

Aphasia Insights!

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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 the wider public about stroke and the 50 state *“Aim High for Aphasia!”* Aphasia Awareness Campaign.

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Questions from the America’s Hometown Stroke Club, Plymouth, MA.

By Tom Broussard, Ph.D.

One participant in the America’s Hometown Stroke Club asked “How do I continue to heal over time?” “Can we get better after the conventional therapy is gone and we are on our own?”

I think that we get better all the time, whether still in therapy or later, when we are on our own. The problem isn’t because we need a 24/7 therapist to MAKE us get better. Therapists don’t MAKE us do anything. Our therapists can’t DO anything on our behalf. The only thing that therapists can do is alert us of the healing properties of the same enriched environment that nourished us with the skills we originally had.

Now that the language is damaged, the only thing we can do, is do what we did before. The only real difference between how you acquired language originally and now, is that you learned your language as a child somewhat

effortlessly. The brain is built to learn. That is what it does. The only difference now, after having lost your language, is that it now required effort to get better. It has been said that the five steps of aphasia recovery require, motivation, practice, practice, practice and more practice. Working alone, working with family and friends, working with other stroke survivors, and people



Plymouth Rock, Plymouth, MA

with aphasia all contribute to the energy and effort to fill-in the deficits of an enriched environment as a result of a stroke.

Finally, banish the word, stroke survivor. A survivor is one who survives or gets by. People with aphasia who continue to heal and get better become stroke *educators* who understand that “lifelong learning” isn’t just a slogan or a catchphrase but rather active words with healing properties.

How do we get better? *“A little each day is enough as long as a little is produced each day.”*

The Education of the Will, The Theory and Practice of Self-Culture. Jules Payot (1914).