LESSON #1: *Things are not as they first appear.* Your life plans may have been destroyed, but your life does not end because of the changes that were forced on you. You can’t always choose what happens to you, but you always get to choose how you deal with it. Consider your future to be filled with possibility. Believe your life has a Divine purpose.

LESSON #2: *Surrender.* But don’t give up. Surrender means quit fighting for that which will never be. Let go of the past - it is gone. Let go of the hopes and dreams that were destroyed and find new ones. Let go of the cheated feeling you are holding onto because your life is not going to turn out according to your plan. Get busy building your new life.

LESSON #3: *Turn and face the unknowns that your future holds - one day at a time.* Take advantage of every opportunity to improve your health, your attitude and your abilities. Be mindful that you do not attach negative emotions to trying new approaches, learning new technologies, experimenting with different medications, or exploring new treatments. Stay emotionally neutral or attach hopeful expectation.

Concentrate on how to make it through one day. When you have mastered one day, plan how to get through one week. When you’ve mastered one week, expand your planning to include two weeks, then three, then a month, and so on.

LESSON #4: *Never give-up or lose hope.* Take the Tortoise Track – it doesn’t take a lightening pace, slow and steady wins a race. Daily consistent effort – small steps repeated consistently over-time produce magical results. Practice patience, tolerance and determination.

Overwhelmed? Don’t know where/how to start? Identify one thing that would make the biggest difference or one thing that would make you feel happy. Do it. Repeat. (Tip: Doing something that makes you feel happy often leads to also doing that one thing that makes the biggest difference.)

LESSON #5: *Adopt a thriver attitude.* Commit to be teachable by asking yourself, “What did I learn from this? What can I do so this doesn’t happen again?” Develop personalized systems or strategies that work best for you. Use the rule of three to test for effectiveness. (Third time’s the charm or three strikes and you’re out!) Tweak and test again. ~ *ASK is not a four-letter word.* Help is available if you will ask.

LESSON #6: *Things don’t always go as planned.* Expect to experience unexpected difficulties when you break your normal routine, start a new venture, or expose yourself to a new experience or unfamiliar environment. Re-assure your self-confidence by acknowledging that it is not realistic for you to always pre-determine difficulties or equip yourself with strategies in advance. Snags or setbacks – both are part of the natural process of growing and maturing (two steps forward and one-step back).

*Develop a sense of wonder.* Everyday events have significance and purpose. Pay attention so you will notice opportunities and be guided to resources that could improve your situation. Listen to and trust your “little voice.” Believe in miracles. Be willing to try new things and take risks.

LESSON #7: *Practice a daily recovery habit.* Use pacing to protect against rapid wear-down. Take regular breaks to restore your physical and mental energy. Quiet your mind and breathe deeply. Drink water. Learn coping strategies. Use movement, music, or nature to outwardly release stressful emotions. Develop your sense of humor. Incorporate play and fun into your life. Laugh for no reason.

*Things are not as they first appear.*