

National Aphasia
Awareness Month!

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“Those actions which appear the most insignificant, if only they are constantly repeated, will form for us in the course of weeks or months or years an enormous total which is inscribed in organic memory in the form of ineradicable habits.”

The Education of the Will;
The Theory and Practice of
Self-Culture, (1914) pg.
209.

Jules Payot, a friend of
Santiago Ramon y Cajal
(1898), Pioneer of modern
Neuroscience.

Stroke Educator, Inc. is
committed to educating
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stroke and the 50 state
“Aim High for Aphasia!”
Aphasia Awareness
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Aphasia Insights!

Lacking “awareness of deficit” puts the cart in front of the horse.

By Tom Broussard, Ph.D.

My first assessment and prognosis (10/17/2011) ended with the words “awareness of deficit.” I knew what it meant (globally) but I wasn’t sure what it meant (locally). After a week of therapy, I started asking my therapist (in whatever words I could) what “awareness of deficit” *really* meant. She affirmed that I *was* aware of my deficits.

Of course, at the time, I was having problems just remembering the details of what we were doing! But she used *her* definition of that phrase (and I assumed that *she* thought that I thought that I was using her definition) for me to adopt.

I *knew* I was having big problems with my language. But I still didn’t know the details. I asked that question several times at various sessions but as far as I knew, the answer was still pretty much the same.

I started an inventory of my deficits, what I called “symptoms” in my diary (1/7/2012) and listed more specific deficits. Most of the words were spelled properly although it was clear that grammar and syntax were still damaged. But *I* knew what I wanted to say.

That was the beginning of understanding what “awareness” *really* meant. Awareness can

mean many things for many people, depending on the situation. In my case, I began to understand that “awareness” is a skill that needs to be learned until a critical

mass of knowledge (and a critical component of new dendrites and synapses) rises to the level of being more consciously “aware” of my deficits including new ones that I am still discovering.

People with aphasia (PWA) may give the *appearance* of being aware of their deficits but that doesn’t mean that they are necessarily aware of their deficits in any comprehensive way. It takes time and energy to build up awareness “muscles.” Being told by others that you are “aware of your deficits” but long before you are fully and consciously aware of your deficits, puts the cart in front of the horse.

