



"I Am Brain Damaged, Too"

The following was a comment left by Curtis Neeley at the Blogs for Terri site. I was moved by his story and asked Curtis for permission to reprint it here, and he graciously agreed. After you read his story, be sure to visit his [web site](#) and see how this disabled man is making the world a more beautiful place

Posted by Dory on March 19, 2005 at 06:09 PM in

IamBrainDamaged2

I am a SEVERELY BRAIN-DAMAGED man who was nearly killed in an accident and spent two months on life-support. I had a feeding tube! A machine even BREATHED for me! My wife just knew - as her husband thinks he does - that I would not wish to live on machines My wife did a "Do-Not-Revive" order and had the respirator disconnected.

As I lay there and the respirator was turned off, my brother held my hand. I was supposed to die. He says that I squeezed his hand. I began to breathe on my own but barely. The doctors told my brother and my parents that it was 'normal' for a person to seem to squeeze as they died. They were told my oxygenation would slowly decrease till I died. A neuro-surgeon was brought and asked me how many fingers he held up and I raised two fingers. He asked me to give him a thumbs-up and I did. They were all amazed and life-support was returned as needed. My wife was grieving my death in the hospital chapel already and was simply amazed! She had been told that I would die.

I was estimated to have AT BEST the mental abilities of a toddler. I was one an EXTREMELY smart man but did not type much as a toddler! Due to my 'diffuse axonal' brain injury I have forgotten most of my past. A court already declared me incompetent and my LOVING wife is now my guardian. She is surrendering her life to ministry. I may have said that I wouldn't want to live as a vegetable as my wife said I had. How many would actually choose living years on a machine over a painless death! My wife never lies and would not say I chose to be disconnected if I had not!

It is extremely obvious that life would have been easier for her had I died. I had a stroke and was left a T-9 paraplegic. I type this with one hand because I lost most use of one arm. My LOVING wife emptied my bladder and colon for two years. I am nowhere near the man I once was. My wife still cries over loosing the man I once was. That annoys me a little. I am NOT glad that I am a paraplegic and brain-damaged. I delivered my daughter into the world according to others but I have no memory of it. Who would have ever forgotten that? I can recognize my daughter but have no memories of her! DANG!

One of the leading causes of death in paraplegics is suicide! Every day I choose to live! I may have at one time felt living connected to a machine was worse than death, but I had never tried it! I have now! I have lived in a vegetative state! Although I hope to just die quickly with no pain, I now choose to live by ANY means God provides. I STILL feel it was a loving act of my wife to disconnect me when she did! It is hard to imagine loving anyone enough to give them up as dead. It would be even if the loved one thought it might be better in certain cases!

I feel I could testify to congress and help out. Keep in mind that I am 'legally' incompetent and would need assistance getting there and my speech is not too good. I could probably help the husband accept letting his wife's feeding tube remain.

Visit Curtis' web site [here](#)