and has to re-learn to type. Thank you again for the wonderful book!

\* Have you read Paul Berger's book of real-life adventures with stroke & aphasia? \*

\* Have you passed a copy to family, friends, colleagues? \*

\*\*\* Send your comments to: paul@strokesurvivor.com \*\*\*

\* For details on print, audio & e-editions: "How to Conquer the World With One Hand...And an Attitude": [http://strokesurvivor.com/conquer\\_the\\_world.html](http://strokesurvivor.com/conquer_the_world.html)

\* Order your Kindle copies. Did you know you can send Kindle books as gifts by clicking "Give as a Gift" button on the right-hand side of the Amazon page. And you don't need a Kindle, you can read it with free Kindle apps on computers, Ipads, tablets & smartphones: <http://tinyurl.com/HowToConquerWorld-Kindle>

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4. CELEBRATE: American Heart Month  
Help Prevent Strokes, Too

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, cardiovascular disease (CVD)--including heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure--is the number one killer of men and women in the United States.

It is a leading cause of disability, preventing Americans from working and enjoying family activities. CVD costs the United States over \$300 billion each year, including the cost of health care services, medications, and lost productivity.

Cardiovascular health begins with awareness of risk factors, as well as maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy, balanced diet, and exercising.

For information on American Heart Month from the CDC, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth/>

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5. PAUL'S FAVORITES:  
Tying Shoes

One of my stroke group friends showed me these great new shoe laces, the Uptown Hickies Elastic Lacing System. They are easy to use with one hand, allow you to slip in and out of your shoes while keeping them snug. And they come in all the trendy colors. A set comes with 14 pieces of lace.

To see a set: <http://tinyurl.com/Shoe-Laces-Set>

Do you have a favorite product to share? Send a description to me at: [Paul@strokesurvivor.com](mailto:Paul@strokesurvivor.com)

For details on other Paul-tested helpful books and products, visit:  
[http://www.strokesurvivor.com/reading\\_list.html](http://www.strokesurvivor.com/reading_list.html) and  
[http://www.strokesurvivor.com/lifestyle\\_products.html](http://www.strokesurvivor.com/lifestyle_products.html)

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\*\* Aphasia & Speech Therapy in the Comfort of Your Home \*\*

If your goal is to aggressively continue your speech-language recovery, you must try tele-rehabilitation.

Aphasia experts can conduct your treatment sessions over the Internet and it is easier than you can imagine.

<http://www.aphasiatoolbox.com> is providing a 45 minute aphasia consultation with treatment recommendations at no charge as a SPECIAL OFFER to subscribers of this "Stroke Survivor" newsletter.

Contact Bill Connors at [bill@aphasiatoolbox.com](mailto:bill@aphasiatoolbox.com) or phone: 724.494.2534.

Currently, these consultation are offered in 6 different languages to people with aphasia all over the world.

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6. EATING FOR STROKE HEALTH  
Sugar

Here's another reason to switch from soda to water, unsweetened tea or coffee or fresh-squeezed orange juice: researchers found that seven 12-ounce servings per week or one can of soda a day, increased a person's risk of dying from cardiovascular disease by more than a third.

The researchers showed that most Americans eat the equivalent of 18 teaspoons of sugar a day, since most packaged and prepared foods have many grams of added sugars.

Sugar is hard to give up, and the more you eat, the more you crave. One way to break the cycle when the craving hits, is to eat naturally sweet fresh fruits.

Resources:  
To read a report on the sugar research & solutions:  
<http://tinyurl.com/NBC-Sugar-Story>

For details on other Paul-tested helpful kitchen, shopping, and eating tips, visit:  
[http://www.strokesurvivor.com/lifestyle\\_products.html](http://www.strokesurvivor.com/lifestyle_products.html)

7. WHAT'S NEW on the Stroke Survivor.com web site.

We're adding helpful new things to our web site all the time:

- \* European Stroke Organisation (ESO)

We have many useful links for survivors, families and professionals on rehabilitation, motivation, and to regain fulfillment posted to our Resource Links pages. Visit:  
[http://www.strokesurvivor.com/resource\\_links.html](http://www.strokesurvivor.com/resource_links.html) and  
<http://www.strokesurvivor.com>

\*\*\* PERFECT GIFTS FOR STROKE SURVIVORS & CAREGIVERS Paul's best selling books \*\*\*

Follow Paul's adventures and his creative, positive approach to living a full life after stroke...way beyond rehab!!

A WORLD-WIDE FAVORITE for GIFTS & BOOK CLUBS:

- [1] "How to Conquer the World With One Hand...And an Attitude"  
[http://strokesurvivor.com/conquer\\_the\\_world.html](http://strokesurvivor.com/conquer_the_world.html)  
<http://tinyurl.com/HowToConquerWorld-Kindle>

BE CREATIVE...AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MUST-READ:

- [2] "How to Conquer Hobbies With One Hand: Stroke Survivor Paul Berger's 50 Tips & Tools to Make Things"  
<http://strokesurvivor.com/hobbies.html>  
<http://tinyurl.com/HowToConquerHobbies-Kindle>

SET NEW GOALS: IF PAUL CAN DO IT...

- [3] "You Can Do It! 105 Thoughts, Feelings, & Solutions to Inspire You"  
[http://strokesurvivor.com/you\\_book.html](http://strokesurvivor.com/you_book.html)  
<http://tinyurl.com/YouCanDoIt-Kindle>

E-BOOKS - BEST SURVIVOR & CAREGIVER TIPS..any time, any where!

"Conquering Aphasia & Stroke" - 3 VOLUME SERIES

- \* Vol. 1: Paul's Guide for Stroke Survivors

<http://tinyurl.com/E-Book-Vol-1>  
<http://tinyurl.com/ConqAphasia-Stroke-Vol-1>

- \* Vol. 2: Stephanie's Guide for Caregivers

<http://tinyurl.com/E-Book-Vol-2>  
<http://tinyurl.com/ConqAphas-Strk-CaregVol-2>

- \* Vol. 3: More Guidance for Survivors & Caregivers

<http://tinyurl.com/E-Book-Vol-3>  
<http://tinyurl.com/MoreConqAphas-Strk-Vol-3>

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 Special rates for newsletter & web: [www.strokesurvivor.com](http://www.strokesurvivor.com)!

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Would you like to view a previous month's newsletter? Visit our newsletter archive at:  
<http://www.strokesurvivor.com/newsletter.html>

Lots more stuff at: <http://www.strokesurvivor.com>

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8. Stroke/Aphasia Reading problems?

After a stroke, many people have reading and other language problems, known as "aphasia." Hearing a sentence read aloud helps to understand it. You can hear this newsletter read aloud while each word is highlighted on the computer screen with the FREE text reader software described at:  
[http://www.strokesurvivor.com/disability\\_access.html](http://www.strokesurvivor.com/disability_access.html)  
or <http://www.naturalreaders.com>

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