

## Manuela Messmer-Wullen: 50-year-Old Professional, Austria

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50-year-old, Stroke Survivor

Time since stroke: 9-10 years

My story:

I had a brilliant job and enjoyed my work. I was on a foreign business trip and one morning I tried to jump out of bed and fell on the floor. I tried to stand up but fell again. I had to rock on my stomach to get to the bathroom and when I saw my face which was totally damaged on the left side, I realized something had happened with my brain. I was very angry, panicked and tried to get back to the telephone. When I got there, I couldn't read the numbers to dial. In panic I tried everything to get somebody on the line and was lucky someone answered. I managed to call for help but then lost consciousness. I was in intensive care for over six weeks and in rehabilitation for over six months without going home.

My family visited me at the weekends and in their spare time. I wouldn't have achieved what I have if they had not been with me. It was really hard work to become the person

I am today but I am not the same person as before. This is a very big problem, but I am so glad that I can move, think, react and handle the telephone. After 18 months I went back to work and realized that I couldn't. When the phone rang, I couldn't remember what the person was calling me for, his or her name, what I should do or what my job was. It was very difficult. Things have really changed because money is nothing if you can't move, if you can't enjoy life, if you can't visit friends or participate in sport. "My family, partner and kids think I am fine now, fit and can do nearly everything for myself. Of course, they can't understand that my brain has changed.