

A Guide To Understanding Your Stroke Recovery - Bill Gasiamis

Successful Stroke Recovery - Discover the 10 things stroke survivors can do to have a great recovery and find the silver lining in their experience. Get motivated and uplifted by the resilience and positive mindset of these individuals. Watch now and see how a stroke can be a blessing in disguise.

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So if you're somebody who is in pain emotionally, because you're afraid to go with the emotional pain, you're just swapping one emotional pain for a different emotional pain. And the one that you're swapping out with is an emotional pain that lasts forever.

Bill Gasiamis 0:17

If you never deal with the emotional problems of the past, you are going to be living with the emotional problems and pain of the future, that will continue to come because that's what happens in life stuff continues to come. We are not immune to life.

Bill Gasiamis 0:35

As you are aware, if you're a stroke survivor, you've already experienced a bloody ton of life. And what you don't want to do is have that cumulative effect impacting you negatively. And making things worse and decreasing the level at which your brain can rehabilitate.

Intro 0:57

This is the recovery after stroke podcast. With Bill Gasiamis, helping you navigate recovery after stroke.

Introduction - Successful Stroke Recovery

Bill Gasiamis 1:10

Hello, and welcome to episode 237 of the recovery after stroke podcast. If you have been following me for a while, and would like to get updates more often go to [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com). And in the search bar type recovery after stroke and come and follow my page. Over there, you'll be joining more than 5000 other people that already follow my page.

Bill Gasiamis 1:33

In those posts, you will see there are lots of people getting involved, just like you in conversations, sharing their experiences with stroke and learning from each other. If you'd like to support this podcast, the best way to do it is to leave a five-star review and a few words about what the show means to you on iTunes, and Spotify.

Bill Gasiamis 1:54

This actually means the world to me, and makes the show more visible to the algorithm and pushes it in front of more people who are stroke survivors like you that need this type of content and may benefit. In today's episode, I will be answering your questions now. I made a post on my Instagram page quite a while ago now.

Bill Gasiamis 2:17

Which went, what are some of the stroke related questions that you would like my thoughts on? And I had a lot of responses. And I've had already answered a ton of them on episodes 224 and 225. So if you haven't heard those yet, go back and have a listen to them. And in this part, part three. And yes, it took me 11 More episodes to get back to here. I will be answering a question from Andy Dovey,

who was a guest on my podcast as well on episode 206.

Bill Gasiamis 2:55

And Andy had a cerebellum stroke. And he asked to hear my thoughts on the common threads between all the stroke survivors that I've interviewed. Now, it's a pretty massive question. And I probably won't mention all of the common threads, I'll mention the ones that I think are important. And there are lots of common threads.

Bill Gasiamis 3:18

But the question that he asked still continues, and it says, Are there personality traits that you've identified that are more prevalent in the more "successful survivors?" What enables somebody to make more improvements than someone else? Is it the psychological? It's the psychological aspects that intrigue him. That intrigued Andy.

What Stroke Survivors Have In Common

Bill Gasiamis 3:45

So I'm going to answer that question, there is definitely a lot of things that I have found that are very much common in certain stroke survivors. And I will tell you what those are right now. Okay, so there are a number of things that make people feel like they are getting ahead and making a good inroad into the stroke recovery. And this is despite what the challenges are that they continue to live with.

Bill Gasiamis 4:17

So they may have deficits, they may have paralysis on one side of the body. They may have vision problems, they may have an inability to walk and talk 100% like they did before the stroke. But these things are definitely the things that make people stand out as "people who feel like they are achieving a really high level of recovery, even though they're living with deficits."

Bill Gasiamis 4:45

Now, one of the first things that I want to mention, one of the main things that I find is that those people have a recovery mindset. So you might ask what is a recovery mindset? Well, a recovery mindset is the type of mindset that is honed in or tuned in or fine-tuned to becoming somebody who recovers from their stroke,

that does not mean going back to the way they were or the condition they were before stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 5:24

So it does not mean going back. And being the same as they were before they had the stroke, it means that they are going to take on this recovery, and they're going to move towards getting better each and every day. And it is a mindset. So they don't necessarily focus on the negatives, they don't necessarily focus on what they haven't got occur to, still or anymore. They focus on how far they've come and where they want to go.

Bill Gasiamis 5:56

So they're looking at the type of things that they can achieve, and get better at rather than looking back at the things that they have lost or supposedly or maybe become worse. And what that does is that allows them to focus on seeing the wins, seeing how far they've come, noticing what they've overcome, noticing what they've been able to achieve, and not focusing on the negatives.

Bill Gasiamis 6:28

And that gives them a boost in this state of mind, that gives them a boost in the way that they feel about themselves. And that gives them encouragement to keep going forward and continue the focus on the goals, the things that they are going to overcome and the things that they're going to achieve. So they have a recovery mindset. That is the first thing that they noticed.

Bill Gasiamis 6:54

Now the next thing is that all of the people who I've spoken to who seem to have a more "successful" recovery or feel like they are doing well within their recovery, have done some kind of emotional work. And when I talk about emotional work, I'm talking about work in the heart, they've gone back perhaps, and dealt with some emotional traumas.

Bill Gasiamis 7:21

And the reason why they've dealt with emotional traumas is because somewhere, they realize that those emotional traumas from the past that they harbor have been getting in the way of their recovery, because stroke is not a one approach thing, you have to address all the issues in your life to get out of the way of your recovery. And some of the things include mindset, like I said a bit earlier, but

emotional recovery is a very big part of it.

Bill Gasiamis 7:52

Because without the emotional recovery. And without having dealt with the difficult emotions from the past, how are you meant to deal with difficult emotions from now, they can potentially all become, all too many or too much and put you in a situation where you are struggling, not only because you're dealing with the new emotional challenges that you're feeling because of the stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 8:16

But because of the cumulative effects of the emotional challenges that you've had, for an entire lifetime, that perhaps you were afraid to go toward, and deal with.

Bill Gasiamis 8:31

It's a situation of going where the pain is, and then dealing with the pain so that you can overcome that pain from the past. Every time you do that you get better at overcoming traumas, from the past things that you've struggled with, with some emotional challenges, you'll overcome them quicker than others. That's why I recommend ticking off all the small things that you can as quickly as possible.

The Emotional Roller Coaster Ride of Stroke Recovery

Bill Gasiamis 8:59

And then as you get good at dealing with the emotional traumas from the past, then you can deal with the current emotional traumas and the ones that are going to come in the future because let me tell you, stroke is an emotional journey. It is a roller coaster ride, it is definitely going to make it difficult for some people to handle what it is that they are experiencing.

Bill Gasiamis 9:25

I myself experienced massive amounts of emotional turmoil when I had my three brain bleeds, but by the third one, I had done a lot of work. So it wasn't so much more traumatic than the first one was, for example, brain surgery wasn't a breeze but compared to what I was dealing with with the first Brain Hemorrhage, it was a completely different experience.

Bill Gasiamis 9:53

And I gotta tell you that I did a lot of emotional work between the two and a half years from the first incident, to the third incident, and then brain surgery. And that help that I got. And that work that I did for my emotional challenges actually went a long way to making my recovery and learning how to walk again and use my left side again, and get back to my life again, it made it a lot easier.

Bill Gasiamis 10:20

Now, it took me seven years before I got from the first Brain Hemorrhage to feeling like myself again, or in some way, being able to say that I feel like myself, because I still have the numbness in my body, I still have the left side deficits, I still have some balance issues, I still have weakness in my left side, I still have the tingling sensation, and all the things that go with stroke when you're impacted on one side of your body.

Bill Gasiamis 10:53

But my emotional experience, and the way that I think about that now is nowhere near what it was compared to what it was at the beginning of this whole process and this whole saga. So emotional work will help you overcome your traumas from the past, it will improve your emotional intelligence, it will help you overcome those ideas and thoughts that you had about whether or not it's safe to go to emotional trauma and deal with it and take it on.

Bill Gasiamis 11:27

And it'll help you get to the point of understanding that you are capable of dealing with emotional traumas from the past, you are capable of overcoming them. And you are able to become more resilient to the emotional turmoil. If you're somebody who wears their hands on their sleeve, like I was, trust me, the more emotional work you can do, the better off you will be, I went and got help.

Bill Gasiamis 11:56

And I made sure that it was something that I focused on. And this is also what other stroke survivors have done, they've been able to get in touch with their emotional side, develop it, deal with it, attack it, face it, or whatever the words are that you want to use, they went where the pain was. And let me tell you about going where the pain is. Once you go there, the pain goes away.

Bill Gasiamis 12:21

So if you're somebody who is in pain emotionally, because you're afraid to go with

the emotional pain is you're just swapping one emotional pain for a different emotional pain. And the one that you're swapping it with is an emotional pain that lasts forever. If you never deal with the emotional problems of the past, you're going to be living with the emotional problems and pain of the future that will continue to come because that's what happens in life stuff continues to come.

Bill Gasiamis 12:54

We are not immune to life. As you are aware, if you're a stroke survivor, you've already experienced a bloody ton of life. And what you don't want to do is have that cumulative effect impacting you negatively. And making things worse and decreasing the level at which your brain can rehabilitate themselves. Now, the next thing that people have in common, somehow they tap into their intelligence of their gut. So what do I mean by that?

Bill Gasiamis 13:33

Well, if you hear yourself or if you've heard other people say that I used my gut or I followed my gut, or it was my gut instinct. Well, that's what these people have done, they've been able to somehow use their gut instinct to help guide their recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 13:33

Now, I did this a lot with my stroke recovery, my brain, after the second bleed, pretty much completely switched off, I was unable to use it to make any real decisions, any important decisions that are needed to make about my life, about my medical needs, about anything that was happening, my life basically went on hold. And it was just a holding pattern until I worked out the way forward. And it was my gut instinct that guided me really well at the beginning.

Bill Gasiamis 14:25

And a lot of people who I deal with, who say that they are doing well, "having a very successful recovery", will go to the gut instincts. mine told me to set my first lot of doctors and the neurologists that I was seeing and change hospitals, because they were having conversations about me at the end of my bed, they are not including me. And when I did have questions that I asked about my prospects and about what was going to happen going forward?

Bill Gasiamis 15:02

They didn't really want to commit and answer any of my questions. So I felt like I

was alone, I felt like I couldn't move forward with the people that were put in charge of my health care, especially since they weren't involving me. So it was my gut instinct that said, you gotta get out of here. So I reached out to people that I knew.

Bill Gasiamis 15:20

And I made it, so that I could find a neurologist and a brain surgeon and a different hospital that will help me and will talk to me in a language that I appreciated. And as a result of that, I found that amazing surgeon, Professor Kate Drummond, who was at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, who answered my questions, spoke to me amazingly, her team was awesome.

Bill Gasiamis 15:46

And as a result of her amazing work and monitoring of my conditions, it took some time, but we finally got to brain surgery. And at that time, she did an amazing job of removing the faulty blood vessel in my head. And then I began the journey of rehabilitation and getting back on my feet. So I followed my gut instinct. And so do a lot of the people that I speak to about stroke recovery, they tune into the gut instinct.

Bill Gasiamis 16:15

Now there is a couple of ways that you can increase the conversation that you have with your gut, you can specifically go to your gut, and you can go there and you can talk to it. It takes a little while to respond. But if you close your eyes, and gently go and ask and place your hand on your belly, and ask yourself a question, and specifically ask your gut, what it thinks of that particular question, you will get an answer.

Bill Gasiamis 16:44

It won't be immediate, it might take a few seconds, maybe 30 seconds or more, and you will get a response. So if you want to do that, pause this episode right now. Go there and ask a question and see if you get a response. Okay, so if you're back now, you might have noticed the response or you might not have sometimes the gut will process the question that you asked that, and it will ask you overnight, and it will answer it overnight in your sleep.

Bill Gasiamis 17:14

Or you might have a big aha moment the next day. Now, if your guts not talking to

you, one of the reasons it might not be talking to you is because it is being overwhelmed by the type of food you're consuming. So one of the next things that the people who consider themselves having a good stroke recovery is that they attended to their nutrition.

Bill Gasiamis 17:40

But I'm going to come back to that, and I'm going to talk about it in a while, because there's a few things that I want to get through first before I go to nutrition. So your gut brain is your gut, is also known as your gut brain. It's been very commonly referred to now by a lot of people in the medical field, as a gut brain researchers, and a whole bunch of different people, you can just Google, any search on Google get you a result, when you type in what is the gut brain, you'll get an amazing amount of information.

Bill Gasiamis 18:13

So you can go there and check that out. And there are books that specifically talk about the second brain in your gut, it is considered a brain, it has neural networks, it is where dopamine, serotonin, and a whole bunch of other neurotransmitters are created. And they are created in the gut to be used by the brain, the brain does not create a lot of those neurotransmitters.

Bill Gasiamis 18:40

So when you are eating incorrectly, and you are putting stuff in your gut, that is going to inflame the gut and make it difficult to digest. Your gut is going to decrease the amount of neurotransmitters, it's going to decrease the amount of support that it can give to your brain. So your brain can go along and do the healing that it needs to do. And then as a result of that, so it can also support Neuroplasticity. So that is an amazing thing.

What's Important About Neuroplasticity

Bill Gasiamis 19:16

That if you think about the fact that you have said the words I've followed my gut or my gut instinct told me if you follow the words, then I told you that yes, that's because your gut is your second brain. That should just work for you. You should understand that and that should go well. And if you don't, that's okay because it's a pretty new concept. But what you could do is go and do some further research

on that and be amazed at what you find out.

Bill Gasiamis 19:42

Now, I just spoke about Neuroplasticity, in not so many words. When I refer to if you get out of the way of the of the gut and you give the gut what it needs to eat, to create to support the brain. One of those things things that the gut supports the brain to do is Neuroplasticity.

Bill Gasiamis 20:05

It supports the brain to create new neural pathways and overcome where possible some of the challenges that you've experienced with your deficits that are that are related to the stroke, if your deficits, physical, or if they're speech deficits or hearing deficits, there could be some situations where those deficits cannot be improved. And that might be because the damage done in that area of the brain has permanently impacted those spots and damage them.

Bill Gasiamis 20:39

But if there are areas where there's some damage, and there is some deficits that are not going to be totally impairing their person in a permanent way, the Neuroplasticity is the other thing that a lot of the people who talk about having brain plasticity

Bill Gasiamis 21:05

that the other people talk about, who have had a very successful or good or are having a great recovery, they take advantage of Neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is a thing that you hear about now, and 12 years ago, it wasn't a thing you, never heard about it just before I had my stroke in 2011 there was only a few people talking about it.

Bill Gasiamis 21:31

But the time I discovered Neuroplasticity was mid to late part of 2012 and the research on Neuroplasticity was fairly new. Now I did an interview with one of the forefathers of Neuroplasticity, a gentleman called Dr. Michael Merzenich. And that was episode 108, where we discussed what Neuroplasticity is and help particularly it works.

Bill Gasiamis 21:57

Neuroplasticity is something that you can practice without being physically active, you can imagine yourself doing something. And that is creating new neural

pathways in the brain, just as if they would be getting created if you were physically doing that thing that you would like to do.

Bill Gasiamis 22:16

So what's the benefit of that? The benefit of that is if you're experiencing fatigue, or you can't get on your feet yet, or you don't have enough hours for therapy, or your insurance company doesn't pay for therapy, or you're on your own and it's unsafe to get on your feet, you can imagine yourself walking, you can imagine yourself moving your hand, you can imagine yourself doing the things that you want to get better at.

Bill Gasiamis 22:41

And Neuroplasticity will be kicking in to create new neural pathways to support that. So that when you do get on your feet and start moving your legs or start moving your hand or start overcoming the challenges that you have already given yourself a head start so that it is less foreign to you when you get to the point of doing the exercise actually physically or in person in a rehabilitation setting.

Bill Gasiamis 23:07

So a lot of the people who I speak to will be taking advantage of Neuroplasticity. And they will be making the most of their time when they are not being physically active or they can't access rehabilitation services, so that they are improving the neural pathways in their brain and overcoming the challenges on their own as much as possible. So they're very motivated to overcome and get better in this way and overcome their deficits.

Bill Gasiamis 23:40

So the next thing that they do is they start to pay attention to their sleep habits. And they want to make sure that what they do is overcome some of the things that they are doing that get in the way of sleep, here's some tips to help you perhaps get better sleep. If you're struggling with that. One of the things that I do is as soon as the sunsets, all lights in the house gets switched off.

Bill Gasiamis 24:11

So if I've got lights on in a dark part of the house or if it's not very bright outside, all overhead lights get switched off, and what I do is put on lamps. And those lamps have got warm light bulbs in them, you can get them in LEDs these days, they used to be the old incandescent lamps, the style of the old, original lamps.

And that color is a warm kind of yellowy, orangey red.

Bill Gasiamis 24:40

And if you can get lights and lamps that do that, that certainly goes some way to supporting and mimicking the type of light that you get. If you were in a cave many, many hundreds and thousands of years ago where the sun has set and in order to illuminate your surroundings you had a campfire, the kind of lighting that you use is going to make a big difference to the way that your brain understands whether or not it's time to start shutting down and putting you into a sleep zone.

Bill Gasiamis 25:12

And the reason being is because any fluorescent or very bright white, stark lights mimic daylight. And when you have lights like that in the house, your eye receives that information, and it shoots and makes the brain and the body and your circadian rhythm think that you are outside and you're getting the UV rays that are for awake time. So it's changing the cycle that you may or may not be going into to help you support, dozing off and staying asleep.

Intro 25:50

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, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 26:14

If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to recoveryafterstroke.com where you can download a guide that will help you it's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Intro 26:33

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. And download the guide, it's free.

Bill Gasiamis 26:52

You might have heard that blue light from TVs, computer screens and mobile phones are lights that interfere with sleep or can activate the brain to remain awake, even though it is bedtime. So it's a good idea not to use those types of screens at night, at least an hour before you go to bed if you can switch those off. And if you have devices which allow you to use them in night mode, perhaps switch on night mode so that you can have those devices.

Bill Gasiamis 27:24

Change the color of the background lighting, decrease the blue lighting, and increase the warm, incandescent style lighting that mimics fire. So attending to sleep habits is really really important, go to bed at a regular time, every night. So that you start getting used to being in bed by a certain time and your body starts to know that it can start to wind down and decrease the stimulus in your brain.

Bill Gasiamis 27:55

And also, if you are struggling with sleep, and you think that you're doing a good service by drinking alcohol, you are not going to actually be supporting good deep sleep, alcohol has been shown that it actually interferes with REM sleep, the part of the sleep cycle that helps the brain flush toxins out of it, refresh it and make it less inflamed. And alcohol does only potentially, maybe support people dozing off because it's a day to you.

Bill Gasiamis 28:32

So it kind of puts you into sleep, but it actually makes you miss out on REM sleep on the deep sleep that you need. So if you're drinking alcohol to go to sleep, you need to stop doing that, you can once again jump on Google and do any amount of research that you want about the link between alcohol and decreased quality of sleep. And there is just a ton of information.

Bill Gasiamis 28:55

So definitely don't do that. Now, I know a lot of people on listening to this podcast will be consumers of marijuana or weed. And there are a lot of benefits for marijuana and weed. But it doesn't help sleep either. It does today people and put them into a state of being able to get to sleep, but it does interfere with the sleep cycle. And it doesn't allow people to rotate through the sleep cycle

Let's Talk About Nutrition In Stroke Recovery

Bill Gasiamis 29:25

as well as they would have if they were alcohol and weed free. So short-term gain, but long term it is actually changing your sleep cycle your, sleep habit and it is decreasing the quality of sleep that you're getting. It is therefore decreasing the rest and the recovery that your brain can get. And as a result of that you are getting in the way of your recovery. So here's some food for thought for you to think about.

Bill Gasiamis 29:54

Speaking of food for thought that's a great segue, because the next thing that people do as they change their nutrition, and I've already mentioned nutrition briefly and about the benefits of nutrition on the gut brain. And what food does is definitely either get in the way of your brain health, or support brain health, it either inflames the brain, or decreases inflammation, and your brain after a stroke is already inflamed.

Bill Gasiamis 30:24

So what you don't want to be doing is you don't want to be increasing the inflammation in your brain, you do not want to be doing that, you want to be decreasing the inflammation in your brain. And the best way to decrease inflammation in your brain is to cut out certain foods. And this is where I get to talk about a little course that I've put together that specifically answers this question.

Bill Gasiamis 30:47

Now, the thing about nutrition, it's not necessarily about what you should eat, which is really important as well, this particular course, and the information that I've put together is about what you should not eat. And in order to put this together, I've brought along a couple of amazing people who have been interviewed by me. And one of them is qualified nutritionist Stacey Turner and her husband performance coach, Matthias Turner, who are both Aussies.

Bill Gasiamis 31:20

And we got together and we recorded five interviews, where we spoke about what

we call “The Fun Five Series.” Actually, the fun five was not something that I coined, that was what the guys coined, but I loved it. And I use it to name this course, because the fun five are the foods that you should avoid after stroke. And there’s a lot of reasons why you should avoid them after stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 31:44

And I’m not going to go into all of them here. Because it’s this particular thing took us five hours to explain and put together. So the five foods that you should avoid after stroke are sugar, caffeine, gluten, dairy, and alcohol. Now, I’ve already spoken briefly about alcohol. But you need to understand all of the reasons why you need to avoid sugar, caffeine, gluten and dairy after a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 32:10

And how that is going to go do well to support your gut health, which is going to do well and support Neuroplasticity, which is going to do well and support a whole bunch of other things in your body. Now, in that interview, we do eight reasons to quit sugar after stroke and seven reasons to quit caffeine after a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 32:31

It’s a really comprehensive discussions and interviews, 8 Reasons To Quit Gluten After Stroke, 6 Reasons To Quit Dairy After Stroke and 6 Reasons To Quit Alcohol After Stroke. Now, when you get them, you pay \$49 to access those courses. And you will basically be able to sit down and listen to actually more than eight hours of content, not five, all episodes, all parts of this particular course are available in audio in mp3, they’re available in a video, you’ll get to see the video as well.

Bill Gasiamis 33:08

And you’ll be able to print off a full transcript of all the content. So you can take notes, highlight things that are important to you. And they’re presented by myself. And like I said to amazing people who know a thing or two about nutrition, and how to get the best out of people, and how to help people perform and overcome injury and be better at life. And from day to day and at work and all the things that they need to do. You’ll have access to it at any time.

Bill Gasiamis 33:40

You don’t need to wait around and get it at a specific time. You’ll get lifetime access to the course once you’ve purchased them. And you will be able to leave

questions in the comment sections that I will respond and answer for you. You'll be able to get in touch with me. And we'll be able to speak about them. One on one, I'll be able to answer your question specifically.

Bill Gasiamis 34:04

And hopefully you'll get a lot out of that particular course, in order to access that course just go to recoveryafterstroke.com/courses. And you'll see a couple of other courses there. But the one that you'll be looking for is the 5 Foods You Must Avoid Eating After Stroke. It's a very comprehensive course. It's only 49 US dollars. It's over eight hours of content. And it's five interviews with two of the most amazing people.

Bill Gasiamis 34:32

So I'm going to wrap this up quickly by just saying the five foods that you need to avoid are sugar, caffeine, gluten, dairy and alcohol. Now the next thing that people do to overcome their stroke and to start feeling like they're making some progress and that they are becoming successful overcoming the deficits and getting beyond this situation that they find themselves in is they're getting physical. So what does this mean? Well, they're not necessarily running marathons.

Bill Gasiamis 35:09

Although I've interviewed a lot of stroke survivors that have, I've interviewed stroke survivors that have run marathons with foot drop, some that have participated marathons, by not running. But by walking. I've interviewed people who have participated in marathons by cycling in different versions. There's a whole bunch of different ways that people have participated in amazing, crazy events that they wouldn't have dreamed of before stroke, this is the most amazing thing.

Bill Gasiamis 35:37

Now getting physical doesn't mean that you are attending grueling events, it means that you are just becoming physically active as best as you can. If that is from your chair, and you're doing it sitting down and seated, and you can only do chair aerobics, or whatever it's called. And that is perfectly fine.

Bill Gasiamis 35:57

But it is really, really important to get physically active after a stroke, the more

physically active that you get after a stroke, and the more you will experience the opportunity to support your brain to heal from all the challenges, physical activity just spurs off a whole bunch of amazing neuro chemicals in the body. And it can only be created when you get physically active.

Bill Gasiamis 36:23

Yes, being physically active after stroke is probably harder than it's ever been to be physically active, I totally get it, I've been there. And there are some certain exercises that I will not do, because I don't enjoy doing them anymore. And one of those is running.

Bill Gasiamis 36:41

Although I can run I will avoid running because my balance is an issue. I'm always overthinking where my leg is going to go, whether I'm going to over-extend my knee, when I'm going to do damage to myself, and it is no fun. So I found an electric bike that I used to ride. And as a result, I get some physical exercise like that. I love walking, and I can do a lot of walking. So I do that instead of running. I don't play sports anymore.

Bill Gasiamis 37:10

Because again, that physical impact that a lot of sports have is a challenge to me, and I don't like being hit on my left side, it's much easier for somebody to put me off balance and knock me over. And I'm not keen on getting myself into situations that are uncomfortable and where I risk hitting myself as well as injuring my head. So getting physically active, no matter what you do, is one of the most important things that you can do after a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 37:38

Now, I have met people that interview people on the podcast, do physical exercises, to the extent that you and I couldn't imagine like powerlifting, one of the people that I interviewed was Kelly Studebaker on Episode 106, who is a powerlifter, who uses only one side of her body to lift the weights because of the other side has been impacted by the stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 38:02

So physical exercise doesn't have to be that crazy. But anything you can do with the good side of your body, or with the side that's better than the other side. Or even with the side that's weak and needs rehabilitation, don't neglect that.

Bill Gasiamis 38:15

Just do anything you can to start getting to the point where you're creating resistance in your body, whether it be from walking, cycling, weightlifting, I don't care if it's crawling, whatever you need to do, to get physically active, get help from another person, get training, get any coaching.

Bill Gasiamis 38:38

Get anything you can, just get physically active as much as you can, being sedentary is only going to make matters worse, it's going to increase your risk of stroke, and probably a second stroke, it is going to decrease your health.

Bill Gasiamis 38:51

And it is not going to be a good long-term solution. So that's another thing that other people who are considered that they are achieving better or going well or having a good stroke recovery are doing. And they are doing that in spite of their deficits. Now, the next thing that people do to achieve a good stroke recovery is they do some kind of an internal work. So we spoke about emotional work earlier.

Bill Gasiamis 39:20

Now they do meditation, like a heartfelt kind of meditation, what they're doing is going in and concentrating on doing a guided meditation, whether they download it from YouTube or Spotify or some other and they get to go in quietly, to quiet the mind and start connecting with the other parts of their body like their gut and their heart. So a meditation practice is something that really does help to decrease stress levels. Decrease cortisol, helps to decrease blood pressure.

Bill Gasiamis 39:56

So there are a whole bunch of different reasons why a meditation practice, five minutes in the morning, five minutes at lunchtime or five minutes before you go to bed is all you need to start to have a positive impact on your health and your recovery and the way that you feel and the way that the brain is being supported after a stroke. So a harmful meditation, I specifically said harmful because in those meditations, I'd like you to be able to focus on that area of you on the heart.

Bill Gasiamis 40:29

And give yourself another way to connect to your heart. So that you can go to where some of the things that trouble you and give yourself an opportunity to gently and quietly just heal and overcome things that have been with you for a

little while.

Bill Gasiamis 40:45

Anything you can do to support your heart via meditation, or another method is really going to help you and believe me, coaching, counseling, which is something that I've done for many, many years really will support that emotional intelligence upgrade, going to a great psychologist, will help you let go of some of those things from the past and change the way you think about things.

Bill Gasiamis 41:09

And at the same time, if you're doing meditation, it's going to be an amazing, beautiful thing that you can do for your body and start to support it in a way that perhaps you've never supported before. And if you're a man, and you're listening to this, and you're thinking out and do meditation, or even if you're a lady, and you're listening to this, and it's not for me, it could be for you, and just be curious about it and think about it and see whether or not you'd be brave enough to go there.

What Happens When You Discover Your Purpose

Bill Gasiamis 41:38

Now, this is a big one, discovering your purpose is the next thing that people do. Now, it's not that they discover their purpose immediately. And all of a sudden, they know what the purpose is, is they start working towards doing things for other people. And somehow their purpose emerges. So what happens is they go through the process of saying, "Oh, my gosh, I've had a stroke, this is terrible."

Bill Gasiamis 42:05

I've come some way in my own recovery. And I've learned some things. And I'd like to share them with other people. So they come on my podcast, they volunteer somewhere, they raise funds, they do anything they can to help themselves, but also at the same time, be helpful to other stroke survivors, it helps them find new people to connect to, who understand them. And I'm going to talk about that in my next step.

Bill Gasiamis 42:32

And the next thing that happens for people who are getting to the point of saying that they're recovering well, and they're having a good recovery in spite of their deficits and the challenges.

Bill Gasiamis 42:42

So what happens is, when you go towards the path of doing something purposeful, where there is a purpose for what you are doing, as in I'm going to volunteer to help these people or I'm going to go on a podcast to raise awareness, or I'm going to support the local food bank, or I'm going to cook a meal and take it to somebody, when you're doing something with purpose that's purposeful and has a good outcome intended, then what happens is, you discover your purpose.

Bill Gasiamis 43:17

Now, that is how I came about discovering my own purpose.

Bill Gasiamis 43:21

And I had no idea that I was on the path to do so. But I wanted to help, I wanted to do something for people that are having a stroke after I had one. I've been down this path for more than 10 years now. And when people came along and had a stroke after me, I had some experience that I could share. And I did it in the form of a podcast. And I didn't want to do it alone. So I recruited other stroke survivors to come and share their stories.

Bill Gasiamis 43:46

And with them, I created the Recovery After Stroke podcast. And we've had more than 230 episodes now, where we share information that every single day somebody contacts me and says, that was an amazing episode. Thank you so much for that I really needed to hear that. And I really love your podcast and all those things. All of those responses and all those people that have come on my podcast and all the things that have come from this podcast, made me realize that I've actually found my purpose.

Bill Gasiamis 44:15

My purpose has become to be the person who creates the most podcast interviews of stroke survivors, and make a database of it that's available to anyone who has come and had a stroke before us, or somebody who's going to have a stroke after us so that they can not be in a position where I was and blindly trying to navigate stroke. After I was released from hospital, I don't want anybody

to be in that position.

Bill Gasiamis 44:44

And my purpose in life is to make sure that this podcast continues and the coaching and the support and the courses that I put together are all going to go towards helping people overcome stroke. So that is what some people do or a lot of the people do, who talks about having a great stroke recovery and overcoming their challenges.

Bill Gasiamis 45:05

That's what they do, they start doing things purposefully. And some of them even get to discover what their purpose is, you're not going to work out what your purpose is in your head, your head will not do that. Do not try and think about what your purpose is. Purpose is heart related thing. And it's why it's important to go back and do some healing, some emotional intelligence upgrades, some healing of those challenges that have

Bill Gasiamis 45:31

hustled your heart for many, many years. That is why mindful meditation, and heartfelt meditation is helpful and useful. Because what we want to do is we want to get you living your life via your heart's desires, we want to get you living your heart's desires via this purpose that you're going to discover that you don't know yet that you do not have to work out, you just have to start working towards doing purposeful things for other people.

Bill Gasiamis 46:03

It doesn't have to be full time, part time, doesn't have to be many hours a week, it can just be once a month, that's all that's necessary. Even if it's 30 minutes a month, it doesn't matter. But as soon as you start putting other people before you, and I'm not talking about with regards to your health and your recovery, yours first when it comes to health and recovery from stroke.

Creating A Community - Bill Gasiamis

Bill Gasiamis 46:27

But when it comes to helping people and doing something for somebody else that's going to reward you, it's going to make you feel great about yourself. And it's going to make somebody else feel great about the fact that somebody is

helping them. So do something purposeful, you might discover your purpose. That's the next thing that is on the list. Now the last thing that is on the list, and this is a list of 10.

Bill Gasiamis 46:52

And it is an amazing thing that these 10 things are the things that people have in common to support them in overcoming the deficits over stroke and to have "a successful stroke recovery", even though they still live with deficits and challenges and losses that the stroke has created, is they go about building a supportive community. And I've done that, how have I done that?

Bill Gasiamis 47:22

My community has been built on the podcast and brought people in and they've become part of my community. And I have more than 5000 followers on Instagram, and they're part of my community. And I am part of their community. So together, we are creating a community of people, where we are able to go and learn and discuss and overcome things together. And feel like we're not alone.

Bill Gasiamis 47:45

Now my community doesn't only exist online, my community now also includes people on the ground. In my hometown, in Melbourne, it includes people overseas that I have caught up with. While I've been overseas, it includes people that I catch up with regularly or irregularly. But I have people that support me, they're not people who are in my life, because it's about them. They're people that are in my life, because it's about me.

Bill Gasiamis 48:12

And since they make it about me, I make it about them. I don't have people in my life who drain my life, I do not allow people to come in and make it about them, and drain me of my energy so that I can put into them, and I get nothing in return from them.

Bill Gasiamis 48:28

This is a situation that is difficult for some people to deal with. When you have people in your life that are not about you. There are people in your life that are narcissistic, or have personality traits that you don't like, that you would prefer not to deal with, as a result of becoming a stroke survivor.

Bill Gasiamis 48:49

Because you realize life is too short, you need to start slowly, just walking backwards and distancing yourself from people who are not going to be supportive of your recovery, who get in the way of your recovery. You know, some people are like bad food, they just get in the way of your recovery, they cause inflammation, they make things worse, and you do not want to be hanging around with people like that.

Bill Gasiamis 49:11

That doesn't mean that you have to have arguments with them and break friends with them or make it difficult for them or anything like that. It just means that you have to replace the amount of time that you spend with them, that you are going to spend more time with people that fill your cup, people whose cup you feel, people where there's a reciprocal relationship and there is mutual trust and love.

Bill Gasiamis 49:36

That is the type of people that you want to surround yourself the most with. You know, there's a famous saying that goes that you're the average of the five people that you spend the most time with. That is a really, really important thing to remember. Not only are you the average of the five people you spend the most time with.

Bill Gasiamis 49:54

You are also the average of the five people they spend the most time with, and the five people they spend the most time with. And as a result of that, you're being influenced negatively by negative people, if they're hanging around with other negative people, and if they are hanging around with other negative people. So basically, if I've confused you, I didn't mean it.

Bill Gasiamis 50:13

Basically, what I'm saying is the friends of your friends and their friends are also influencing you negatively. So if your friends, your five closest people that you hang out with, that you spend the most time with, negative to be around, hard to be around, not encouraging, making it about them, narcissistic or have other personality traits that are not helpful. You want to start decreasing the amount of time you spend with them.

Stroke Recovery Mindset

Bill Gasiamis 50:38

And you want to start increasing the amount of time you spend with amazing people that fill your cup more often. Now, that is the list. That's the list that I'll go back and quickly summarize. They have a recovery mindset. They have an emotional intelligence upgrade, and they go to the heart and they do some emotional work and heal traumas of the past.

Bill Gasiamis 51:01

They make use of their second brain in their gut, they support the second brain, they talk to the second brain, they follow their gut instincts, they listen to their gut, they are guided by their gut, they do things to start using the gut intelligence as a tool to guide their life going forward to take action on the heart's desires. That's what the gut is supposed to do. It's supposed to help you take action.

Bill Gasiamis 51:28

So the more healthy your gut is, the less things that you're putting into your gut and making it feel inflamed, the better your gut is going to respond and guide you and help you have great gut instincts about how to move forward. So that's what they do. They also then use Neuroplasticity.

Bill Gasiamis 51:50

They use whether it's physical activity or imagined activity, they make the most of Neuroplasticity that create new neural pathways in their brain to overcome the challenges that they are experiencing. And they may not be able to overcome them completely, but they do their best to overcome them as much as possible and to improve things always, always moving forwards towards improving things.

Bill Gasiamis 52:17

They sleep better, they look for ways to improve their sleep cycle and to make sure that they are getting deeper, more restful and more cleansing sleep. So they are doing that, they are making the most of their food choices and they stop consuming certain foods that I mentioned that are not good for brain health and recovery. They are not consuming food that are increasing fatigue and making fatigue worse.

Bill Gasiamis 52:47

And they are improving on eating foods that are decreasing inflammation and making fatigue less impactful. They are getting physical, some way shape or form, be it with an electric scooter, an electric bike, within a gym setting, whether they are walking or riding, whether they are doing it in their chair, just waving around their arms and waving their legs, they are getting physically active in some way, shape or form.

Bill Gasiamis 53:17

They are doing meditation, they are checking in with their body, their heart and their soul. And they are going internally and doing five minutes of meditation, I would recommend five, five and five, five minutes in the morning, five minutes in the afternoon and five minutes before bed. They are doing things purposefully and it's helping them discover their purpose. And they are building a supportive community.

Bill Gasiamis 53:45

Now, I just gotta mention that a supportive community can also include doctors, your GP, it can also include your physical therapists, you can include a whole bunch of people that have already been involved in your stroke recovery that can continue to be involved in your stroke recovery. That supportive community can also include coaches and counselors, and psychologists and other therapists.

Bill Gasiamis 54:11

So your supportive community can be amazing. Just hanging out with supportive people more often, and let go and just slowly walk away from people who are not supportive. And I hope that what you'll be able to do is learn a little bit from this and get to the point where you are now, thinking of some things that you haven't thought before.

Bill Gasiamis 54:32

And this might be what leads you to some stage get to the point where you are feeling like you are at least successfully getting better and overcoming your deficits and moving through life and feel like you're leading a fulfilling life and you're living a life where you feel like you are once again a success, you are feeling like once again, that you are able to participate in life fully, and you're able to be a part of your community fully.

Bill Gasiamis 55:02

And I just hope that this episode, inspired by Andy Dovey is going to be an episode that you're going to take to heart and you're going to listen to multiple times, I hope I've done a good job in speaking to you about it and letting you know my thoughts on the topic. The reason being is because these 10 things are going to be the chapters of my book, which by the way, I have just finished.

Bill Gasiamis 55:29

And in a couple of weeks, I'll be submitting the first manuscript to my editor to start editing. And hopefully within the next six months or so there will be an actual book. But that's why I know the answer to Andy's question is because I interviewed people who said that stroke was the best thing that happened to them. And believe it or not, I'm one of those people. And I couldn't believe that we had all these things in common.

Bill Gasiamis 55:56

These are the 10 things, that the people who say stroke is the best thing that happened to them have in common. And I hope that you have at least ticked off a few of these. And if you haven't, you've got some idea of how to go about ticking off a few more. And then from that, maybe, just maybe in spite of all your suffering, and all your challenges and all the things that you dislike, and that stroke has done to you.

Bill Gasiamis 56:26

Hopefully, maybe one day, you might say that stroke from the perspective of a learning experience and how far you've grown in your life. Maybe stroke was the best thing that ever happened to you. Well, thank you for joining me on today's episode, I hope that you got something out of it. It was pretty rapid fire. I spoke very, very quickly because there was a lot to get through and I wanted to make sure that this episode didn't go forever.

Bill Gasiamis 56:57

But if you would like to support this podcast, the best way to do is leave a five star review. If you liked this episode, and you're watching on YouTube, please do hit the Like, subscribe to the show. Tell your friends about it. Share this in your communities let people know about it. If you are a stroke survivor with a story to share about your experience, come and join me on the show The interviews are not scripted, you do not have to plan for them.

Bill Gasiamis 57:21

All you need to do to qualify is be a stroke survivor or care for someone who is a stroke survivor or you are one of the people who helps stroke survivors. You're also welcome on the show. All you have to do is go to recoveryafterstroke.com/contact fill out the contact form.

Bill Gasiamis 57:38

And as soon as I receive your request, I will respond with more details on how you can be on the show how you can choose a time that works for you and me to meet over zoom. Thanks again for listening. Thanks again for being here. I really appreciate all the support. See you on the next episode.

Intro 57:54

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Intro 58:39

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