

## **JUST A SECOND AGO: *The Brad Livingston Story***

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation. Featured are:

**INTRODUCTION:** A brief description of the program and the subject that it addresses.

**PROGRAM OUTLINE:** Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

**PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION:** These sections will help you set up the training environment, help you relate the program to site-specific incidents, and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Questions may be copied and given to participants to stimulate discussion about the program, its safety lessons and universal theme.

### **INTRODUCTION**

"Just a second ago I was walking and happy, healthy and normal. Now I'm laying here fighting for my life." This is how Brad Livingston describes his reaction to being involved in back-to-back explosions at work. When he decided to violate procedures, participate in a shortcut and condone the unsafe actions of a co-worker, his world was literally blown apart in a matter of seconds. As Brad was engulfed in flames, he fully expected to die, but thoughts of his three young daughters inspired him to fight for his life. In this motivational presentation, Brad humbly points out how his choices and decisions that day contributed to the death of a co-worker, life-changing injuries to himself and unimaginable grief and trauma to his wife Bobbi and their three young daughters. To prevent others from making the same mistakes he did, Brad motivates his audience to maintain a proper safety perspective and helps them truly understand why they must work safely every day.

### ***PROGRAM OUTLINE***

#### **HIGH SCHOOL**

- "I want to start today by telling you a couple of important things that happened to me in high school," Brad says. He began running cross country and met a girl named Bobbi.
- They decided to get married as soon as they got out of high school and moved away from their hometown of Elkhart, Kansas.
- Brad joined the Air Force and played every sport he could while in the military: racquetball, tennis, volleyball, basketball, softball, etc. "Whatever it was, if it was a sport, I would play it. And I ran, every opportunity I had. I loved to run," says Brad.

#### **EVENTS LEADING TO BRAD'S ACCIDENT**

- After completing his service in the military, Brad moved back to his home town and went to work for a natural gas company in the pipeline department.
- He says he really enjoyed the work because he was almost always outside and had a wide variety of things to do.
- One day, Brad was assigned to help senior welder Tracy with some welding assignments at some remote company locations in Oklahoma.
- After completing one job, a company pumper approached Brad and Tracy and asked them to schedule a repair on pinhole leaks around the fire tube on a well's two drip tanks.
- When the pumper told Tracy he'd inform the supervisor that the leaks would be fixed, Tracy said, "No, you don't need to get a hold of your supervisor. I'm going to do it today while I'm here and we'll surprise him."

- After Brad checked the atmosphere with his gas monitor at the well, he asked Tracy, “What’s going to keep a spark from getting inside one of those drip tanks?” Tracy told him that the pumper said that the liquid level was high enough to put out a fire that resulted if they burned through the tank.
- Brad and Tracy didn’t check the tank’s liquid level and assumed the information the pumper gave them was correct. “Any time you do something to save a few minutes, and that’s all we had done, we wanted to save just a few minutes by not having to go up to the catwalk. So we didn’t gauge the tanks,” says Brad.

### **THE EXPLOSIONS**

- Because there was no grinding or brushing for him to do as a helper, Brad didn’t bother to put on his gloves. He rolled out the leads for Tracy to do his welding.
- Tracy finished his weld on the first tank and moved to the second. After speaking briefly with a supervisor, Brad walked toward Tracy, who was lying on the ground welding.
- Brad heard a sound in the tank and knew it was going to explode. “I hollered at Tracy, ‘It’s going to blow! And just then, blew’.”
- The explosion that came from the tank threw Brad into the air, through a ball of fire and onto the other tank. “When I landed there, I couldn’t believe what had just happened. I couldn’t believe that I had just been involved in an explosion at work. Those things happen to other people, not me,” says Brad.
- While Brad’s clothes were on fire and he was engulfed in flames, he was more concerned about his three daughters at home than he was about dying.
- When he started moving towards the catwalk to get down off the tank, it also exploded. “Threw me back up into the air, again I have no idea how high I went the second time, but this time I landed back on the ground on the opposite side of the tank that I started out from,” Brad says.
- Although he was in great shape and had been a distance runner for 18 years, Brad only had the strength to roll three times to get away from the fire. “The heat had taken all my energy. My left leg was broke and so it would just flop every time I rolled. And all I did was make it to the edge of the flames,” says Brad.

### **BRAD IS RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL**

- As Brad lay there fighting for his life, he wondered what had happened to Tracy. Finally the ambulance arrived, got him loaded and headed to the hospital.
- “As soon as we got on the road, I said a prayer and when I said “amen,” that’s the last thing I remember for two and a half months,” says Brad.
- About the time he arrived at the hospital, something just about as bad as the explosions started happening, according to Brad. “That is the family started getting notified.”

### **BRAD FIGHTS TO SURVIVE HIS INJURIES**

- Upon arriving at the hospital after the explosions, Brad was flown from the hospital to the Burn Intensive Care Unit. After being assessed, he was taken into surgery to set his broken leg; the bone was shattered beyond repair and had to be replaced with a steel rod.
- The morning after, Brad was put on a respirator for breathing trouble and a physician informed his family that he had suffered third-degree burns over 63 percent of his body. By adding that number to his age of 32 and subtracting the total from 100, the doctors gave him a five percent chance of surviving.
- Over the next two and a half months, Brad had six skin grafts on his legs, hands and parts of his side and back. He received more blood transfusions than any three patients combined that they’d ever had at the Burn Intensive Care Unit.

- Because of the amount of tissue that had been burned off of his body, his bloodstream had absorbed some of the contents of the tanks after the explosion. “I found out later those blood infections were serious enough they could have been fatal just by themselves. My kidneys quit working for about a month, so I was on dialysis. And then, of course, I got pneumonia,” says Brad.

### **THE EXTENT OF BRAD’S BURNS**

- Brad had to go into a de-breeding tank twice a day to remove dead and dying tissue, which can cause infection and must be removed so skin can be grafted to live, healthy skin.
- Even though he was unconscious and on morphine, Brad still would try to scream as a result of the pain involved in scrubbing all of the raw exposed tissue. “Miracle number one to me is that I don’t remember any of that that went on while I was unconscious,” Brad says.

Bobbi had the nurses wrap his face and head with gauze so the girls couldn’t see what he looked like at that point. They had the option of coming back and standing next to his bed or stand on the other side of the glass wall and look at him.

- While Brandi and Kayla put on their gowns to go back, Sara made the decision, “Since he’s going to die anyway, I don’t want to go back and stand next to him laying on that bed. I don’t want to remember him that way.”
- “What was that like for her in fifth grade to make that decision?” Brad asks, “What did that do to her, to have to make that choice?”

### **BRAD ASKS WHY HE & TRACY HAD TAKEN THE SHORTCUT**

“Why did we do what we did that day?” Brad says he asked himself. He also asked why they had taken that shortcut and had not gauged the tanks; they both knew better than to do that, to assume information we had been given was correct.

- “Why had we skipped over talking to the supervisor, who I can guarantee you would have never allowed us to strike an arc in the field. That was against company policy. Why did we do that?” Brad asked.

“Why didn’t I do more to stop Tracy? I thought it was an unsafe act. I told him so, but that didn’t do enough to stop it,” Brad said at the time.

- Brad later discovered that Tracy had welded the new fire tubes on the tanks six months before the explosion with a wire feed welder notorious for leaving pinholes. A co-worker had seen the pinholes at the shop and informed Tracy, who said he could patch them up but forgot to do it.

- “When we were over there welding that day, as soon as he was told about these two tanks with pinholes in them, all of the sudden he remembered being told about them while they were still in the shop. He was too embarrassed to let any one know. He had too much pride,” says Brad.

- “He didn’t want anyone to know that he had been told about those pinholes. So the plan was just to weld over them, fix them in the field and no one would ever know. It killed him,” Brad concludes.

### **COMPLACENCY & SHORTCUTS**

- “Guys, I’ll tell you what I think our biggest problem is most of the time,” says Brad. We think we’re bigger and stronger and faster and smarter and it isn’t going to happen to us.”

- It’ll happen to somebody else. You are “somebody else,” according to Brad. “If you start thinking it can’t happen to you, you will become complacent, and when you become complacent, bad things happen.”

- “We don’t have the right to decide for other people what they would prefer we do on the job when it comes to taking unnecessary risks,” says Brad. “If you take a shortcut at work, you have decided for your family it’s okay with them for you to take that shortcut and risk your life. You don’t have that right.”

## **BRAD UNDEGOES THERAPY**

- Four months after the explosions, Brad was sent to San Antonio, TX where he would undergo five hours of therapy a day.
- Two hours each day were spent working with his legs, which he couldn't even pick up off the bed by himself. "I lost too much muscle. The muscle that was left had atrophied because I hadn't used it for so long," says Brad.
- He also had two hours per day of occupational therapy on his hands, "which were pretty much balled up into fists when I got to San Antonio," according to Brad.
- "I had one hour a day of recreational therapy working with my mind," Brad says, "Making me play games and think and use my brain, and taking me out into public getting used to being looked at."

## **THE EXPLOSIONS & ANTIBIOTICS DAMAGE BRAD'S HEARING**

- About five weeks after arriving in San Antonio, Brad's hearing went "from normal to nothing in a period of three days. An audiologist found he had suffered permanent nerve damage and would have to wear hearing aids the rest of his life.
- When Brad asked why, after five months, this had occurred, the doctor told him that while the two explosions undoubtedly had caused some damage, there were certain antibiotics "that if you take too much of those antibiotics, they can cost you your hearing."
- "Those were the only antibiotics they could use to fight the blood infections I had," says Brad. "You use too much of them, they cost you your hearing and sure enough they took their toll on me."
- Brad says that he's told God on a lot of occasions "if he wants to do another miracle on me, I want my hearing back before I even want normal hands. Helen Keller said that 'loss of eyesight separates people from things; loss of hearing separates people from people.' It's the absolute truth."
- The \$5,000 digital hearing aids Brad wears don't come close to giving him normal hearing. "I can be sitting at our diner table with my family and can't understand their normal conversation," he says. "I've had to learn to read lips and try to put the two together; I might be able to get 60 or 70 percent of what's been said and try to figure the rest out."
- He adds that conversations go on around him that he can't join in because he's not sure what's been said. "I can tell you it is the most debilitating handicap I have," says Brad.
- "You all may work in an environment where you have to wear hearing protection around loud noises; I hope by all means you do it," Brad says. He also notes that hearing protection is just as important when you are around loud noise away from the job.
- "You can only protect it (your hearing) while you have it; once you lose it, you cannot get it back. And like I say, it is by far the most debilitating handicap I have," concludes Brad.

## **MENTAL TRAUMA, THERAPY & PAIN**

- Brad says after he got to San Antonio, the mental trauma became tougher to deal with than the physical trauma. "My wife had to get an apartment, had to get furniture rented, had to get the kids enrolled in school. My daughters had to leave our little town of 2,200 and relocate to San Antonio, TX, a city of over 1.2 million people."
- "Because I got hurt at work, my family had to completely uproot their lives and relocate and that was hard to take. Mentally, that was hard to with, what I was putting them through, what I was forcing them to go through in their lives because I took a short cut at work; I did not stop an unsafe act," continues Brad.

- He also started finding out what the permanence of his injuries was; he would never be able to play sports again, never have straight fingers again and how many more surgeries he was going to have. “I learned more and more about the permanence of everything I was going to be living with for the rest of my life,” says Brad.
- When he asked the doctor if he’d ever be able to run again, the doctor replied, “No, you’ve lost too much muscle from your legs, especially around your knees. They’ll never be able to support your body weight if you try to run.”
- “It was like a kick in the gut. Everyday, I found out something else I was going to have to live with for the rest of my life, because I got hurt at work,” says Brad.

### **JUST A SECOND IS ALL IT TAKES TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER**

- Imagine never being able to engage in your favorite hobby or enjoy vacation, Brad says, because you took a shortcut at work. “Or you drove a little bit more like a maniac to get two or three minutes ahead of where you needed to be and had an accident.”
- “Just a second, just a second, I know a shortcut that can get this done. Just a second ago, this wasn’t broke, now it is,” continues Brad. “Just a second ago, I was fine and happy and healthy enjoying my job, now I’m laying here fighting for my life.”
- “Just a second is all it takes to change your life forever, maybe even end it. Just a second is all it takes for you to raise your hand and say, ‘Wait a minute; I don’t think this is safe.’ Explain to me how we’re going to do what we’re about to do and no one is going to get hurt, no equipment is going to get damaged. Just a second and it’s totally up to you, individually, every day to make those decisions,” Brad concludes.

## **PREPARE FOR THE SAFETY MEETING**

Review each section of this Leader's Guide as well as the videotape. Here are a few suggestions for using the program:

Make everyone aware of the importance the company places on health and safety and how each person must be an active member of the safety team.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Copy the review questions included in this Leader's Guide and ask each participant to complete them.

### **Here are some suggestions for preparing your videotape equipment and the room or area you use:**

Check the room or area for quietness, adequate ventilation and temperature, lighting and unobstructed access.

Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the videotape program.

## **CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION**

Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

Explain that the primary purpose of the program is to illustrate how Brad's choices one work day contributed to the death of a co-worker, life-changing injuries to himself and unimaginable grief and trauma to his family while motivating viewers to maintain a proper safety perspective and help them truly understand why they must work safely every day.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline. Copy the discussion questions included in this Leader's Guide and allow the participants to review them and then conduct a discussion about the program.

After watching the videotape program, the viewer will be able to explain the following:

- What mistakes Brad and Tracy made that led up to the explosions;
- What injuries Brad's body endured and how he fought to survive them;
- How Brad was overcome with frustration and despair as a result of his therapy;
- How just a second in choosing to perform an unsafe act can change your life and your family members' lives forever.

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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Have you ever allowed your negative perspective of your job influence how you performed one or more of your job tasks? If so, why?
2. Have you ever gone along with a co-worker who wanted to take a shortcut to complete a job task? If so, why did you agree and what could have been the consequences had something gone wrong?
3. Which of his injuries did Brad consider his worse? Describe why he felt that way.
4. How would injuries such as the ones Brad suffered affect your family and loved ones? What changes would have to be made to accommodate your condition and your family's lifestyle?
5. How do you think Brad would have responded to his therapy and recovery had his wife and daughters not been so supportive?