Vladislav

I am 43 years old. Occupation – builder.

Two years ago on 13th May 2008, I had an ischemic attack. It all started with two weeks of constant headaches, and if not for the clinical negligence of the doctor whom I consulted, the stroke could be prevented…

The attack itself started when I was at an appointment with another doctor. It happened very suddenly. I remember only bits and pieces before I woke up in the hospital. I was in and out of consciousness. I remember mumbling something, and I remember the ambulance, and then I woke up and saw white walls around me.

Was I scared? Of course. Life is that way – you either sink or swim. Thank goodness I was alive. I was told that I wouldn’t be able to walk, but I am now walking and moving without assistance. When I was discharged from the hospital, I realized that there would be no meaning in sitting beside the window from which you could only see a lot of parked cars. I realized that I would have to choose, and I chose as my ultimate goal a complete recovery. Now I am moving forward and only forward, because there is no road back. Because if I turn back there is no reason to stay alive. Before it took me half an hour to go down the steps from the second floor, and my right hand did not listen to me for a year, but all the same I took my dog with me and went for walks around Arkadiy’s park. Nowadays everything is different. With little breaks, I can go from “Vaivari” health center to Sloka. All in all I try to walk more, because motion is life. I am proud of my achievements.

After meeting Marina Kuznecova (the representative of the “Vigor” community) everything fell into place. Various concerts, people with similar problems, special activities. But, some days, I do get gloomy and start holding a grudge against fate, feeling tired because of all those exercises twice a day. I feel angry because of peoples’ commerciality and incomprehension, but I try to throw those thoughts out of my head. Because if the stroke happened, that was God’s will which means that I did something wrong. I always remind myself that life goes on and I must take the best out of it, because the worst always exists. After the stroke, my values changed. I understood that life is not all about money, but about relationships. And I became more calm and tolerant. Before I was quite quick-tempered, sometimes even getting involved in fights. Nowadays I do not think about doing that anymore and I started to think more rationally.

I like drawing and from all the Workroom activities, I like to color in the most. In the beginning it was hard to even write letters with my left hand, but I trained hard, so now I can even solve crossword puzzles, and even can draw with my left hand the same was as with my right hand, with almost no difference between the two.

In a professional sense I do not consider what happened to me as a loss. If I am given an opportunity, I will work but otherwise it is better to acquire new skills. Before the stroke, I felt somehow spent, everything was alright but I was lacking motivation. That is why in some sense the stroke even helped, and nowadays the construction field is not that active. When I was talking with some of my former colleagues, several of them changed their occupation and a number of people even went abroad. So that is why everything that happens is a good sign. I do not really miss the manual work, but maybe someday I will return to the construction site.

After the stroke, even if I spend a lot of time doing rehabilitation, I am spending it on myself. Before when I got home I just watched TV and then went to sleep. Now my day is rich with activities. But to be honest now not all of my thoughts and wishes can be granted. I would like to learn English, earn money to travel or just simply to live normally. But my greatest wish is of course to recover then everything will fall into place. I am very happy when I see progress in my recovery because it gives me hope. And I believe that everything is possible. You just need time.

At times, I start to give up and it feels like everything is pointless – hope, is the only thing we have. I would like to tell people who have suffered a stroke to have hope. If we managed to save our lives, we need to fight and move forward while overcoming every obstacle. And if you cannot do it anymore, than just slow down, take a break and soar once again.

*The conversation was lead and recorded by volunteer Tatiana Kiryakova*

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