

**THERAPY FOR YOUR CEO**  
Marketplace Script – Final

Host intro: There is a part of your brain that's often referred to as "your CEO." It's a region called the frontal lobes (right behind the eyes), and it helps you multi-task and organize, problem solve -- have insight. These are called our "executive function" skills. But what happens IF the "boss" of your brain is somehow damaged.

Producer Mary Beth Kirchner met a therapist with rare insights into the brain's executive functions. Her training came from a patient who, quite by accident, prompted her to make this her passion.

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SEPTEMBER 21, 1994. MIKE WARD WAS WORKING AS A MANAGER AT A MASSACHUSETTS TEMP AGENCY IN HARVARD SQUARE. HE WAS RIDING HIS BIKE TO WORK ON A BEAUTIFUL, BRISK FALL DAY...THE BRIGHT SUN REFLECTING OFF THE PUDDLES FROM A RAINSTORM THE NIGHT BEFORE THAT'S ALL HE REMEMBERS OF A MORNING COMMUTE THAT FOREVER CHANGED HIS LIFE.

Mike's story: What happened was I was hit in the face with a Mack truck.

MIKE WAS THROWN ALMOST 30 FEET BY THAT ONCOMING TRUCK WHOSE DRIVER DIDN'T SEE HIM IN THE MORNING GLARE. HE WAS 26.

Ward: ...not wearing a helmet, which is not the brightest thing in the world.

FORTUNATELY FOR HIM, HIS ACCIDENT HAPPENED IN FRONT A FIRE STATION. PARAMEDICS WERE THERE WITHIN SECONDS.

Ward: I shattered every bone on the left side of my face – my whole jaw, my nose, back of my head. I had grill marks on my face.

MIKE WAS LUCKY. NOT ONLY DID HE SURVIVE A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY -- THE THERAPIST ASSIGNED TO HIS CASE WOULD BECOME HIS MOST IMPORTANT ADVOCATE.

Sarah: I was a young clinician, and I thought gee, he's talking all right, and he's doing OK on the tasks in my office. So we sent him back to work in mid-November. And he was there only two days before they sent him home the first time.

CLIENTS COMPLAINED THAT MIKE WAS CALLING THEM THREE OR FOUR TIMES A DAY WITH THE SAME QUESTIONS.

THE THERAPIST LATER SENT HIM BACK TO WORK A SECOND TIME AND THEN A THIRD -- BEFORE IT BECAME CLEAR THAT HIS PROBLEMS WERE MORE COMPLEX THAN SHE WAS SEEING IN THEIR THERAPY SESSIONS. IT WAS WHEN MIKE WARD STOPPED BEING HER PATIENT AND BECAME HER HUSBAND THAT SARAH WARD DEEPLY UNDERSTOOD...

Ward: You can't see this injury. It's the things that get forgotten over the course of an entire day -- the things that occur over the long haul and really affect a relationship and a family.

THE CHANGE IN MOOD, THE FATIGUE...THE PRIVATE STRUGGLE. SARAH SAYS MIKE AND THE HUNDREDS OF PATIENTS LIKE HIM THAT SHE'S SINCE TREATED ARE PART OF A "SILENT EPIDEMIC."

Ward: I have more individuals that walk through my door that are articulate, and they look great. And you would have absolutely no idea that they had a traumatic brain injury.

PEOPLE LIKE JUDY ASHTON...

Ambi: ...with a brain injury, I've lost my flexibility...

JUDY WAS A PROFESSOR AND MANAGING PARTNER OF A TOP LAW FIRM IN BOSTON WHEN SHE CONTRACTED WEST-NILE ENCEPHALITIS—AN INFLAMMATION OF THE BRAIN THAT AFFECTED HER FRONTAL LOBES.

Ashton: The neurologist who actually diagnosed me when I asked him what I should do to improve cognitively, he just smiled at me and put his arm around me and said go smell the roses.

BUT JUDY PERSISTED UNTIL SHE FOUND SARAH WARD.

Ambi:

SARAH SAYS JUDY IS STILL EXTRAORDINARILY BRIGHT WITH AN IQ IN THE 99TH PERCENTILE – BUT SHE CAN'T QUICKLY ACCESS THE INFORMATION SHE NEEDS.

Ward: She is like a top of the line, state of the art brand new computer that just came out on the market. And yet if she were to access the internet using that computer, it would be as if she had a dial-up modem.

Ambi:

SHE CAN STILL WRITE A LAW REVIEW ARTICLE BUT WHAT USED TO TAKE HOURS TO COMPLETE, NOW TAKES A WEEK. SHE CAN GIVE LECTURES BUT CAN'T ACCEPT QUESTIONS THAT DIVERT HER ATTENTION.

JUDY EVENTUALLY HAD TO RESIGN FROM THE LAW FIRM. AND TODAY SARAH IS TEACHING HER COPING STRATEGIES: HOW TO AVOID OVERLOADING HER SCHEDULE, HOW TO PLAN FOR TRIPS, HOW TO MANAGE HER HOUSEHOLD.

Ambi: You need to do that weekly planning – the monthly is too macro...

THERE ARE VERY FEW THERAPISTS IN THIS FIELD. SARAH WARD THINKS SHE'S PERHAPS ONE OF ONLY TWO IN BOSTON.

Grafman: We've never formally been taught this.

DR. JORDAN GRAFMAN IS A NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH WHO STUDIES EXECUTIVE FUNCTION. HE SAYS THE SMALL NUMBER OF THERAPISTS IN THIS FIELD COMES AS NO SURPRISE.

Grafman: Since we've never formally been taught this, there's not a lot of available methods to sort of borrow to rehabilitate patients who have executive function deficits, so you're really starting almost from scratch.

YET THE NATIONAL BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION ESTIMATES THERE ARE NEARLY 1,500,000 TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES A YEAR. ADD TO THAT STROKES, BRAIN TUMORS AND OTHER NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS. WHY ISN'T THERE MORE REHAB?

WELL: INSURANCE DOESN'T COVER THIS TYPE OF THERAPY. SARAH WARD SAYS PHYSICIANS DON'T UNDERSTAND THESE DEFICITS -- AND EVEN HER OWN TRAINING AS A SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST, DIDN'T ADEQUATELY PREPARE HER.

SWard: Even if you have the right training, you can't understand the experience of it until you've really met and worked with people over and over.

Ambi – Mike Ward/pool

TODAY, SARAH'S HUSBAND MIKE IS BACK TO WORK AS A POOL DIRECTOR AND SWIM COACH (Ambi: look at these swimmers!) A JOB HE HAD IN HIGH SCHOOL THAT'S STILL SECOND NATURE TO HIM. (Ambi: look at those strokes!) SCHEDULING LIFEGUARDS OR COMPLETING PAPERWORK -- IS A REAL STRUGGLE. BUT WITH THE GUIDANCE OF HIS WIFE, WHAT'S NO LONGER SECOND NATURE FOR MIKE WARD'S BRAIN -- DOESN'T DETRACT FROM HIS GOOD NATURED OUTLOOK ON LIFE.

Mike Ward: I'm the luckiest guy in the world. Some days I still laugh. Did I get hit by a truck? I'd hate to wake up if it's not real. Cause it's all too good.

Ambi: Nice! Like that, Mike? You are such a fish...

FOR MARKETPLACE IN BOSTON, I'M MARY BETH KIRCHNER.