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A new book shares how gratitude transformed a 37 year-old massive stroke and put her on the road to recovery

What do you do when you think you're on top of your game and suddenly, without warning, life as you know it comes to a screeching halt? How do you cope when life-changing events leave you feeling hopeless? These and other questions are addressed by Mia and Myrtle Russell in their new book *The Stroke That Touched My Heart: How Gratitude Transformed a 37 Year -Old Massive Stroke Survivor*.

Thirty seven year-old Mia Russell was a vibrant nurse and known around the area for her unique crochet designs, a hobby she enjoyed as much as she liked taking care of sick babies. But that all changed on January 9, 2017 when she was blindsided by a massive stroke that landed her in the hospital for 52 days, leaving her permanently disabled. After her discharge from the hospital, her mom, Myrtle, became her caregiver and motivator, working diligently to help her daughter adjust and not become discouraged and give up on life.

The Stroke That Touched My Heart chronicles Mia's year-long journey of healing and it all began with learning to be grateful in all things, good and bad. It is more than a stirring story; the book is a tool that offers hope to anyone who has faced a life-changing event, whether it is a medical diagnosis, loss, trauma, or any personal crisis. In the book the reader will find:

- Examples of gratitude lessons learned by Mia and Myrtle
- Questions to guide you into starting your own gratitude journal
- The opportunity, through daily practice, to experience the hidden gifts of gratitude
- The discovery that gratitude is truly transformative

The book's premise is that when you work on gratitude, gratitude works on you: it changes you on the inside and when you change on the inside, life changes. By getting Mia to focus on what she had left rather than what she had lost, gratitude gradually transformed her and put on the road to thriving. Even though she has no use of her right arm and hand, on the two-year anniversary of the stroke, Mia began crocheting again, this time with her non-dominant left hand and left knee. She has not returned to nursing but neither has she given up hope that one day she can. Mia states in the book, "The stroke may have attacked my brain, but it also touched my heart in ways that I never imagined so I believe that more good things will happen for me." Her mother Myrtle adds: "The words in this book were written in the spirit of gratitude and we are a testament to the

belief that what flows from the heart never returns void. Not only did Mia's stroke touch her heart, but it also touched the hearts of family, friends, and co-workers. Read our story, be inspired and let it put you on the road to a more grateful and fulfilling life, one small change at time."

The Stroke That Touched My Heart will be released on Saturday, June 8, 2019, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Doubletree Hotel, 770 Highway 45 Bypass, Jackson, TN 38305

About the Authors

Mia was a high school honor graduate, attended the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, a graduate of the Tennessee College of Applied Technology and a Licensed Practical Nursing. She has also enjoyed working as a phlebotomist and lab manager. She learned to crochet at the age of six and prior to the stroke, loved creating unique designs.

Myrtle is a public health administrator who is as passionate about her work today as she was thirty years ago when she began working in Health Promotion. Writing has also been a life-long dream for Myrtle and in 2005 she co-authored her first book with her son, Cameron, a professional trainer and coach: *small change: a 28-day guide to eating, thinking and feeling healthier*. In 2013 she authored *Free Your Mind and the Best Will Follow*, and in 2014 she and her son teamed up again to co-author *small change - BIG RESULTS: the Trainer's Guide to eliminating Childhood Obesity with Sports*. Myrtle holds a B.A in Psychology and a M.A. in Counseling. She is also a certified life coach, Licensed Practical Nurse, and loves to crochet.

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