

**This is a great piece that was sent to me by a fellow speech pathologist.  
I am not sure where they found it, but if you had a stroke, please read on.....**

The 5 “-tion” words below are important factors in stroke recovery that come from inside you. Each factor plays a role in recovery, though having all 5 is not a guarantee of success if the brain injury is too severe or the goals are too big. Can you identify which factor might be hindering progress in you or your client? Recognizing the problem is the first step to improving it!

**Let’s see how these 5 personal factors can impact stroke recovery:**

## **1. Recognition**

In order to improve, first you must have awareness that there is a problem. If you think you speak just fine, it’s highly unlikely you’ll put in the time and effort required to change your speech. Some stroke and brain injury survivors are unaware they have problems with communication or cognition, a condition called anosognosia, so when they come to therapy, they don’t understand why they’re being asked to do the tasks. Building insight into the problem is an important first step in rehabilitation.

## **2. Motivation**

After you recognize you have a problem, you must have the desire to change. If you know your speech is slurred but don’t care, why would you put in the time and effort to improve it? Some people lack motivation because they’re suffering from clinical depression, while some strokes physically damage the neural networks and dopamine pathways that control motivation. If you are feeling chronically unmotivated to improve a known impairment, talk to your doctor. And remember, it’s the person with the problem who must want to change – not just their family.

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### 3. Determination

Having the desire to change is a great start, but you also need the resolve to do the work. Changing the brain is possible with repetition and time. There are no easy fixes, so if you really want to change, you have to be prepared to put in the effort – especially when it gets hard. Setting up small tangible rewards for yourself along the way can keep you moving forward when changes in your communication are harder to see.

### 4. Direction

You know there's a problem, you want to change, and you're ready to work hard – now you need a road map. This is where having a good therapist can help you set realistic goals, helping you know where you're going and how to get there. You'll receive instructions, exercises, or activities to help you improve. Don't waste your time and money on snake oil; focus your efforts on evidence-based treatments that are known to work.

### 5. Conviction

Deep down, you have to believe that change is possible. Hope is a powerful drug that makes therapy so much more effective. Some people hear from their doctors that they won't get any better after 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year... These timelines are untrue and can destroy hope. Hope alone won't make you better, but without hope, progress is rare.

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