Ahmadi, Amir

In my senior year of high school, I suffered a motor vehicle accident. I spent two weeks in a coma, one week in intensive care, and two weeks in brain recovery. During my therapy, I was asked to compute the integral of e^x with respect to x. I instantly replied, "$e^x + c$." I had retained my long-term memory, but problem-solving became a larger mental hurdle than I could have imagined. When I was rolled into my brain injury program, my exercises for physical therapy were simple compared to my problems for speech therapy.

These questions were surprisingly difficult because I thought I could still solve the problems of advanced math competitions. My analytic overconfidence was further inflated when I helped my fellow brain injury patients with board games. This was until I rolled my wheelchair to a patient-accessible computer to view one of my former online problem-solving accounts. I chose to not view my previous solutions, because I thought I could again solve these problems. I was stunned by the difficulty of the questions while consciously remembering having solved them with ease. Before viewing what I had previously posted, I concluded that if my long effort was now unfruitful, the solution must show that the answer just does not exist; however, the clever manipulation of pre-calculus tools performed by my former self swiftly ended my overconfident fantasy.

I was struck by humility and benediction. My mother, a high school math teacher, never left my side. She patiently motivated me to overcome my redefined mental endowment. I was able to re-learn how to logically understand problems by exercising mnemonic devices and other memory techniques. After a few days of fast re-development, I was rolling out of the brain recovery unit to begin the school year at home.

My time in home school was expedited. The one visit from my home instructor was rearranged so that I was able to explain the concept of a limit and how it defines the derivative of functions in order to provide the home mentor with his long-desired understanding of calculus.

My time in emergency care and brain recovery showed me how often young men and women do not continue their lives after traumatizing accidents. Learning of this reality with grieving families transformed my thankful rejoicing to painful questioning. What right did I have to survive such a severe head trauma?

During my time as a patient, the one thing I remember wanting the most was to apply my mathematical ability to provide the **greatest** benefit to future generations. I realized that my life's passion is to provide opportunity for others via mathematics. I will utilize my talent for teaching others how to have fun with mathematics, regardless of their preconceived feelings about math. **This** I believe.