

# From This Moment on

Simon Handcock

# Day 1

It was a sunny Bank Holiday in May 2003 when my fiancée and I took my aunt and uncle for a spin in our new car.

Everything was lovely until ...

I was unconscious and stuck in the car for 45minutes.

As it was a Bank Holiday, none of the local hospitals could accommodate me, so I ended up in Queen Square.

My car hit a tree and the tree won.

Kent Air Ambulance was called to take me to Maidstone Hospital.

I had a large, right temporal extradural haematoma and base of skull fracture, which involved an operation lasting nearly five hours.

And then began my long road to recovery.



# Queen Square

- ❖ I spent two weeks in a coma and nine days with Post Traumatic Amnesia.
- ❖ Once I came round from PTA I worked very hard with the rehab team to get better.
- ❖ Initially I was unable to walk, but managed to get up to some antics in my wheelchair!
- ❖ I had a bet with the nurses that I would run the Marathon one day...
- ❖ My short term rehab goal was to get married but the nurses advised Lisa against this.

# From this moment on...

- ❖ My focus for a time at Queen Square was getting well for my wedding, and I was quite fixated on this at the start of my rehab, it is common for head injury patients to be fixated on things.
- ❖ One day, I was listening to music when my fiancée walked in and I said, “Lisa.... I have found our wedding song.”
- ❖ Little did I know, we had already chosen this track, but I had no memory of it. So there it is, ‘From This Moment’ on it was.



# Short term goals

When I was discharged from Queen Square; I became a patient at the Frank Cooksey Unit at Kings College Hospital.

Here I continued my rehabilitation journey, to help build my independence. Things most people take for granted, such as; how to make a cup of tea, finding your way to and from the shops etc. The rehab plan also included:

Physio

Daily workouts  
in the gym

Memory  
exercises

Speech and  
Language  
Therapy

My sole focus at this time was being discharged for our wedding, to walk down the aisle and be able to have our first dance to “From This Moment on”

Rehabilitation is really hard

but things do get better...

I can't do what I  
used to

Have loose  
goals, but not  
fixed deadlines

Feeling like I  
want to hide  
how bad I am

Embrace who  
you are NOW

Having to adjust  
to a slower pace  
of life

Rehab is a  
Marathon not a  
Sprint

Hidden illness,  
peoples  
attitudes

Seek support  
and inform  
others

No confidence  
in who you are

Determination  
(aka bloody  
mindedness)

Frustrated about  
your failings

Use your coping  
strategies  
ALWAYS

# Longer term goals

- ❖ **Wolfson Vocational Rehab at St Georges Hospital in Wimbledon**
- ❖ **Taught more vocational skills to prepare me for a return to work, including liaising with my employer.**
- ❖ **Following completion of the course, I began a graduated return to work which wasn't without its traumas.**
- ❖ **Once I'd returned to work, I set about achieving the goal I'd set myself that Bank Holiday in May 2003...the London Marathon.**
- ❖ **And... I DID IT!**



# On-going challenges

- ❖ Since my accident, I've faced many challenges.
- ❖ It's been 15 years since that day, 15 years since I married Lisa.
- ❖ In work.
- ❖ Out of work.
- ❖ Setting up my own business.
- ❖ Two wonderful sons, age 8 and 11.
- ❖ A wife who is my strongest supporter and help.



# Things I still struggle with. 15 years on...

Fatigue

Wobbly days

Crowded spaces or  
lots of noise

Balance Issues

Fixed mind-set

Slurred speech  
when fatigued

Executive  
Dysfunction

Sudden change of  
plans, doing things  
out of routine

Planning and  
Prioritising

# Coping strategies

