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MY TURN

■ **Wayne Chan**



A clear enough mind to know I was insulted

Apparently, vanity has no limits. Unfortunately, this is what I've discovered about myself.

Let me explain.

And I have to start off with some bad news first. This past October, while I was asleep, I suffered a seizure. I know this, because in the middle of the night, I woke up in bed with two paramedics standing over me telling me they were going to take me to the hospital.

I believe my first reactions were: "Why do I have to go to the hospital? Where is my wife? And why are you two guys in my bedroom in the middle of the night?"

After they explained I'd had a seizure, and particularly because I felt awful because of it, I thought it best to let them take me to the hospital. It's good that I felt that way because at the time, I didn't seem to have much say in the matter.

My wife Maya kept me company in the ambulance. For the next few hours at the hospital, I was poked and prodded any number of ways by nurses trying to figure out what had happened. In the end, I was told it was likely a singular event, but I would have to get an MRI to inspect my brain to be sure there wasn't anything they needed to worry about.

The only problem with this was the doctor told me that, according to policy, anyone who suffers a seizure must have it reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). And apparently, one automatically loses driving privileges until an MRI, your doctor, and the DMV approve you to drive again.

So, for the first time since I was 15 years old, I was grounded. I couldn't go anywhere unless my wife could take me or if I could bum a ride from one of my friends or neighbors.

Now, with plenty of time on my hands, I started doing some research to better understand some of the potential reasons why people have seizures in the first place. As I soon discovered, a number of things seemed to make sense.

What are the most common causes for seizures? Stress and lack of sleep.

Stress? The day I had my seizure, I was planning and hosting my uncle's memorial service. I gave the eulogy, drove out-of-town guests to the venue, and attended to the meal after the service. Check.

Lack of sleep? For the last four months, as my uncle's health was deteriorating, my brother and I

spent many days figuring out ways to keep him comfortable. Check.

In any case, if I was going to earn my driving privileges back, I had to get an MRI.

For those of you who have never had an MRI, here is my best effort at describing it.

It's as if you are beans and rice being rolled up in a flour tortilla and put inside a wrapper. Then for about a half-hour, you lie on a gurney wrapped in blankets and pillows with a mask on your face and placed snugly into a tunnel contraption that seems best suited for, well, a human burrito.

Fortunately, no one was going to douse me in salsa and guacamole after the procedure.

So a week passes after the burrito-like MRI experience. Having not yet heard back from the doctor, I give him a call.

The bottom line was that it was good news. My brain function is fine.

But here's where the vanity part comes into play.

After caring for a sick family member, after mourning his passing, after organizing his memorial service and respecting his memory with close friends and family, and after suffering a seizure and losing my driving rights, upon hearing the good news that I was OK, one would think I'd be elated, jumping for joy, and thankful the future looked bright, right? Not exactly.

It wasn't that he told me I was going to be all right. It was *how* he told me.

I believe the exact words were, "It's good news, Wayne. Your brain function is fine ... for someone of your age."

WHAT THE @#!%* IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? I didn't actually say that, but I was sure thinking it.

What he was trying to say was that while there were some changes he could see in my brain, it was something everyone my age would have, so I was perfectly fine.

My question is, if I'm perfectly fine, why couldn't he just say it without adding the "for someone of your age" baloney? Because in my mind, I translated his words as, "You've got some level of brain function right now, but at your age, who knows how much time you have left before your mind goes kablouey."

I probably shouldn't share that with him, though, or he might want to put me back into the burrito chamber.

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