

DAILY NEWS

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BODY & SOUL

A promising sign



THEN AND NOW: His brother didn't give up on a comatose Steven Benvenisti.

Family's encouraging words were heard

The first thing Steven Benvenisti did when he heard about the functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) study was call his older brother, Bruce.

Benvenisti was 21 when he was struck by a drunk driver and thrown 75 feet into the street. Mangled and comatose, Benvenisti's injuries were so severe that doctors began discussing organ donation

with his parents.

But Bruce wanted to know if it would hurt his brother's chances to play a tape recording of his loved ones cheering him on.

The tape played almost continuously for the 10 days Benvenisti was in a coma. "Continue the fight," Bruce told him, alluding to their days playing high school football together.

Though he has no recollection of hearing the recording, "when I came out of the coma, I started to talk to people about things that were on the tape, which I just think is wild," says Benvenisti, now 37 and a successful practicing attorney in New Jersey.

"I love that part of the story," he says. "It never had any significance until this study came out."

J.L.

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