

Don't waste a moment!

A close shave with death taught Kevin to seize the day



Marilyn and I went into business together

bedside while I was in a coma.

The doctors had no idea what state I would be in when I woke up, if I woke up.

"He could

have varying

degrees of memory loss; he may not recognise some people; he may even need to learn how to do everything all over again," they said.

I belonged to the Manaia Volunteer Fire Brigade, and the members and other locals really rallied around my family during that month.

The lawns and garden were kept neat and tidy, and whenever Marilyn needed help, they were there - I'm so grateful to them for that.

It was during that month I had a near-death experience.

I arrived in what I can only describe as a white waiting room. My mother-in-law, Elaine, who had passed away a few months earlier, and my late brother, Peter, were there.

They told me I wasn't sick enough to stay and I had to go back.

That was the first thing I told Marilyn when I woke up. "You know who I am?" she cried.

"You're my wife!" I replied.

Everyone was ecstatic that I could talk and my memory was okay, but there was still a long road ahead.

I stayed in hospital for a few weeks before I was allowed to go home and start rehabilitation and physiotherapy.

The next two years were spent seeing specialists, physiotherapists, and getting my strength back.

I loved being an electrician.

For more than a decade, I helped people fix their washing machines, fridges, lights, and other things we rely on every day.

I enjoyed working with my hands, meeting new people everyday, and leaving them happy because I had fixed their problem.

In 2002, I was promoted to service manager for a new workshop opening in Stratford, about 30 minutes' drive from Manaia, where I lived with my wife, Marilyn, and sons, Rodney, then 11, and Michael, eight.

"New beginnings," I said, kissing Marilyn goodbye before my first day on the job.

That afternoon, I was installing the lights and power points in the workshop when I fell off the ladder.

I can't remember what made me fall, but I knew

I had one hell of a headache when I hit the ground!

Wandering into the office, I collapsed onto a chair.

"My head really hurts,"

I said to Cheryl, the office manager.

"You have blood coming out of your ears, I'm going to call an ambulance," she said.

I can't remember anything from that moment on.

The medics established I had suffered a severe head injury, and I was airlifted to Taranaki Base Hospital

"He may not survive the trip. I would say my goodbyes if I were you," a nurse told Marilyn.

"I lost my mother five months ago, I'm not losing my husband too," she cried.

The surgeons opened up both sides of my skull and successfully stopped the bleeds, but it was touch and go.

"It was at the stage where we all agreed you weren't going to survive it, and we talked about stopping," a

A scan showed I had two massive bleeds in my brain

in New Plymouth, where Marilyn, my parents and family met me.

A scan showed I had two massive bleeds in my brain, so I was flown to Wellington Hospital for emergency brain surgery.

surgeon told me afterwards.

"I decided to carry on just a little bit longer, and amazingly, you pulled through," he said.

Marilyn and the boys, as well as friends and family, spent the next month at my