

# Better After Stroke - Sheri McIntyre

Sheri McIntyre believes that she is better after stroke. Sheri feels this way even though the bleed in the brain due to an AVM (arteriovenous malformation) that ruptured when she was in her early 50's has caused deficits including vision issues, balance issues, and speech issues.

Socials:

[www.instagram.com/compassionate.snob/](http://www.instagram.com/compassionate.snob/)

[www.facebook.com/CompassionateSnob/](http://www.facebook.com/CompassionateSnob/)

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Sheri 0:00

Not like how we used to be I think I'm better than I used to be. And I also think that the doctor made my brain better.

Bill 0:11

How can you say that? How can you be better than you used to be? You're dizzy, you can't talk properly, your eye doesn't work the same. How can you possibly be better? What kind of thinking happens for you to get to that stage? That's weird.

Sheri 0:26

No, it's good. It's a good thing. Because I see things so much differently now. And

I'm also about education. And so I wasn't before, it's probably because I was Go go go all the time working. And so when I stopped, I just saw things that I didn't really pay attention to before probably.

Intro 0:54

This is recovery after stroke with Bill Gasiamis helping you go from where you are. To where you'd rather be.

## Introduction



Bill 1:02

Bill from [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) this is Episode 107 and my guest today is AVM stroke survivor and compassionate snob, Sheri McIntyre. Even though the bleed in Sheri's brain cause deficits including balance issues, vision issues, and speech issues, Sheri believes that she's better after stroke. Sheri describes her new voices sounded like actor Matthew McConaughey's accent.

Bill 1:28

Now when you get to the end of this episode whether you are watching on YouTube or listening online on your favorite podcast app, please do me a favor and share this episode in other groups you hang out in, this will help someone that is doing a tough at the moment perhaps feel a little better about the journey that they are on.

Bill 1:44

Also, if you feel that this podcast makes a massive difference to you and the stroke community please do me a favor and give the show a five star review on

iTunes or wherever you download your podcasts from. Part of the reason I make these podcast episodes is to share stories of stroke recovery, and the aim is to share all parts of stroke the good, the bad and the ugly.

Bill 2:06

In the more than eight years since the first bleed on my brain I've spent a long time discovering what supports stroke survivors to heal their brain. And all this information is going into a course called 10 steps to brain health the stroke survivors. Module One is available now and module two will be released just a few days after this podcast goes live.

Bill 2:26

This is a course that is included as part of my recovery after stroke coaching program that will help you overcome fatigue, reduce anxiety and support your memory amongst other things. This 10 step program has been created to complement any medical interventions and works in conjunction with any other therapies that you are undergoing.

Bill 2:45

So if you are a stroke survivor that wants to know how to heal your brain, overcome fatigue and reduce anxiety, this course is for you. If you feel like there is not enough support after you leave the hospital and you're afraid that your recovery will go backward then this is where I can help. While you are participating in this course I will coach you and help you gain clarity on where you are currently in your recovery journey.

Bill 3:09

I will help you create a picture of where you would like to be in your recovery 12 months from now and I will coach you to overcome what's stopping you from getting to your goal. To find out more go to [recoveryafterstroke.com/coaching](http://recoveryafterstroke.com/coaching). And now it's on with the show.

Bill 3:24

Sheri McIntyre welcome to the podcast.

Sheri 3:27

Hi, how are you Bill? Thanks for having me. It's so nice to be here.

Bill 3:34

It's lovely to have you here too. Now, you're the first guest I've ever had that wears two pairs of glasses at the same time. And I thought it was just a joke, but it's not a joke. It's serious stuff. Tell me why you need two pairs of glasses at the same time?

Sheri 3:54

Yeah. Okay, well, I have a prism and one of these Right? And so I wear these over them to read so I can see close up. So I wear them a lot when I text on phone or computer and things like that. But I have to wear these. I never wore glasses before, but one eye is not even a little off. So I need a prism lens. So, we have these two.

Bill 4:24

The first pair fixes that prism, it fixes the eye being out of the right height. And then the other pair helps you read like a normal person supposedly.

Sheri 4:38

It just magnifies they're only magnifiers. I put over these so I can see better. Like when I text.

Bill 4:49

Yeah, there's an amazing invention waiting for some smart optometrists to create a single pair, that fixes all those issues for us.

Sheri 5:02

Yeah, so I sometimes forget that I have them on and so I talk like this because of the stroke. I had to learn to talk all over again. So I sound like I'm from South Carolina. But it's not that, people ask me, where are you from? I go. You don't want to know. Wrong question.

Bill 5:33

So what happened to you?

## **Stroke caused by AVM rupture**



Sheri 5:37

I had an AVM rupture a brain bleed, right? So they gave me a craniotomy down the back of my head that I don't even know how gruesome it was. And so, I have a big (inaudible) back here. They shaved my head. So there's a lot of things that they did to me, but I came home and everything was different everything. What I'm kind of upset about is that there is not enough knowledge out there.

Sheri 6:18

That's why you do what you do. Right? Yeah. And I wrote a book. I have no idea how I wrote that by the grace of God. That's how I wrote that. I don't know how I wrote it I don't know. I get home and I kept saying I'm gonna write a book. No one believed me mind you, they just appease me. They said okay, okay, yeah. I'm gonna write a book.

Bill 6:53

How old were you when you had the AVM burst?

Sheri 6:57

51 I think, yeah 51.

Bill 7:03

Wow, how many years ago was that? Do you mind me asking?

Sheri 7:06

Four?

Bill 7:08

Awesome. Well you have one of the most impressive scary I'm not sure scars that I've ever seen of a stroke survivor. That scar in the back of your head is one of the biggest I've seen.

Sheri 7:19

Yeah. It was very brutal. I've been told because my cousin works in the hospital and some girl was in, the operating room. And she said that it was gruesome. So I don't know why he chose to some of that. But he did. I don't want to hear it.

Bill 7:46

Have you seen it?

Sheri 7:50

What my scar?

Bill 7:51

Yeah. Have you seen the photo?

Sheri 7:54

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Because in my book, Anyway they shaved my head. And I have a scar right from here all the way down the back of my neck. So I used to say to people want to see my elephant, because I thought it looked like an elephant trunk. But, I thought that it had pink rhinestones for staples.

Bill 8:32

What do you mean pink rhinestones? Like Is that what you thought?

Sheri 8:36

Yeah, I thought that I don't know where that came from. I'm not blingy at all. I'm not that type of person. But, I thought I go everywhere I go want to see my elephant? And I'll show them my scar and I thought because I could not see it when it happened I saw the pictures much later because as I saved the drugs, I was on very heavy medication right in the beginning, so I don't remember a lot, but I do remember saying to people wanna see my elephant? And I thought it was pink rhinestones. But it wasn't it was staples as someone asked me how many staples I had in there and I don't know. I don't know it was a lot though.

Bill 9:34

It was seriously was a lot now other than your speech you obviously had your

speech affected what else was affected your eye we know about what else was affected.

Sheri 9:44

Well, like my equilibrium is very, very off. I'm like dizzy it's so hard to describe. I'm dizzy all the time. Like you know how a kid when you take your kids and give them an airplane ride, you grab their leg, their ankle and you spin them around. And then you put them down. That's how I feel like all the time. That is the only way to describe it. Or I also feel the other way I describe it. It's like a cinderblock on my head like imagine carrying that around all day, every day. And that's what I do.

Bill 10:34

Yeah, that's really interesting.

Bill 10:37

Yeah everyone have different symptoms I know.

Bill 10:41

Yeah, you and I, we had a couple of discussions about you and what happened to you before you came on the podcast in messenger on Instagram. And one of the things that I mentioned was that study by Paul Bach-y-Rita a scientist, that's Passed away now, who discovered how to retrain the tongue to become the center for the balance.

Bill 11:09

And the person that he was helping was somebody who had damage to the inner ear. And as a result of that their balance had been gone. And then they were able to retrain this person to use the tongue to take over that task. It's neuroplasticity. It was amazing, right?

Sheri 11:26

Yeah. That's wonderful.

Bill 11:29

Have you spoken to somebody about helping you to overcome your balance issues further? Has there been anyone that can help in that area?

Sheri 11:38

Not really. I don't know. I haven't really looked into that. I go to a chiropractor, and she can help me but she doesn't do neuro chiropractic, right. And there's a place but it's hard for me to drive I pass around town I couldn't drive before. So for me to drive is a big, huge thing. So I drive a little bit around. I don't go far though, and the place that I have to go is far and I'm working, and it's a couple of days that you have to be there.

Sheri 12:22

So, it's hard for me to do that. But I want to, but I will someday because now, I am learning more and more and more about this. And that is why I wrote the book because there wasn't enough information given to me. I don't feel like but it's about it's for everybody. I don't think there is enough information given to other people either.

Bill 12:50

Yeah, absolutely. There isn't. I mean, there is a very common lack of there's a concern by all people who I speak to in stroke recovery, whether they been recovering for 10 years or 20 years or five years, there is definitely a concern that there isn't enough information out there. And that people have to go on their own search for information, how to heal, how to recover.

Bill 13:15

And I suppose maybe it is our responsibility to do the kind of work that we're doing so that we can help because if there is a problem, and you can't solve it, because there's nobody else helping out, then we've got to take responsibility for that and create communities that are easy to find and easy for people to come to. And I think that's starting to happen now.

Sheri 13:41

And guess what, that is how I found out that information, but when I was able to look myself, I had to rely on my families to help me and they were so overwhelmed with everything right and they did the best they could. But what's hard, it's describing, what you feel like what your symptoms are. So they had to go back to their jobs. So I was alone. I'm on disability, I can't work and I hate that. And so I'm finding out a lot of things because now I can use technology to find out before I couldn't. And that is a big, huge thing.



# How the stroke happened

Bill 14:35

Yeah. So, you know, when you had the stroke, what were the circumstances around that? Were you alone? Were you with some family? What happened there? How, did you discover that you were about to have a stroke?

Sheri 14:48

It happened I didn't even know no one knew I had one. I went to the bathroom it's New Year's Day. I went to the bathroom. And so I guess I didn't feel right or something. And my daughter knocked on the door. I didn't want to scare her. I said, Go get your father, because I knew something's wrong. Right. And I came out of the bathroom, and my hands start going like this uncontrollably I said call the ambulance and that was that, I fell and I was out.

Bill 15:25

That was it. Wow. So sudden before that, did you have any idea that maybe there was something going on in your head, no headaches, no nothing.

Sheri 15:37

Nothing it's weird it says an AVM you know grows into the artery veins going and it just couldn't handle it anymore the veins couldn't handle it. The flow of blood flow so they ruptured, and it happened in my cerebellum.

Bill 16:05

It happened in your cerebellum, I had an AVM that was near the cerebellum, and it affected lots of things at the time. So how long did it take for you to recover your speech and be able to talk again?

Sheri 16:20

Well, I could talk a little bit but I didn't know. Like, because I was on such heavy medication. And so I used to have no filter, none, I would say whatever to whoever and that was a little bit of a problem. Cuz as you see, I have a big mouth. Like I love to talk. And I will say things like I don't like you to people like and now I wonder why I don't have many friends. I probably pushed them all away.

Sheri 17:05

I'm a brat. But you have to be to get where you want to go. No, you don't have to be. But I'm fun. I should say, I'm laid back. I'm a brat. But, in a fun way, I would

never hurt anybody's feelings on purpose.

Bill 17:24

Yeah, I understand. And you're still in recovery mode, your brains not working properly. So it's not your behavior is probably due to a lot of the stuff that's going on in your head. And it sounds like your personality was affected for a certain amount of time.

## **I'm better than I used to be**



Sheri 17:43

Yes, it was, but now it's back. I know right from wrong, all that kind of thing. But neuroplasticity, I didn't have it before. So you know, it's getting better. And one thing I want to stress that I did not know is that it takes so long for the brain to heal, to get better. So, like, you know, be able to be normal if there is normal, I don't think there is. But back to the way not like how we used to be I think I'm better than I used to be. And I also think that the doctor made my brain better.

Bill 18:36

How can you be better? How can you say that? How can you be better than you used to be? You're dizzy, you can't talk properly. Your eye doesn't work the same. How can you possibly be better? What kind of happens for you to get to that stage? That's weird.

Sheri 18:52

No, it's good. It's a good thing. Because I see things So much differently now. And I'm also about education. And so I wasn't before, it's probably because I was go,

go go all time walking. And so when it start, I just saw things that I didn't really pay attention to before probably.

Intro 19:20

If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. Like, how long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid? In case I make matters worse, doctors will explain things. But obviously because you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 19:44

If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) where you can download a guide that will help you it's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke. These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke. They'll not only help you better understand your condition, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery. head to the website now, [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) and download the guide. It's free.

Sheri 20:32

And so now, I'm like, oh, I have a lot of experience.

Bill 20:40

Sheri could you do that beforehand? Did you have to have a stroke to get to that point?

Sheri 20:46

Yeah, I guess I does. Yeah. So not that it's a good thing, but it is a good thing. I am a better human being for it and that is why, I named the book Compassionate Snob, I found out a I'm much more compassionate than a snob which I never really was a snob. But that is a play on words, right? Because I tried to act like I used to work at a high end hair salon and all these women come in right? And so I acted like no, I'm better than that. I don't care. But everyone when they go out, I find wears mask and they kind of not like the two selves and so I was like that. But now I'm not.

Bill 21:57

Yeah, I know what you mean I can relate to being a better version of myself after the stroke because I started to do things that I hadn't done before that I always wanted to do. You know, I apologize to a lot of people. I said, Sorry, a lot. I did all those things, you know, and I made sure that I became basically somebody who I think my kids could look up to, and they could trust and they could be proud of, because I wasn't terrible before. But when I reflected, I wasn't maybe 100% living my truth. And I didn't like that.

Sheri 22:36

That's how I was with my daughter. I would do things a lot differently than what I did. People think that material things are what matters, but it's not just the other way around. It's not about I always said, this is about what kind of person you are. Because that is why on Instagram, I'm like, I don't care. I don't wear makeup or whatever. I'm real. I'm real. And a lot of people, I think aren't that way. And so, it's about what kind of person you are, not what you have, not makeup, hair, all that. That's ridiculous.

Bill 22:38

Yeah, I agree. I think there's a place for it as well. But it depends on why you're doing it if you're doing it to impress other people, or to fit into a particular group or a crowd. It's not really an enjoyable thing. And I'm talking about it from my experience, you know, when I used to try and pretend I was somebody that I wasn't to hang out to fit in group of people. I felt like well, you know, my head was giving me all this information about how amazing it was to be there. But deep down, I knew that that was no fun. And those aren't real friends.

Sheri 24:03

Oh, I learned. You're right. I learned I can't point at people that not nice. I learned that through this whole experience? who your friends are, real friends are, did you?

Bill 24:21

Yeah, absolutely. Some went missing. A lot of them went missing and ones that I wasn't expecting actually turned up and they did the most they helped the most. They were the most amazing. And they were people that were around for a long time, but we just never used to see each other a lot. But yeah, they stepped up in a big way. And I didn't ask them to they just did and it was so refreshing. And you know, they are always were great people. And now I know why.

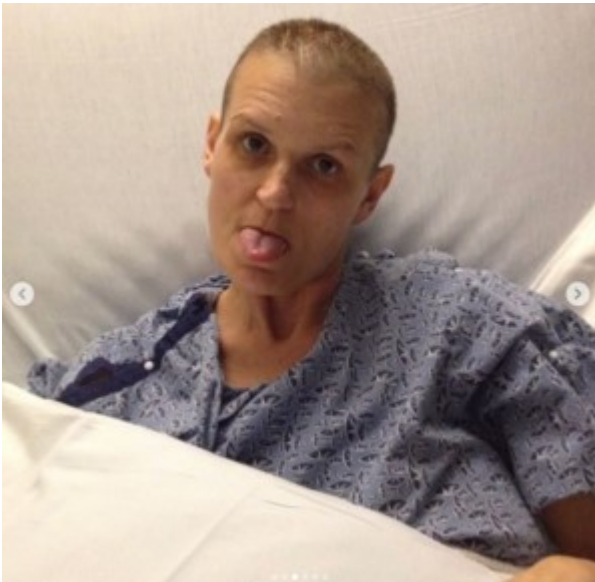
Sheri 24:53

Yeah. Oh, yeah. And so I see people so much differently now and now I'm like, I have a big thing always go by now, actions speak louder than words, because you can say whatever you want. But action I go by people's actions, even for myself. If I say I'm gonna do something, I'd do it. It's about your integrity as a person.

Bill 25:27

Yeah, I agree. You know, when you woke up from surgery, and you started to get better, and you noticed your voice was different. Did you have any concerns about that? Were you embarrassed by that? Or did you feel any kind of strange stuff going on because your voice sounded different?

## Dealing with the changes after stroke



Sheri 25:49

No, I didn't. And I used to say to people, I used to, like fix my pants like step on them and talk a little bit and go I'm like Matthew McConaughey, he is an actor, you know him. He, like has a twang right? So I sound like that. And so if you don't like it well, sorry, your loss.

Bill 26:21

Yep. Have you had people respond to you differently because of the way that you talk? Do they make assumptions about who Sheri is?

Sheri 26:33

I don't know because I don't see that many people. So I'm not concerned with like, how they think? I don't have time for that.

Bill 26:45

Yeah. What do you have time for?

Sheri 26:50

Learning stuff. Learning and writing and music and my family and that type of thing. And not enough hours in the day, because I have to learn everything over again. And I cannot write with my right hand. So I learned to text or type or whatever with my left hand. So I am trying to learn technology, but I have a hard time learning to something so it's a lot slower for me to do. Everything is slower. But I try like hell to get keep up.

Bill 27:34

Yeah, you sound like you're a go getter for sure. Tell me about your husband. Like what kind of a man is he? Is alright like did he do a good job helping you out?

Sheri 27:49

Oh, yeah, yeah he did. And, everyone in my family did, but after what I think They didn't know because I was always the type to be strong for them. I knew that if I laid back and like, I could do that if I want to but it's not fair to them. You have to be the best person you know, it's not a fear to make someone else take care of you. I do things and stuff. I said, No, no, no, I'll do it myself. And that is the only way you're gonna learn how to do things. Because I have gone to things I say I'll do this, oh, no, no, go sit down. Other people do that to me. And I don't like that.

Bill 28:49

Yeah, I know what you mean. It's about regaining your independence and not having people assume that you're not capable of something and coming from a lovely place they're trying to be, you know, loving and caring and they don't want the worst for you. And they're doing all these things for the right reason, potentially, you know, but I, know what you mean, because when I go somewhere, and there's escalators, the stairs that move, then on the and then on the left side or the right side of those, there's actual stairs.

Bill 29:23

I'll go to the stairs and walk up the stairs. It's harder. It's more annoying, it hurts more, but I do the stairs because I can because I one day I couldn't. And now I can. So I'm going to make sure that I'm not going to go up the escalator the lazy way. I call it lazy now. I talk about it as being something that I can do. So I'm

going to do it. I'm not going to miss out on doing that. And if I get tired, I'll stop.

Bill 29:50

And if I need to hold on to the rail I'll hold on to the rail, like I know exactly what you mean there's an easy way to do things and there's a hard way to do things and I don't like to take the easy way out. But if I'm really really tired, really, really fatigued. I'm not silly. I'm not going to do something that's gonna make it difficult for me. or dangerous. I'll do the right thing. But, but I know what you mean.

Sheri 30:16

Yeah, you know your limitations. Like the other day, I thought, Oh, well, I just took it easy. And like steam bed and Putz around, right. I didn't do much. That was the wrong thing to do. Because the next day I suffered for it. So you always have to move always have to keep like I exercise. And I go for walks and things like that. I'll never did that again. You have to move you have to move. You have to because if you don't use it, you'll lose it. You know that thing.

Bill 31:01

Very true use it or lose it. I know. And it's true. I had lost a lot of those things. And I used to struggle reading and typing an email and all that type of thing. And my words would be mixed up when I was typing the email. The letters would be all over the place.

Bill 31:17

But I just kept doing it. And at one point, a couple of lines of email might take me five or six hours, because I didn't have a sense of time. So I'd be sitting there typing an email. That was important or not important, didn't matter. And then the whole day would be gone. And I didn't even finish the email yet.

Sheri 31:39

Yeah, not funny. It's not funny. Well, it was kind of funny.

Bill 31:45

Yeah it wasn't then but it is now. And then I could have given up and said, This is too hard. I'm not gonna do that anymore. can't be bothered sitting here for a whole day to type three lines on an email. What I'm going to do though, is practice and practice and practice and that is what slowly made my brain recover the ability to do that. And I didn't get concerned that I couldn't do it. It was frustrating. But it was like, Oh, well, I can't do it. I'm going to try again. And I'm

going to try again and we'll see what happens.

Sheri 32:17

Yeah, and that's what I did. You have to try. That's the only way you're gonna get better. But to a better place you transform. Right? So that is the only way you're going to get to a better place. Or I could stay where I was. But that is no fun. Who wants to do that?

Bill 32:43

Yeah, I agree with you. Did you have children?

Sheri 32:48

Yeah. One she was 16 at that time and so my book I wrote a little bit about her but I don't put people's names in there because they did not ask to be written about and I don't think it's fair to them. So I don't put names.

Bill 33:12

Yeah, fair enough.

Sheri 33:14

I don't mention them a lot, I don't talk about them a lot.

Bill 33:18

Yeah, how did she deal with her mom being so unwell?

## **Raising kids while recovering from a stroke**

Sheri 33:26

Awful. And that I think was the worst part. But now she's alright. But I think at that time, cuz I did everything for her. But this is now what I learned. I wouldn't do as much for her because they're not doing anything to help them. You have to let them do it themselves. And even though they struggle. Let them do it themselves. That is my biggest mistake I made as a mother, but now, I know.

Bill 34:06

So you're one of those mothers, the helicopter parents.

Sheri 34:11

Oh, yeah. And now I'm not.



Bill 34:20

And now how is she transitioning. She's becoming a different version of herself. She's gone from someone that didn't have to lift a finger to somebody that has to do some things.

Sheri 34:29

It's hard for her, I'm sure. But I think that she sees that me and my husband are go, go, go, right? And so she's coming along.

Bill 34:51

I was gonna say she's a teenager. My kids were teenagers at the time. And they're terrible 10 agers are terrible all the time regardless of whether they're mom's well, the dad's well or not well.

Bill 35:03

They play that role. And then every once in a while, you do have to stretch them and give them some additional responsibilities. And my kids, they weren't keen on having additional responsibilities. They just wanted life to be normal.

Sheri 35:18

Yeah, It's very hard. I think to them. They are in a phase that stage where they're all self-consumed everything about them, and then they have a sick parent. That means hell I needed a lot help at the beginning.

Bill 35:45

Do you experience fatigue? How are you doing these days as far as energy?

Sheri 35:51

Well, the one thing I thank God for is that I'm not in any pain. I don't have headaches. But I do get fatigued but not like, I don't know, because some people talk about this wicked fatigue. There's my New England accent. Wicked. And I get tired yeah, but like I have to lie down, but I'm not like, I can't move but I know when I'm getting fatigued. I don't talk as good.

Bill 36:32

Yeah. Have you noticed the recovery continuing slowly? Year on year, month on month? Have you noticed it all the time?

Sheri 36:39

Yes. Cuz I would not get to be at this point. If it hadn't pushed myself. Cuz I do a lot of things now that I didn't before. But in my book, I wrote about that. What I learned and I want people to like I want to help people learn what I didn't know. And so I think it's so important for caregivers, I think to know because no one can read my mind, simple things, simple things that we didn't know. But I could take care of myself. I had to rely on everybody else. Because I couldn't do anything I couldn't even think correctly.

Sheri 37:35

So I had to rely on others. And a lot of the people now they're using technology, which is wonderful. And but the other generation like my parents and things, they didn't use it. So there's big gap. Oh, this is what I want to say. I got excited. This is a good tip for people, I go to exercise at the senior center. So my sister is a social worker.

Sheri 38:08

And so she said to me, she go, Sheri why don't you go to the local Senior Center and exercise there. They'll come and get you because I couldn't drive. So they would come and get me and drive me to exercise and drive me home. And so, Oh, God, you have no idea how important that was? Because that's my social life. Not only is it because it's physically isolating. And you can get very isolated. And, but that was my outing. Exercise. Going to Local Senior Center, and I still go there.

Bill 38:54

Yeah, good on you. You seem very upbeat, very positive. Do you have bad days? Do you have those really dark days?

Sheri 39:03

Oh, yeah.

Bill 39:06

What happened? What do you feel like what do you notice?

Sheri 39:13

Just I'm moody something like that. But I just stay away from a big party. But I don't the one good thing is I don't have many bad days. And I don't know why. I'm lucky. I'm very grateful for that. Because I hear of so many people having bad days. And I don't. Of course, I do sometimes, but not often.

Bill 39:47

That's great. I know what you mean. I'm mostly upbeat. I think it was my personality always to be upbeat and to be always half glass full kind of guy and I think that helped me In my stroke journey because that meant that I was already primed in that way I was already looking for those good things. And the mindset that I had made it very possible for me to overcome all the challenges that I experienced, and still I am experiencing.

Bill 40:20

But I still did have my bad days. And I think I get worse when I get tired. When I get tired, my brain is in really dark places, and I can behave inappropriately, and I could be nasty. And I could do all sorts of things and it's thought who I prefer to be. So it's really about resting and taking time to recharge and then get back to my full energy level. So do you miss driving and all those things that you can't do? Do you focus on any of that stuff at all?

Sheri 41:02

I choose not to, because why go back? Why do that to yourself? So I just go forward. I do not like driving, far I don't like it, but that's where it is right now. And so like we had to drive into Boston, all right, for few appointments, and I can't do that. And I feel so bad for people. I have to go with them. I can't believe it anyway, but I feel bad for people. And that is the problem because I'm more compassionate thinking about people than myself.

Bill 41:48

Uh-huh. So you need help you want somebody to drive you for example to your appointments, but you don't want to ask

Sheri 41:55

Yeah, yeah.

Bill 41:56

Yeah. I understand.

Sheri 42:01

I don't want to be needy, like, I need you. I 'd rather do everything myself. But I know sometimes you have to but I'll ask if I have to, because I am going I have an appointment to go see a cerebellum specialist. And that's in Boston. And my sister took me I don't know now, with this whole shutdown thing which is awful. That's

another thing. Like, are you doing that too?

Bill 42:40

Yep.

Sheri 42:42

And but I think people that are stroke survivors, they kind of used to it. So they did the isolation thing beforehand.

Bill 42:57

Yeah, that's interesting because I was asked about that, and that's what I said, I'm used to it. It wasn't anything strange or different. I know it's going to end. I know that we'll get back to work and all those types of things. However, some people who are having to recover from stroke right now don't have the experience that we have that haven't got the distance, and the learning that they got from five years ago. They're going through isolation and stroke isolation at the same time. So it's been really difficult for some people.

Sheri 43:31

Yeah, I understand that. I already went through that.

Bill 43:41

Yeah. Especially if I can't get to rehab.

Sheri 43:45

Yeah. It's hard. A lot of people that are stroke survivors have already been through that. So we're good on that end I think that a lot of people now are learning. Their eyes have been open because they stopped. So now that same thing that they didn't do before.

Bill 44:10

Yeah, I agree with you. I love your approach to recovery. I love your approach to life in general, with the fact that why look back, just look forward. I think it's important for some people to look back to be able to perhaps heal some wounds, some challenges that they've faced that are causing them problems in their present so that they don't take that to their future.

# Positive recovery mindset

Bill 44:37

But I just love the way that you go about your recovery. It's all about you know, how do we get better by overcome and stop focusing on the things that aren't helping us and focus on the things that that can support us because when you focus on something negative, you can't focus on something positive or something helpful, and that takes time away from you being able to put into this positive thing that you can do.

Sheri 45:04

Yeah, because I have to learn a new skill all over again. Because I can't I used to be at work in a hair salon, and I used to be a stylist. But I can't do that anymore. Because I can't use hand good. I can't cut hair and stand all day and zip around.

Bill 45:32

Imagine they let you go back to work with the scissors in your hand what could happen to that person's poor head?

Sheri 45:40

I don't want to know they'd have an elephant truck. No, I don't know what would happen. But it probably wouldn't be good. But what I am good at is I'm creative. So I just harness that energy and do something else. Like I wrote this book, and I decorate really good. I'm in the process of decorating my area, my deck and outside for summer because you know, that's going to be where I'm going to be all summer.

Bill 46:20

It might as well look pretty. I agree. Make it as comfortable as possible and make it feel a little bit different if you can, because if you're spending a lot of time there, you might as well enjoy it. If it's dry, then it won't be so enjoyable.

Bill 46:37

Yeah, I have a little courtyard in my house. And because of isolation, we can't go out as much and we can't be in cafes and restaurants and all those things that we used to do to hang out with our friends. So I'm going to put up some little outdoor lights to make it feel like those fancy cafes so that when I'm out there just feels like a fancy cafe in my backyard.

Sheri 47:02

That's what I do too, well my husband did for me today. outside.

Bill 47:12

Well, there you go.

Sheri 47:14

Yeah, that's good.

Bill 47:15

Yeah. I love it. It makes you feel like you're somewhere else not at home because we don't normally see that in people's homes.

Sheri 47:23

No, not at all but that's good. Because you have to have a little fun. And like, what you can do? I just, mess around with things that I always found things to do. Always, people who say they're bored I'm like, What? You have a million things to do now with technology you can go on, you can learn you could exercise you can learn this and learn that that's a whole bunch of things to do.

Bill 48:00

Yeah, there's more things to do now than there ever was. And that's for some people a problem as well, because there's too many things to do. But I know what you mean. Yeah, absolutely. I'm always finding something to do. And even if it's something minor, like just repotting a single little plant, you know? Just putting some new seeds in the ground or something like that anything, it doesn't take a long time. It doesn't cost a lot of money. And it gives me something to do at every day every day, I have to go back and make sure it's got water and do all that.

Sheri 48:34

Yeah, it's good. You can watch it grow. That is a big thing. Like people, you have to grow. You can't stay stagnant, but you should grow. So that's what we're doing.

Bill 48:54

Yeah, absolutely. I agree. Hey, when you were in recovery, what was it like to Learn how to walk again. Was that easy? Or did you have some challenges trying to get back on your feet?

Sheri 49:07

Oh, it was hard. And yeah, it was scary. In this book the reason why I write think think, right? I have bookmark think, because now I can a lot of people don't use their brain as your own human computer. So you have to use well, you don't have to use your brain you can just zone out, I guess. But, my physical therapist came over here. They did a home evaluation, and she put down duct tape everywhere I should go right. And I was a good patient. I wouldn't do what I wasn't supposed to I went by the rules.

Sheri 50:06

But there was duct tape everywhere I had a wheelchair and a walker and then a physical therapist came over to my house right a different one. And she said now we're gonna practice not with the walker because I could get up right but the walker and but I remember going to rehab with a walker, right? I would hold on to it for dear life cuz if I didn't have that, all bets off.

Sheri 50:47

And so then they switched me from a walker to a cane. I remember my physical therapist took me outside and give me cane and say okay, now we're gonna practice I was like, Ah, no. She go yeah, I go no. Right. I was so scared to do it. I was afraid to fall. But it took me a while to walk. And so I just recover but it's just like a baby. I'm a baby.

Sheri 51:26

I think a lot of people who have strokes or babies, they're back and have to really learn everything over again. But like you said, neuroplasticity you can learn. But it's scary because you know, the ramifications if you fall or hurt yourself with something. Which as a baby I don't think you know it. And so I had to learn everything over pretty much.

Bill 52:00

Are you comfortable getting around the home now quite safely?

Sheri 52:03

Yeah, I can walk. It's cuz of exercise. But sometimes if I'm dizzy, I'll hang on to the wall. I went into my daughter's bedroom to check on her. She goes, why are you leaning up against the wall? I was in a corner. I go because the wall is right here. And I'm leaning up against it for my balance. Because I think what happens

is, a lot of people forget that you have a stroke. Because you look like you're fine. You probably have this too all the time. And so, um, it's an invisible illness, right?

Bill 52:54

Yeah, for a lot of people that is if you're not in a wheelchair or wearing a prosthetic or something. People don't see it. And it's kind of good. And then it's a little bit difficult because you have to continue to explain to people what the what the issues are.

Sheri 53:11

Yeah. That's why I wear this all the time Brain Aneurism Foundation. They endorsed my book back here, right? But I wear this all the time to tell people because I'm not shy about it. I talk about it all the time because I'm trying to educate other people right? Like, for instance, I was at a grocery store, and I was getting something printed at kinkos from my book across the street, right. And the lady in the ticket line said to me, (inaudible) something from my book.

Sheri 54:03

She goes, oh what are you writing about? I go brain aneurysms and stroke and that kind of thing. I go, Why? She goes, that is what my brother died of. And she goes I have a brain aneurysm also. Yeah. So everywhere I go, this has happened to me more than three times I think at different places. And because I talk so much to other people, I think it's much more prevalent than what people think it is. They don't talk about it. Well, I do. I talk about it all the time.

Bill 54:51

I good on you. I think the stats about the amount of people who have a stroke worldwide is one in six people will have a stroke. in their lifetime, like it's huge.

Sheri 55:04

Yeah. And I don't know why. Well, people are starting to talk about this community now. People are doing things by that. And what we have to do is educate people about it. Plain and simple.

Bill 55:23

Yeah, there's not a lot of education.

Sheri 55:24

And you're doing that.



## **Not enough support for stroke survivors**

Bill 55:25

Yeah, you too. And there's not a lot of education happening. In Australia. There's a lot of bodies who are trying to do great work, and they are doing some great work. But there's still not enough about it. You hear about multiple sclerosis gets spoken about all the time. There's fundraisers, annual fundraiser, which are great. And then you hear about cancer survivors. They do fundraisers for every kind of cancer and that's great.

Bill 55:52

But you don't hear about a stroke one you never hear about a stroke one and it's a real challenge because there is so many people are affected and stroke affects people forever. And 30% of people who have a stroke will have a psychological challenge, mental health issue challenge, you know, 20% of people will pass away like, the statistics aren't that good, but for some reason, there's not a big conversation about it. And that's what I'm struggling with.

Sheri 56:25

Yeah, and I don't know why. There's not enough information out there because people need desperately, this information, and they don't have it. And that is where I get upset about.

Bill 56:43

Yeah, one of the things I think of is because it's invisible in a lot of cases, and a lot of people don't notice it. And same with mental health issues. You know, we are starting to hear people talk about it. But the reality is, is that people with mental health issues, you can't see it and when you can't see If you make assumptions that they look fine, they must be fine.

Bill 57:03

You know, and it's not really sexy to talk about mental health issues. And I know that that cancer is not sexy either. But, you know, it's mental health issues are completely invisible and people can't relate to it at all. And they're still afraid to talk about mental health issues. Because there's a big stigma.

Sheri 57:26

I don't have mental health issues. I'm forever grateful for that. But I know that

people that do and it's awful, what they have to live through. It's awful. And so I am a big, big believer in talking about it. Don't hide it and talk about it because that is the only way and I'm a big team player because I learned that it's the only way you're gonna impact other people is by being a team.

Sheri 58:06

You can't do alone. Just like people let the stigma of brain health, TBI, whatever mental health we need people to talk about it. Don't be so isolated everybody. But I think it's changing because I think people like, the older generation, how we were raised by parents was keep quiet about that thing. And now we're like, uh-uh.

Bill 58:45

That doesn't work well. Just makes things harder.

Sheri 58:48

No. And then, then you really feel alone, and I don't want anybody to feel alone.

Bill 58:57

Yeah, fair enough. How long did it take you to write your book?

Sheri 59:03

Two years. and look at this.

Bill 59:08

How many pages?

Sheri 59:10

100?

Bill 59:11

Well, that's okay. That is like, wow, that's like 50 pages a year. That's, one page a day, though. If you think about it, that's one page a week.

Sheri 59:22

Yeah, it took me a long time to do. It took me a long time because I would go with this. And I didn't know how to use a computer good. But I have a pretty funny story.

Bill 59:22

Yeah, that's one page a week. And at the end of that you had 100 pages. And it just goes to show you if you start and you just keep being consistent, you get to the end, and you look back and you go, wow, I've done this. It's taken two years, but I actually physically have done it and there's a book and now people can buy it. Where can they buy it from?

Sheri 1:00:05

Amazon it's in my link on my Instagram. And I am reading it on Instagram. I'm reading it two people not a lot. It's only like a couple of pages.

Bill 1:00:26

But it's an easy read. It's called *Compassionate Snob: Washing off the Fake* by Sheri McIntyre. Is it Sheri or Sheri.

Sheri 1:00:39

Sheri.

Bill 1:00:49

I love it. At Amazon people can buy it from \$9.28 this is not a promotional video, but I feel like I need to tell somebody on Kindle It's only \$9.28. Anyone can buy that hardcover is \$19.99. And paperback is \$12.34. Now, if somebody wanted a signed copy, can they get one?

Sheri 1:01:17

If they want, well what I did? Yeah, I guess I don't know. I'll sign it, but I had a book launch. And I had a raffle which I gave all the money to the Brain Aneurysm Foundation I tried to raise money for them. And but what I did I have a stamp, and I stamp it. Yeah, because I can't write good. That's pretty good.

Bill 1:01:51

That's a very quick way to sign books without having to worry about getting tired.

Sheri 1:01:57

Yeah I just stamp it, stamp it.

## **Washing off the fake**



Bill 1:02:00

But yeah, fantastic. You know, it's really good I love your cover, I love the way that you've created this idea about washing off the fake because a lot of stroke survivors really need to do that they really need to wash off the fake it makes it very difficult to continue life being the way that some of us walk. And I know that if I had continued to be the kind of person I was before, this whole experience would have been a waste there wouldn't have been anything for me to grow from and learn from.

Bill 1:02:25

And I don't want to be that stupid. I want to be a little bit smarter than that in my life, you know. So I love the fact that you've put so much effort into getting a book out to just also be a great example for other stroke survivors that if you put your mind to something and you put the effort in, it doesn't matter how long it takes. You didn't have a timeline on it did u right?

Sheri 1:03:01

No. But guess what, this is a funny thing. I said to my sister, I go, Well, wanna know what my next book is? She goes your next book? I go yeah I'm gonna learn a lot more which I don't know if I'll write another book ever. I have a lot to do. What I don't know, but I'm pretty creative. I'll find something to do.

Bill 1:03:31

Yeah, well, I'm looking forward.

Sheri 1:03:32

I want to help other people.

Bill 1:03:34

Yeah, you are doing a great job you really are. And I'm looking forward to continuing to follow you and learn from you and also see what your next project is. And I'll make sure that everybody who's listening can go to the link to find the book on Amazon very easily. And also connect with you on Instagram. If they like I know that you're a good person on Instagram.

Sheri 1:03:58

Yeah, and guess what? My name is? On Instagram is Compassionate Snob,

Bill 1:04:03

Compassionate.snob,

Sheri 1:04:04

Compassionate Snob, but I don't think people understand they're probably like, oh, she a snob blah blah. No, not at all. I just do it because I used to kind of be but it was fake.

Bill 1:04:25

So being a snob was fake.

Sheri 1:04:30

Yes. But I just acted like everybody else in the business. And then when I was pulled away from that when I was alone, I realized I'm much more compassionate. I'm not like that.

Bill 1:04:50

Were you a snob away from work, so did it come home with you the pretend snob did that come home with you?

Sheri 1:04:58

Yeah, but when I was left alone and my brain started coming back to me. I was like why did I act like that that's stupid. Why wasn't I myself? I think if you're nice though people do tend to take advantage of you. So you have to be a little bit not mean, but like, forceful but I want to explain some I'll be honest with them, but I feel like a lot of people don't want to hear the truth.

Bill 1:05:44

Absolutely a lot of people don't wanna hear the truth, the truth can hurt.

Sheri 1:05:49

Yes. And, but people can tell me the truth. I try to be nice. I try. But sometimes it doesn't always work. Sometimes I have to be a little forceful.

Bill 1:06:06

I agree. I was gonna say there's a post I made on Instagram just a few days ago. It was something apparently that the Greek philosopher Plato said and he said, most people are not just comfortable with their ignorance, but hostile to anyone that points it out.

Sheri 1:06:26

Ah, that's a good one.

Bill 1:06:29

That's true, isn't it? Like if you tell somebody they're being a little bit silly or ignorant or most people don't want to know that they just want to continue to believe what they believe and act, how they want to act, but don't want to be told.

Sheri 1:06:43

No, that is wrong. Because I get so upset when people say something about someone I'm like, that's not nice. It's not nice. I'm like that in my mind, this is what I didn't think of before. I think like, oh, if they're saying that about someone that makes me look at them differently. I should say that did not like someone I want to be around that. And I think what you're around influences you.

Bill 1:07:30

Yeah, And you were around all of that stuff because of your work. It's is that the place hung around is that the type of people you used to normally hang around with? Or is it just because of work?

Sheri 1:07:41

It was, but work became my whole identity. So there wasn't, there was just work and now used to socialize with people from work.

Bill 1:07:57

I see what you're saying.

Sheri 1:07:59

And everybody is about this how they look. And that is why sometimes I'm like, I'll

go on Instagram and no makeup. And I hate that. Because that is not a true person.

Bill 1:08:16

Yeah, I know what you mean. Well, as you can see, I go on Instagram on YouTube. I go everywhere with no makeup, no hair care. No nothing. When isolation happened I haven't shaved since then becoming a bit crazy so soon I'm going to get rid of it. And not because I'm trying to impress anybody, just because it's starting to annoy me.

Sheri 1:08:40

It's itchy?

Bill 1:08:42

Yes, itchy? It gets really dirty this whole beard gets really dirty when you eat all your food goes around it. It drives you crazy. So it's not for me. I'll get rid of it soon. Sheri McIntyre. Thank you so much for being on the podcast. I really appreciate it.

Sheri 1:09:06

Thanks, Bill it was nice talking to you.

Intro 1:09:09

Discover how to support your recovery after stroke go to [recoveryafterstroke.com](https://recoveryafterstroke.com)