

ALAN BRESLAU'S TIPS AND STRATEGIES  
FOR BURN SURVIVORS



SURVIVE  
AND THRIVE

# Forward:

This is a collection of thoughts and beliefs from the American burn survivor Alan Breslau, compiled by his loving wife, Delwyn.



Alan Breslau was a chemical engineer when he was severely burned, at the age of 37, in a plane crash in 1963, Rochester, New York.

# 1963

During this accident, he suffered burns over 45% of his body, losing the top of his head, an eye, an ear, his nose, and several fingers. He spent 5 years in the hospital. He underwent more than 80 surgeries.

# 1977

He founded what would become the largest support organization for burn survivors in the United States, the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors.

Alan's philosophy and positive outlook on life have helped –many say “saved”– thousands of burn survivors around the world.



Alan died in 2020, at the age of 94, in New Zealand.

The optimism and gratitude he shared continue to inspire and transform the lives of many today.

May his philosophy help you, too.



# The Phoenix

Burn injuries damage more than the body, they scar both the spirit and the soul. No matter how well one recovers from the wounds, the person you once were is no more. This is why I named the Phoenix Society after the Phoenix, the mythological bird that burns up in its nest and rises reborn, even more beautiful than before.



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Alan Breslau

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# The advantages of a different appearance

Many people try to look unconventional and different, but they can't compete with those who are dramatically changed by burns.

There is nothing extraordinary to do to stand out in the crowd: people will notice you and remember you just as you are.

It is totally up to you whether you use this attention positively or negatively.

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Alan Breslau

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# Use the stares

The curious stares of the public are not intended to be rude. They are unaware of what exactly has happened to you. Empathize with them and take control confidently of these encounters by being the first to initiate a conversation.



“Would you like me to tell you my story?” is a good starter.

You will very soon make a brand-new friend!

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Alan Breslau

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# Your power

If your face deviates from the average, regardless of the cause, remember:

**YOU** have the power.

You can give the power to strangers, or you can keep it for yourself!

In a society where physical beauty is prized, keep in mind that high self-esteem will **NEVER** fade with time.

# A word of advice

Being disfigured often has the same effect as being beautiful. It is an instantaneous attention-getter.

Make the most of it by projecting a confident, friendly, and outgoing personality and you will immediately make a positive impression. People will always remember you!

This alone can have many positive advantages for you.

# Beauty in every moment

Look on every day as a celebration and instead of waiting for happy endings – open your eyes to the wonder of life and see the humor and magic in each moment!  
Always delight in the way things always turn out and be amazed at the beauty of it all!

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Alan Breslau

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# Your secret weapon



Smiling is a powerful tool. People can't help smiling back at someone who smiles.

If you haven't experimented with the smile weapon, try it!

You will be surprised at how effective it is.

————— Alan Breslau —————

# You have the choice



Life is all about choices.

Happiness is a DECISION and a conscious choice – a unique ability with which we humans have all been blessed.

We can choose to be miserable.  
We can choose to be happy!

Let each day be fun and choose your attitude:

**CHOOSE** to be happy!

Don't dwell on what you can't do,  
but on what you CAN!

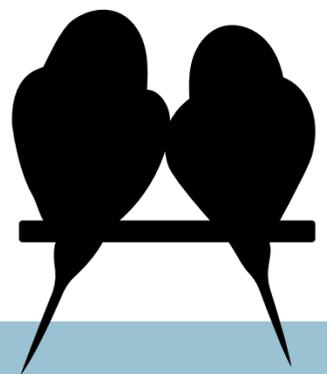
————— Alan Breslau —————

# Healing

There are three great healers in life:

- time
- purpose
- love

Give yourself some time,  
Find a purpose,  
Find someone to love.



# Your story

Take every opportunity to tell  
your story.  
Honor it, whatever it is.

————— Alan Breslau —————

# The scars

We are NOT our disfigurement.

Wear your scars with pride  
as “badges of courage”.

————— Alan Breslau —————

# Reciprocity

How a person is treated is determined by how they treat the world.

————— Alan Breslau —————



# Citation

Eleanor Roosevelt said:

“Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

————— Alan Breslau —————

# Heroes

We are victors of circumstances,  
not victims.

What we have now is life!

And life is everything!

————— Alan Breslau —————



## Delwyn...

Delwyn confides that she literally fell in love with Alan's mind because of his outgoing, joyful and confident personality. He walked the walk and he talked the talk. She was so in awe of what he had been through and how positively he had coped that they became each other's best friend, confidante, and partner for over 32 amazing years.



“Alan always maintained that being burned was the best thing that ever happened to him because he was certain that he would never have had such a happy, fulfilling, and enriched life, had he not been burned.”

Delwyn Breslau - 2024



If Alan could say anything to you today,  
he would tell you this:

**“NEVER give up on finding  
someone to love.”**





There IS someone out there  
FOR YOU.

Alan Breslau

And remember...

# You are loved

The existence of this collection is proof of that. Those who have contributed to this booklet have thought of YOU.

You are loved and accepted just as you are.

You are surrounded and supported, creator and hero of your own story.

Stephanie Romeo



*Stephanie Romeo*

Every other year, Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors brings together burn survivors from all over the world, their loved ones, medical professionals and firefighters for a profoundly unforgettable few days of inspiration, connection, and healing at the Phoenix World Burn Congress.



Produced by burn survivor Stephanie Romeo  
in collaboration with Delwyn Breslau.

With the support of:



More information and helping resources, visit  
[stephanieromeo.com](http://stephanieromeo.com)

[CLICK HERE](http://stephanieromeo.com)



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