

A Heart-Centered Recovery - Bill Lee Emery

Bill Lee Emery was recently given the all-clear after being diagnosed with stage 1 throat cancer. The wisdom he shares about following the lead of his heart while on the road to recovery is relevant for people overcoming any health setback.

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Transcription:

Bill Lee Emery 0:00

I'm here, I'm listening to my heart. I really love my body, we have a really nice time on the inside of us. I have a beautiful partner, we live in a beautiful part of the world. We have a gorgeous community that we live in.

Bill Lee Emery 0:16

There are so many blessings in my life. And Julie and I, when we go for a walk around our village, here we, we often say, Okay, three things, what are the three things that we're grateful for.

Bill Lee Emery 0:30

And those things helped me to remind, sometimes of the little things. Just the little things that can bring so much joy, it doesn't have to be a big thing. It can be a simple, simple thing. But that, to me brings more richness than some of the big milestones in my life. I've got to appreciate the little things more and more and more.

Intro 0:56

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

Bill Gasiamis 1:09

Hello, and welcome back to the recovery after stroke podcast. This is episode 233. And to learn more about my guests, including links to their social media and other pages and to download a full transcript of the entire interview, please go to recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25

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Introduction - Bill Lee Emery



Bill Gasiamis 1:44

My guest today is my friend, Bill Lee Emery who has recently overcome a throat cancer diagnosis who has the most amazing approach to recovery and the most

amazing outlook on life. The wisdom he shares is relevant for people overcoming any health setback. If you are anything like me, you will see how our conversation is applicable to stroke recovery as well. Bill Lee Emery welcome to the podcast.

Bill Lee Emery 2:11

And thank you, Bill. So good to be here.

Bill Gasiamis 2:14

It's so good to have you here. It's been a long time, my friend. How long was the last time since we caught up?

Bill Lee Emery 2:23

I don't know if my memory goes back that far.

Bill Gasiamis 2:27

Was it at my place over dinner? Or was it in Queensland at one of your courses?

Bill Lee Emery 2:34

Gosh, you know, I don't know. At my age, that's not such a good thing to do.

Bill Gasiamis 2:42

It was one of those look, I'm younger than you. And I still can't remember exactly the order. But every time that we were together, it was a really amazing interaction. And although we've kept in touch online through Facebook, and I kind of get to know what you're up to, and you kind of get to know what I'm up to.

Bill Gasiamis 3:03

I was a little bit shocked about one of your recent posts about some of the stuff that you had been through recently with your health. And I know it's not related I know it's not specifically a stroke story. But it is a story that's similar to what a lot of stroke survivors experience. Tell us a little bit about what happened to you and what it was that your health scare was about.

Bill Lee Emery Was Diagnosed With A Stroke Cancer

Bill Lee Emery 3:30

So in July last year, I was diagnosed with throat cancer. Fortunately, stage one so

I was lucky enough that I felt a lump here on my throat and it's a bit unusual for that might have been a lymph gland. So I waited two weeks still there and it was a bit hard. So I went to see my doctor he said Yep, go check it out. So did a whole variety of different tests. And then I think was the CAT scan or the biopsy.

Bill Lee Emery 4:09

Basically the cancer was at the base of my throat. And this was like an offshoot if you like, this is the early warning signal for me. So because I found this and were able to find this and it was stage one. But I've never had a night in hospital in my life. I'm 73 I've never had any major illness or any major accidents. So I've been blessed with good health. And then to hear this was a bit of a shock to me.

Bill Gasiamis 4:48

Yeah. I can't relate to that specifically because I was a lot younger when I had my dramas 37 But before that It was smooth sailing, so to speak until 37. And how I can relate to you is through my dad, because my dad Touchwood he's been really well he's turning 80 in a couple of days.

Bill Gasiamis 5:12

And what was interesting about going through that time when my dad was unwell and it for him while he was unwell with dodgy knee that he needed to have surgery on and replaced. And he was out of action for about three months, where they operated on his knee, then it was a time of rehabilitation, and then he had to get on his feet. And I remember how deeply that impacted his psyche, and how deeply that made him feel sort of put him into depression, and all these things that I had never seen in my dad before.

Bill Gasiamis 5:55

Really usually somebody who's quite stoic, able to cope with a lot of stress, challenges, all the things that life kind of threw his way. But then to see him off his feet for three months, which was temporary and in the space of his lifetime, because the surgery was only about maybe seven or eight years ago, it was such a small amount of time, but it had such a massive impact on him in a negative way. Until he got back on his feet. What was it like for you to receive that kind of news? And then to kind of grapple with the what that could mean, in your head?

Bill Lee Emery 6:33

Yeah. So the so the doctors and several doctors told me this, I said, the thing that

will help you go through this one is support. And your you know, Julie, so I have, in my part, I have a superb support system. Like I'm so blessed. So support was one thing, but mindset and mindset is the other is that these two things will make the difference between really how you deal with what's going on, and how you process and recovery, etc, etc.

Bill Lee Emery 7:11

So one of the things, one of my default the things that I hold in my life is that nothing is good or bad, except that I make it. And Shakespeare put it very well when he said and how much nothing is I think he said that nothing is good or bad except how you make or I forget the phrase exactly. But so this I knew was a potentially pivotal moment in my life, especially around health.

Bill Lee Emery 7:47

So it could either be a blessing or a curse. And the choice hack was not going to be a curse. So I was going to turn it into a blessing. I didn't know how. But that's a framework that I had this experience is going to be a blessing for me, I have no idea how it's going to turn out what's going to happen. So let me just skip forward a bit. So during treatment, a lot of the Allied staff including speech pathologist, occupational therapists, and other allied staff will say to me, you're amazing Bill.

Bill Lee Emery 8:29

And I'm going in my own head. Well, yeah, I'm amazing with or without the cancer. But I'm just what they're saying what they're really saying is Bill, the way you're dealing with this is amazing. And for me, it's not me being amazing. The thing that was amazing if something was amazing was a structure that I had that supported me through this.

Bill Lee Emery 8:29

So the structure itself is the thing. That's amazing. I just happened to be using it. Now because I've been around. You know, I've trained with elite athletes training with the National skydiving team. I've worked with world class golfers, triathletes. So I know a lot about mindset and how to use it.

Bill Lee Emery 9:16

So this is a real opportunity for me to take those things that I've been using for somewhere 40 years and go, Okay, this is where the rubber hits the road. This we're really going to use all the stuff that I know, and it's going to be solid. And

so I had some very clear boundaries.

Bill Lee Emery 9:35

Now when you mentioned cancer, the response I got from some people when I said you know, I got throat cancer, and some people say oh my gosh, how awful for you. I go, No, it is not awful. It is my cancer. My stage of cancer is 90% curable so it's not awful. And I would not take on board and I was kind of I hope I wasn't too blunt.

Bill Lee Emery 10:02

I was firm. Like, that's your story about cancer I understand what your meaning, but it's not awful, it is manageable, and I'm going to deal with it. And so this was the structure that I had inside of my head. And I'm so glad I was strong enough to have it and not get into other people's, "oh you poor thing" kind of stuff.

No Two Cancers Are The Same

Bill Lee Emery 10:24

And I wasn't going to have a bar of that. Like, they could see the fire in my eyes a couple of people like oh, okay, right. And but they got it, they understood what I was getting out that nothing is good or bad, except that I make it. And the other thing I learned through this as no two cancers are the same.

Bill Lee Emery 10:46

And it's the same with stroke with brain injury, no two things are the same. They may have similarities, but the individual events within a human life. And so because, you know, I'm a healthy human being, I don't smoke, I haven't smoked for like 40 years or something I smoked when I was a teenager, my 20s I hardly drink, I've got very good diet, I exercise.

Bill Lee Emery 11:18

So all these things meant that my body was in a pretty good shape. And there are other people that had maybe less healthy structures in middle life. And so if they would come to this kind of event, they would have a different outcome. Now I got it at stage one. So it was right at the beginning.

Bill Lee Emery 11:37

And I said to the ENT surgeon, lovely doctor, I said okay, well, what if I wait six

months or 12 months? He said, Well, you can. But he said when you come back, it might not be stage one. So I've been around so called alternative medicine or natural medicine for 40 years.

Bill Lee Emery 12:00

The medical system is an alien thing to me. I wouldn't take Astros when I had a headache I you know, I use acupuncture points or drink a glass of water or something. So to go into this world of pharmacology and of high-end medicine was something of a complete unknown for me and for Julie my partner.

Bill Lee Emery 12:25

So we had some major things to learn. And one of the experiences I'll tell you it's kind of funny, but kind of tragic. One of the things that happened in throat cancer and as the ENT surgeon said, he said swallowing is likely to become it's got to feel like you're swallowing razorblades Oh, okay.

Bill Lee Emery 12:50

Just swallow, and for me, just being able to swallow was such something I look forward to be able to do so without this. This feeling of I'm swallowing razorblades and it's painful. And I lost my appetite and didn't know what to eat, I lost weight, but anyway, does that soak up from what they normally do at the beginning of treatment?

Bill Lee Emery 13:15

So I had from when I got my diagnosis. You know, Julie and I, we pondered do we go down the medical path? And fortunately, my naturopath is also a nurse happens to work with the oncologist that we were talking with. And she said if I were in your shoes, Bill, I'd go down the medical route. It's a seven week treatment, seven weeks of chemo seven weeks of radiation five days a week, chemo once a week.

Bill Lee Emery 13:48

It's a short intense period of time. Once you're done with that, and then we can do all the things that I'm used to doing like acupuncture, naturopathy, chiropractic etc. Homeopathy use all those things, not only during as support, but also after. So it was a seven week actually nine week intensive sprint.

Bill Lee Emery 14:15

I have a friend of mine who's had a seven year journey with cancer and that stage

four prostate cancer. And he actually wrote a book called *Patting The Sharks* by Tim Baker, I highly recommend people read that whether you know, cancer or not doesn't matter. It's a story and what he did.

Bill Lee Emery 14:33

But coming back to this at the beginning of my treatment, I'm supposed to have a feeding tube that goes into your stomach. It's I don't have it here. But it's basically a tube 20 centimeters long and it's, you know, it's a thin tube. It's basically so if I can't swallow, and I've can't swallow, I'm going to die. You got to swallow take nutrition in.

Bill Lee Emery Refused To Take The Pill

Bill Lee Emery 14:57

If I can't swallow, then at least I can in through the feeding tube. So I go in for the open, it's hot out, but they knock you out and etc. So I come out of this and I've got a feeding tube in me and I'm about to go home and say, well, here's some drugs that you can take for pain. So good old hippie me. I said, well, what's the alternative? That way you can take some Panadol. I really got this hardcore nuclear-powered pain control pills.

Bill Lee Emery 15:29

I take Panadol now I go home and I take one Panadol. And one Panadol is like farting in the face of a cyclone, it doesn't know bloody good at all. I imagine if you haven't done any exercise, and then Sunday, one day you go, I want to do 100 crunches, you know, add crunches, and then you're gonna lie down slowly.

Bill Lee Emery 15:51

The pain was extreme when I lay down in bed, because I took one bloody Panadol and so and the look in Julie's face when she's seeing me go through this extreme pain that was actually harder than the pain itself. Anyway, we who went to certain naturopath and she said, Bill, just take the bloody drugs.

Bill Lee Emery 16:40

And so I had to go, Okay, just give me the drugs, man, give me the drugs. So I go back there take these nuclear power, pain control pills, and they work. So I had to learn to become a surgeon on my body. So I don't normally pee at night, not until I had this cancer, then my body would wake me up at to 2:30 or four o'clock in the

morning, at 2:30 in the morning, I don't want to get out of bed and go do a wee.

Bill Lee Emery 17:20

But I had to realize I am the servant of my body right now my body needs me to do things, take the drugs as required. Get up at 2:30 in the morning, go do a pee and come back and go to sleep. So I became a servant to my own body. And I'm really glad I made that shift. Because I stopped doing the internal arguments like I don't want to do this. And if my body needed it, I would almost salute and just do it.

Bill Gasiamis 17:48

I love that concept. My dad, going back to the reason for your explanation is my dad didn't want to be the servant of his body after a lifetime of being well and doing as he pleases, so to speak. He didn't want to give his body three months to just heal from having a new knee, and then he created his own additional mental anguish and suffering to the physical suffering that he was experiencing.

Bill Gasiamis 18:31

And it's unnecessary, because I think that that mental anguish, decreased the rapidity of his physical recovery and his mindset was not that of somebody who was going to overcome this adversity. It was somebody who was stuck in a moment in time and couldn't see light at the end of the tunnel a path forward.

Bill Gasiamis 18:58

Literally, after being forever well. And then just finding himself for like, you know what the audience would say? It's like, the amount of time he was unwell. It's like peeing in the ocean like it makes a difference. It's like you're saying about fighting in a cycle and and trying to make a difference. It's such a small amount of time yet to see him suffer through that was worse than seeing suffering him suffering from the pain of being freshly operated on and stitched up and immobile.

Bill Lee Emery 19:34

Yeah. And that's actually you know, for anyone listening here, this is such an important point. When when I had my PET scan, so we test came back said Yep, we've got throat cancer here. Then I had the PET scan to see if there was cancer in the rest of my body. So I had the PET scan on a Monday, and I was supposed to talk to the oncologist on the Wednesday. Well, he got COVID so that kind of blur

that out, so it didn't actually talk to him till the Friday.

Bill Lee Emery 20:04

So I had five days of wondering, is it just here in my throat? Or is it in the rest of my body? And it was like being, you know, practice mindfulness for a long time? Well, this was mindfulness on steroids. You know, I walk out, you know, where we live here in the Eco village. And I've looked at nature and I'll be again, wow, it's like I was, you know, back in my 20s, smoking dope going far out, man, look at this leaf.

Bill Lee Emery 20:34

And it was like, every single day, no day was Ordinary, ordinary day, just every day was like, an adventure, because I didn't know what was going to happen next. But one of the things I was very clear about my body was about to go through a whole bunch of trauma, chemotherapy, radiation, like neither of those things are pretty things.

Bill Lee Emery 21:03

And what I didn't want to do was to add more stress to my nervous system to my adrenals. So maybe twice, in that period, I would go forward into the future with a negative outcome. Oh, my God, what if I did it twice, and I'm going whoa, hang on Bill. I'm a servant of our body, I'm not going to hit myself over the head with all this unnecessary angsting. Because I didn't know what was going to happen.

Bill Lee Emery 21:33

And if I don't know what's going to happen, then at least give myself the best chance of something good happening, because it's either a curse, or it's going to be a blessing. So I didn't allow myself, I had boundaries on my own imagination, I wasn't gonna go forward and scare the shit out of myself, about all the horrible things that could possibly happen to me. I knew there was a 90% chance of recovery, and I was gonna be in that 90%. So I had a very clear outcome.

Bill Lee Emery 22:01

And so for anyone listening to this, when you get any kind of diagnosis like it's almost indulgent "what if" "poor me" I understand it. But it's indulgent, our body, just does not need that extra stress. And I'm really glad I had those clear boundaries, other people, but I had those really clear boundaries with myself, I wasn't going to do that to myself.

Blessing or Curse



Bill Gasiamis 22:38

What's interesting that came up for me when you said it's either a blessing or a curse, even a curse could be a blessing. Right, because we label something as a curse. Before it has been able to fully play out its lifeline, its cycle. And again, labeling it occurs is again, taking us down that path of despair, taking us down that path of negative mindset I've stuck of being fixed of not being able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Yet, I know that, you know, and I'm writing the chapter in my book at the moment, which is a chapter about stumbling across your purpose.

Bill Gasiamis 23:27

My purpose be this podcast writing a book about supporting stroke survivors, doing all that stuff came from, what was or appeared to be to some people a "curse", I never took it that way. But some people did. And now those people are the ones who 10 years down if you you happen to get into a conversation with them and kind of give them the update of where I am now what I've overcome whatever achieved, etc.

Bill Gasiamis 24:01

If you remind them what they said 10 years ago, or what they imagined or what they thought that perhaps this was some kind of a curse. They would, they would have a completely that they would their head kind of wouldn't be able to comprehend that what they said such a long time ago could have been so short-sighted. Do you know what I mean? Like it was so short-sighted.

Bill Lee Emery 24:36

Yeah. And it's about perspective. And it's also you know, it's tough when you get, you know, a diagnosis of any kind. That can be potentially life-changing or life-

threatening. But there's so many people doing extraordinary things in the world. And they're doing it Because of some event that happened, that could have been a curse, but they've taken that thing. And they've made it into their life's purpose, their life's work, and they've been able to serve like you are so many people because of that particular thing happened.

Bill Lee Emery 25:16

And many people said to me you know, am I am I going to share what I've, what I've learned? And I've written a couple of books this, you know, and Julius hits me. This isn't going to become another book, as I say, well, now one, well, kind of well, yeah, probably. So of course it is, of course, it's gotta go revocable something I'm going to be doing this year, because there are things that any of us, you and I, if you've been doing something for a period of time, you can take that for granted.

Bill Lee Emery 25:55

Almost, it's like everyone knows that stuff. Well, not everyone does. Not everyone knows that things that you and I have experienced and some of your listeners have experienced. And so for me, if I can adjust some of the people I would speak to in the hospital and around, just give them a little, a few snippets that go, Wow, that's amazing. Game one. Yeah, it is amazing.

Bill Lee Emery 26:17

So it's even more amazing when you use it. So talk to some of the nurses about pain control, you have that language, a whole bunch of different things. So, you know, this is an event is neither good nor bad. And I intend to make it a blessing. So there will be a book, my version of what's been going through my life last six months, so that maybe other people can pick it up.

Bill Gasiamis 26:42

I feel like and, again, this just coming from me, right? I feel like it's your obligation to write a book about it. Do you know what I mean? You know, where I'm coming from coming from a place of love, right? It's that the only thing we can do as human beings, well, we can do lots of things. But I think the only meaningful thing that we can do is make life better for other people, whether we're here or not.

Bill Gasiamis 27:11

If we can make life better for other people, our purpose in life, our life's purpose has been met, we've done it. And I feel like everybody doesn't have to write a book. But I think everyone has an obligation to write one if they have the resources, and if they can, and if they choose to. And it's like, there's no doubt about it, that your version of your story, although it's different from mine, I can learn from it, I have already learned a lot from it.

Bill Gasiamis 27:41

And, and the fact that you've already experienced what it's like to not be able to swallow and to go through occupational therapy and to go through all the things that you went through, there are things that stroke survivors go through stroke survivors often lose their ability to swallow because of the stroke. Others have that ability taken because of the stroke of then it's complicated by the tubes that go down their throat and the amount of time they need to keep them there. And there's no doubt about it that what we're all doing is doesn't matter how our, our suffering, turns up, we're all going through suffering, and we're looking for a way out of suffering. And that way out is the part of the story that needs to be told yes. And shared so that others can go, I might try and do a little bit of Bill's version. And I might try a little bit of that guy's version and so on. And then yes, let's see what happens.

Bill Gasiamis 28:08

And there's no doubt about it that what we're all doing is doesn't matter how our suffering turns up, we're all going through suffering, and we're looking for a way out of suffering. And that way out is the part of the story that needs to be told and shared so that others can go, I might try a little bit of Bill's version. And I might try a little bit of that guy's version and so on. And then let's see what happens.

Communicate With Your Body - Bill Lee Emery

Bill Lee Emery 28:19

Yeah, because all the things that I did my system that I had, I didn't make them up other people made them up. And one of the things that I found really, really useful. And something I've been doing for a long time from my Gestalt training, is I talk to my body, you know, me and my body have a lovely relationship.

Bill Lee Emery 29:03

We really like each other, you know, I'll hug myself sometimes, and even in public, don't scare too many people don't do it on buses, me, and my body had this really beautiful, intimate relationship. And I've been doing this for a long, long time. So when I first got the diagnosis, me and my body would have a chat and say, Hey, buddy, this is what's going on. And the other thing I did not do is wage war on my cancer.

Bill Gasiamis 29:39

Tell me about that. This is really interesting.

Bill Lee Emery 29:41

Because you know, the war against drugs, the war against terrorism, the war against this, the war against that, in my view, all it does, is put money and attention into places where you don't need it and they'll never stop drugs on the world, they'll probably never stop terrorism in the world. But you find all these different companies becoming extremely rich because of it.

Bill Lee Emery 30:10

And so when people have a battle against their cancer or their stroke, they are fighting their own body. Now, me and my body, my psyche, my DNA, my genetics, everything, my view of the world, my childhood upbringing, my traumas, all these different things, we all collaborated together, and it came up in a form of throat cancer. So it's like, if I was to stab my toe, will be to blame my toe, and hit my toe for stabbing it against a rock, well, I'm part of my toe, it was my lack of awareness not looking where I'm going, then I'm connected to this.

Bill Lee Emery 30:57

So instead of fighting my cancer, I decided to collaborate with my body. Because together all of us, you know, me, myself and I and my body, etc, we co-created this, it didn't pick on me, it's something that we did together. So rather than fight it, I would collaborate, I would talk to them about it, say, Hey, this is what's going on. Here's some treatment. So even before I had the treatment before chemo, before radiation I would tell my body, this is what's about to happen, take the good things that we need from this, you know, high end medical system that are so alien to me and the pharmacological drugs that they're gonna give me take the best that you need from this.

Bill Lee Emery 31:40

And, you know, let's get rid of the rest as soon as we can. So I talked to my body, just before I go to sleep, I'd say Hey, buddy, how you going. And we'll have this lovely chat. And, I have to share this with you, this is just a beautiful vision I had, you know, as cells in our body are dying, and replenishing as we speak, you know, all the time.

Bill Lee Emery 32:03

So I had this kind of vision of, there were two cells. And it was like, you know, in a race when you have a relay, and there's a baton that you pass from one to the other. So it was like, the one that was dying would pass on the baton of the DNA to the new cell. And the old cell would whisper to the new cell, hey, our human being loves us.

Bill Lee Emery 32:29

And so the new cell would get this information that our human being loves us, we go, wow, good, we have a human being they just loves us and appreciates us. And it was dancing and running off until the next one. And so it was such a blissful kind of experience.

Intro 32:47

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 33:11

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 33:31

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 Lee Emery 33:50

I don't take drugs I could feel the cells in my body just radiating out appreciation for my appreciation of all the hard work that they were doing through this seven week intense in a fairly intense kind of sprint, it was a sprint, not a marathon. So and just being able to do that I think made a big difference.

Bill Gasiamis 34:23

For as long as I can remember before I knew that the way we speak to ourselves has a physiological response. Right? I used to do that with cold so I'd have a get a bug over winter or whatever and I'd let it run its course for a couple of days and then by day three or day four, you know I'd be over it as well. I wouldn't want to I'd want to get back out and about and whatever not go to bed and just say okay, it's been a couple of days you've done your thing.

Bill Gasiamis 34:54

I appreciate it, I'm taking notice, I've you know, rested and I'm good gonna continue to rest and get better and heal myself and the nose, you can stop running now and the chills, they can go away now and you know the rest of the body can just do what it's got to do to get me back on my feet and make me feel better, etc. And I will do that always after probably day two, maybe day three, and then the next day, I would start to notice a shift in the way that I'd feel.

Bill Gasiamis 35:31

In the times that I didn't do that my cold my recovery or whatever you want to call it took a little bit longer, three, four or five days, and it would extend out. And I'd be off my feet for a little bit longer. And it was I think me just not paying attention to what my body was telling me and then not doing what it needed me to do, and therefore extending that, but when I did pay attention to my body, and I did tell it that I was paying attention and listening, it was coming, it was decreasing the amount of time that it was expecting me to be on my butt resting.

Bill Gasiamis 36:10

And again, I took this into surgery when I was going into brain surgery for the after the third bleed in 2014 in November 2014. And I remember, I had spent about three years preparing my body for this particular surgery. And I had stopped drinking caffeine, gluten, dairy, alcohol, all those things were out. And I

was in the best shape I had ever been. And the whole purpose of that was to deliver to the surgeons the best possible version of myself. So what they're dealing with is just my head and not with the rest of my body.

Bill Gasiamis 36:54

And that I figured was the best gift I could give them. Seeing as though I really wanted a really good outcome from them. And I expected them to be on their game, right. And then I remember, I got in touch with a guy who is a hypnotherapist amongst other things. And I asked him to come and take me through a session where the outcome was to have a conversation with my body about how much it was going to bleed during the surgery and for what purposes it would bleed. And when it would be necessary and when it's ok to stop.

Bill Gasiamis 37:37

And that's basically what we did, we went through that process so that when the and that I told my brain that it was going to be opened up and interfered within that when it happened, it wasn't going to be a shock to the brain, it was going to be prepared for it. And that when that finished that was also going to be a a time to just settle down, relax, get into healing and let let the next sort of part of the process take its course.

Bill Gasiamis 38:09

And I don't remember any of that conversation that I had with my hypnotherapist because I was under I was out. It was an hour session. It felt like about a minute or two. And when I went into surgery, we had been given the expectation that this is going to take the majority of the day, I was the first person booked in because they expected it to take the longest.

Bill Gasiamis 38:40

And they were planning on a massive long day. And I was in surgery for half the time that they expected. And it was a real kind of surprise to the surgeons when they were speaking to my wife saying, look, this went really well everything that we needed to do was done with took out the faulty blood vessel. You know, he is going to recovery now he's going to recover but the surgery took half the time to what we thought.

Bill Lee Emery 39:18

What you're saying here, Bill, it is so important. I learned to negotiate and make

deals with my body 30, 40 years ago, and the same thing you know, I get a cold or flu or whatever. And I say I'm becoming a servant on my body. Now in my journey into mainstream medicine and pharmacology, etc.

Mainstream vs Alternative Medicine

Bill Lee Emery 39:47

There's this sometimes a separation of views. There's mainstream medicine and there's so called alternative medicine. And both these fields, sometimes throw Scud missiles at each other. And they that learn from the wisdom that are both caught. And I have to say I appreciate all the millions of dollars that they put into these machines that were warring around my head and body with the radiation.

Bill Lee Emery 39:48

Because I might have been the same state. So I have now and for pharmacology, I have a great deal of appreciation for that. But one of the things they don't always share some of the wisdom that comes from maybe a more philosophical approach, my radiation specialist at the end of my treatment, we were reviewing my progress. And he said to me, he has asked me what I was doing.

Bill Lee Emery 40:54

And I was telling him, you know, because they pretty much heard my story all the way through, he said, Bill, you're not normal. And I said, Thank you. Can I quote you? He said sure. So that's the first line of my book, Bill, you're not normal. And my point here is that if only the surgeons who worked with you, and I don't know whether they did or not, and I'm assuming that they didn't.

Bill Lee Emery 41:24

But they said, hey, you know, this guy Bill that came in? How come it took half the time? Yeah, if every patient that came in, did the same thing that Bill was doing. We can get twice as many people in a day. Or we could spend half a day playing golf whatever they choose. So why isn't that they don't go just Oh, yeah, that just, you know, that's weird.

Bill Lee Emery 41:52

And they don't go exploring? Well, what are they doing? So I was talking to my radiation specialists whose full name is Siddhartha. They call it his name, they called Sid, I'm going Siddhartha as in Prince Siddhartha, as in who became

Buddha? And he is smiling, because he knows, but not too many people, I guess, know that I'm going well, I have got Buddha as my radiation specialists.

Bill Lee Emery 42:21

And he was telling me a story in Western Australia, where a naturopathic friend of his wanted to get together with some mainstream people, and have a conference where both opposites if you like, could meet and share wisdom. And it never got off the ground. And he said, he's a guest who candidate? I'm going to medical people. He said, No, it wasn't. He said it was the naturopaths.

Bill Lee Emery 42:51

They didn't want to deal with the opposite side. And really, what I'm saying is here is there is a place for Integrative Medicine, where we take the best of both, and we get both sides to explore and see what's in the other camp. Because there may be some things that are just out of your viewpoint that can actually save a lot. They can reduce suffering, that maybe there's some drugs that you do need, maybe there's some homeopathics, or naturopathic things that can mitigate some of the side effects of medicine.

Bill Lee Emery 43:25

When I cut the list of what the chemo can do, there was like five pages of all the things that the chemo therapy can do to my body. I think if I looked at that list, the beginner would have gone whoa, all of that stuff. No, thank you. But fortunately, I was working with a natural, so Well, okay, take the drugs for this, and we can mitigate those side effects. So, you know, as a consumer, I've got the best of both worlds.

Bill Lee Emery 43:53

I've got the high end, you know, technology and the drugs. But I've also got the wisdom from acupuncture, which has been around for 5000 years, or more. So I have regular acupuncture and going to my chiropractor and have natural probably I can say my naturopath, I'll do all these things to support me because I wanted to give my body the best chance of so my mantra through this was to heal through it and thrive from it, not just survive, I want to thrive.

Bill Lee Emery 44:29

So now I'm in the thriving part of all of this, because to just give an update just before Christmas, when I had another PET scan. So it was three months at the

after the end of my treatment of radiation and chemo. They give you a PET scan to see what's going on. And my pet scan was an all clear. So my body has gone through this journey. It's come out it's okay there's no cancer cells anywhere. It's all that now I still need to check every three months and then every six months.

Bill Lee Emery 45:01

You know, we kind of figured that was going to happen, but it was really good to get the clinical results of clean Bill of health. And, and that's in part because of the state of my body to begin with. But also because it's for that I got because of the mindset I had, because of all the beautiful test another thing that we did the beginning, Julie and I decided, okay, so this is going to be January, I don't know how it's going to happen.

Bill Lee Emery 45:31

But let's have let's call in human angels along the way, let's have these beautiful human beings pop up exactly when we need them. And they would, in our health fund in government services in the hospital, we'd have people come in to do some gardening for me because I didn't have the energy to do that at all. Someone produced pumpkin pie so all these human angels will pop up and go, Wow, this is far out, how long has this been going on.

Bill Lee Emery 46:02

So we keep on we've kept that going, we're still calling in human angels to help us to do this to do that. And so this is now a permanent thing. And human angels are everywhere, your Human Angel, to so many people I am to so many people. And so they're there, we just have to kind of once you call them in, they show up more often. Because now you recognize that they're there.

Bill Gasiamis 46:26

The similarities in the stuff that you're coming up with, that happen to you that you experienced, and the stuff that happened to me and I experienced and all a whole bunch of other stroke survivors who I've spoken to, you know, more than 200 Now on my podcast, is just uncanny. And I'm gonna go over it, but I'm gonna do it at the end, because I know we're going to touch on more.

Bill Gasiamis 46:49

And I just, I'm not surprised. But now that I've seen the pattern it continues to pop up in every aspect of life. It's just, it's just fabulous that we all share actually

the same pattern to get to this point. i The point that I got two strikes, the best thing that ever happened to me. And what you're describing is you're describing a lot of the key things that made it possible for me to say, and many other stroke survivors who I interviewed to say that and that came from a situation that was not ideal suffering.

Bill Gasiamis 47:31

And then what else came from that was from attaching meaning to that suffering. Which then if you attach meaning to suffering, and then you take action on that, then that leads to purpose. Now, some people listening might not be at purpose yet, but they are already in the phase of experience suffering, they've attached the meaning to it, and now they're starting to reach out to make a difference for other people.

Man's Search For Meaning



Bill Gasiamis 48:09

And what's to come is their life's purpose will emerge because that's what life's purpose is. And that reminds me of an equation that Viktor Frankl spoke about which is $\text{despair} = \text{suffering} - \text{meaning}$.

Bill Lee Emery 48:42

Yes, I was thinking about Viktor Frankl and he, of course, was a Holocaust survivor. And what's his book in search of meaning?

Bill Gasiamis 48:52

Man's Search For Meaning.

Bill Lee Emery 48:54

Yeah, which is like, you know, from such a dire kind of horrendous place. You know, that was his book, and his experience and the way that he approached it was his gift to humankind, which was such a precious gift, and so many people that have gone through horrendous things. But what's emerged from it, and you say, the best thing that's happened to you and, this has been one of the best things that happened to me, I gotta say.

Bill Lee Emery 49:27

Because of the gifts and the gems that are there. And if when something like this happens, we can have the foresight to go, okay. There are gifts amongst this. I don't know what they are, but I'm going to look for them, then you'll find them. But if we go in going, this is shit, this is horrible, this is a disaster. Then they have right in front of us, but we don't have the eyes. We don't have the ears. We don't have the consciousness and notice that they're there. And so we miss them.

Bill Lee Emery 49:58

And so we have to go Through all this despairing and more suffering, like, I don't know who said it, but it might have been, it might have been Buddha that he said, but it's like pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional. Any living things are going to experience pain, and suffering is an optional extra. And to the degree that we do despairing around our suffering, then we don't make anything useful of it. So no matter what happens to us, we can, we can if we choose, and it can take, you know, understand this can take a lot of courage, it can take a lot of perseverance, it can take a lot of consciousness to go and do that.

Bill Lee Emery 50:40

But the alternative is just despair. And that's just plain shit. No good thing about playing despair, and you can pick yourself out of it. So at least people listening to this, if they've listened to the other podcasts that you've gotten and for other people is, it comes down to us, in the end, it comes down to us and our state of consciousness, and our perspective and what we choose to do with it.

Bill Lee Emery 51:18

Because you know, we can have all this laid out in front of us, it's like going to a banquet. And we're starving, hungry, it's laid out in front of us. But until we reach our hand up and pick out a piece of fruit, or, you know, a piece of chicken or whatever, and we eat it, and we consume it, and we do something with it, is there in front of us, but it's no good until we actually take some kind of action.

Bill Gasiamis 51:45

Yeah, one of the things that I think Viktor Frankl was really good at was understanding the different types of suffering. So he definitely experienced physical suffering, because he was in a concentration camp, they used them as slave labor to build train tracks and to build infrastructure and to build all this stuff that they needed to keep the war effort going. So he was in constant physical suffering, because of the lack of equipment, shoes, the beatings that he would receive.

Bill Gasiamis 52:17

And then he realized that there was another aspect of suffering the mental suffering, which was the one that was going to be his worst enemy. And that he separated that the physical suffering from the mental suffering and he made the mental suffering, he transformed that into this is going to mean that I'm going to be able to get back to humanity, when all this ends, and I'm going to be able to tell the story, and I'm going to be able to help people overcome things.

Bill Gasiamis 52:50

And he also, as a psychotherapist, he was also able to use his skills to support people get through whatever it was that they were going through while they're in the concentration camp with him. And what I think I also understood, but I haven't been able to find a follow up to it was that he was also able to, for the moment, while he was in their time, kind of put a pause on the emotional suffering. Because he saw so many horrors, that what he had to do was disconnect from that for that time.

Bill Gasiamis 53:23

And then as a result of that, he kind of park the emotional suffering. And I feel like, but I never got to see any information about Viktor Frankl later. I feel like he dealt with the emotional suffering later. Yeah. But while he was in that moment, he was kind of accepting the physical suffering, transforming the mental suffering, and parking, the emotional suffering, and they all got dealt with in the appropriate time.

Bill Gasiamis 53:58

And when you see him speaking interviews on YouTube, you know, maybe I think in the seven years he's being interviewed about his time, and about his experience and what he learned and what he taught other people he doesn't

appear to be the kind of person who I would picture talking about his time in such terrible circumstances in such a terrible situation, does not put that vibe out at all.

Bill Lee Emery 54:28

Yeah. And I think you know, when we're in a time of crisis, you know, let's say there's a car accident and someone's injured if we, you know, cry and wail and moan and and have a big emotional reaction then we're not much good. You know, at that point, you've got to Okay, move the body, help the person in the way do things stop the traffic, get help, etc.

Bill Lee Emery 54:55

And park your emotional distress about it, and then deal with it later. And of course, the body becomes a vehicle for anything that's an Express, that's not resolved. And so, at the beginning of my treatment, I went to see someone who could help me deal with any of the past emotional things that have led to me because it's the throat chakra. I'm the youngest of three boys had to get my voice heard, there's a bunch of things around this.

Bill Lee Emery 55:30

And part of my story was, you know, my throat was my weak link. And if I get a cold, and it would hit my throat first. So my story around my throat was this was my weak link. And I've been keeping the story going for decades, once I realized that I stopped that. And now this is actually my strength, and my voice has got power. The other story around me is I've got a cast iron stomach when I was a child, so I could eat anything. And that's a really healthy thing to have.

Bill Lee Emery 56:03

So I was really the language around my throat, and how I would do this. So, you know, when I look back, and all of these things, and you know, the emotional aspect, the DNA aspect, the things from my ancestors, all these different things that culminated in this experience for me, giving me an opportunity to learn more about myself. One of the things too, when I was doing my NLP Master Practitioner, there was one of the trainers a guy called Peter Dawson.

Bill Lee Emery 56:37

And he was well known in the NLP field for doing what he called slaughtering sacred cows. And what he would do, he would take one of the concepts around

NLP. And he'd pull it apart, he would slaughter the sacred thing that we had held in NLP, I think it would help us put it back together and why. So one of the sacred cows that I've had since I was 28 29, is I haven't eaten red meat in like 45 years.

Bill Lee Emery 57:12

I did that because I learned I'd come out of the world of computers and start a whole new life and now I've been meditating. And when I first started my body said, Bill, you don't need red meat anymore. And I've been an avid red meat eater. And so I went okay, sure, and I just stopped eating meat. And then that became part of my identity. I am a non meat eater, I would eat chicken or fish, but I don't eat red meat.

Bill Lee Emery 57:43

So when I was going through chemo, and chemo just shatter my blood cells, like just annihilated them, my platelets were down my red blood cells were down they were just like as a mess. And at one point, I couldn't actually have chemotherapy because my platelets were down so low. And then the next week, they were down even lower. So not only couldn't I have chemo, but they had to give me a blood transfusion.

Bill Lee Emery 58:12

And a friend of mine said, Bill, the best way to get your blood cells, your hemoglobin back up again, is actually eat red meat. I haven't eaten red meat in 45 years, but now I'm a servant of my body. If my body wants red meat, I'll eat red meat. And my daughter who's 32 now and she's a vegetarian has been all her life has never eaten meat ever in her life. So I'm telling her Hey, darling, guess what, I'm gonna need some red meat now.

Bill Lee Emery 58:53

So I said a men's retreat and I told people what was going on. I said I'm slaughtering the sacred cow of a non meat eater and now I'm going to become one and on the Saturday morning, they most of its vegetarian and saturday morning we're going to have sausages and bacon, etc. So I'm going, alright it's a good time. So I had two sausages, and some bacon and some eggs and mushrooms, etc.

Bill Lee Emery 59:24

And I ate them down. Too much too soon. My body was just going, what are you

doing Bill? So that next morning, I was like I was I miss workshops in the morning. I couldn't participate. My body was just churning and I just you know beef sauce is probably not a good starter bacon probably not a good idea. I would have been better off just having little bits of brisket.

Nothing Is Sacred Anymore



Bill Lee Emery 59:54

So I did tell my body okay, body, I'm gonna give you some red meat because of blah, blah, blah, and here it comes. And my body should've said, Bill, not two sausages, maybe a quarter of one and forget the bacon, let's just do this bit by bit. And so I kind of learned from that, and my next door neighbor was making this beautiful Angus beef lasagna. And it looks so really nice, so lovely.

Bill Lee Emery 1:00:24

And I had a slice, and I should have had a quarter of the slice, because the next day, you know, my body is going oh no. So now I'm a very slow red meat eater, but that was me, again, being a servant to my body, and taking the things that I'd held as being sacred. And going, you know, when I first stopped eating red meat, my body didn't say just for a week, Bill was just for a year. And I kept it as an ongoing thing. I never questioned it.

Bill Lee Emery 1:01:01

And so the lesson for me is, you know, whatever I take on board, maybe I need to review those things. And in this space, what my body's actually needing is a little bit more protein from red meat. So I am taking a little bit, and it really helped me to go at that time I'm going, anything is open, I'm willing to look at any part of my life, in service to my body, nothing is sacred anymore, nothing is sacred.

Bill Lee Emery 1:01:34

And that was like a big jump for me. Because, you know, there are certain things that I would hold as being this is it, this is me, so everything was on the table. The only thing the higher, logic ever around this was like, if it says my body, I'll do it, if it means standing on my head, whistling Dixie, that I'll do that. Whatever my body needs, I'm gonna serve it.

Intro 1:02:00

It feels similar to the way people bring behaviors from the teenage years or from the 20s. Or from, you know, when they were in primary school and apply them to life when they're 30 40 50, or 60. And it's like it was appropriate, then, yes, times have changed, things have moved on people around you are different. No one knows your history in the place that you work, for example, that behavior is no longer appropriate, you can stop doing it, expressing it, telling us about it, whatever it's possible to stop, and to change it and to turn it into something else.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:43

Because it just has no value here. It's like trying to plug in, you know, the very first television that was ever invented in 2020, you're not going to get anything out of it, you're just going to be wasting your time. So it's really interesting, and you did it a couple of times, you also did it with your ideas and your thoughts around, you know, modern medicine, and whether it was appropriate to go down that path.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:43

And up until that time, it hadn't been appropriate, it wasn't necessary, and you did well in I'm not gonna say avoiding it, but in not being reliant on it, because you did a great job. And then when it was necessary, yeah, it was necessary. And that idea from your 20s to be a, you know, that hippie version of you.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:40

Express itself, but not so fundamentally that it was going to then be in the way of you getting better. And being able to tell the story about it and then being able to write a book about it that's coming up. And then also, you've gone down that path of changing, turning this or evolving this or growing from this, this other work that you want to do and help men out. Tell me a little bit about what else has evolved from this situation that you went through?

Bill Lee Emery 1:04:12

Yeah, so I've done a lot of work in the last 10 years around men's work. There's an organization called Men's Wellbeing Australia, which is a national thing and that two gatherings that happened in Queensland one called Manhood and the other ones called Man shine. And I went to an elder's gathering and was initiated as an elder, officially an old fart now.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:43

Congratulations.

Bill Lee Emery 1:04:47

And in that work, you know, men are typically portrayed as not having access to our feelings, and I had to say that's completely wrong in the right circumstance, we are fully connected to all the feelings of human beings have.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:10

What's the distinction? We are fully connected. So, men are perceived that way. You, and I both agree that we are connected. But what's the distinction there? What is the thing around men and their feelings that's challenging? Or, that's an issue.

Bill Lee Emery 1:05:27

So again, that's like, you know, as we're a teenage we act in a certain way. And we generalize about life as a teenager or life as a male life is a female, and that women are more in touch with their intuition. Well, you and I both know that intuition is a human thing. It's not gender specific. But you know, cultures grow up, and men do this, and women do this, and etc, etc, etc.

Bill Lee Emery 1:05:55

And so we get assigned certain ways of, you know, men can't multitask. Well, I have to say, multitasking, is a load of shit anyway, in my view, you're better off doing one thing at a time being fully present. So part of my involvement in men's work is, it's been such a sacred space for honesty, and truth, and respect.

Bill Lee Emery 1:06:22

So when we sit in a circle, and someone has a talking stick, that only one person speaks at a time, no one tells people what to do there's no advice giving, there's no philosophizing, there's only owning your own stuff. So we use a lot of I statements. So I feel I think I do, not you do we do is me owning my stuff.

Bill Lee Emery 1:06:46

And within this space, when human beings, male or female, because I know women's groups do the same thing, too. When we're allowed to express what we're feeling, what we're thinking, and our experience of the world, without interruption, without advice, without someone telling us how to do or how to be, we can become our own healers. And what we do is we create the space around there for absolute intimacy, and honesty.

Bill Lee Emery 1:07:24

So going back to, you know, my earlier conversation about the structure that I had, structured creates everything, everything has structure, one kind, when we have a clear structure, which leads to a certain outcome, then the structure is the magic. You know, we have to go through and do the magic thing. So you know, when the doctors and nurses are saying, you're amazing Bill and going yeah, well, right. What's really amazing is the structure that we're using. So in men's work, that's a very clear structure.

A Heart-Centered Recovery



Bill Lee Emery 1:08:00

And I guess why I'm led to this and why I love it so much. It's very heart-centered. It's very heart-centered. You know, people don't care when we go to the gatherings what your status is, what kind of car you're driving, how much money you've got, how many houses you got? Your investment? The only thing the only criteria is how open is your heart?

Bill Lee Emery 1:08:26

How generous is your heart, how compassionate is your heart, not how clever you are or how gutsy are you as a warrior it's what's in your heart. And that's why I love this particular space, and why I'm doing a lot of work in that area. And

that's where, you know, this next area of my life is going to be around doing that. And the other thing that comes from this, too, is, you know, I said before that I want to heal through and thrive from.

Bill Lee Emery 1:08:58

So part of my thriving is helping men in particular. But not exclusively, find their second wind. You know, when you're in a competition, and you're in a race, for example, and you hit the wall, it says they come from this point of exhaustion, but you keep on going. And what happens is you kick into a phenomenon called the second wind, and you've gone through all the hard stuff, you know, the hustle and the grind and, and the exhaustion and the pain and the determination.

Bill Lee Emery 1:09:29

And then when you get into the second when it's easier, there's less effort, and you get further faster. And for me, a lot of people half the age men in particular, you know after the age of 45 50 they've come from the corporate world, they've done all the hard yakka and now they want more ease and grace. Now they want to live more on their heart. So my work really now is helping people find their second wind, what's the thing that brings them joy, what's the thing that makes their heart sing.

Bill Lee Emery 1:10:03

Because in my world, if my heart has not singing, it's probably sobbing quietly somewhere in a corner. And I would much rather use my skills, things that I've got to help people find what makes their heart sing. And, to allow more that space into the world. Because, you know, when I look around the world, and all the things that I see happening, which I've never seen before, in my whole life, we need more heart singing and laughing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:36

It sounds like it's supporting people to, to apply meaning to their life now that the we'll call it hard stuff is out of the way, raising the family paying off the mortgage, or that kind of stuff, and then potentially even uncover and discover the purpose for their life. Because purpose takes on this weird thing again, you know, kind of we fall into purpose when our kids are born in that, you know, we make our purpose about our kids, and then they and then they leave the house.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:18

And then it's like, shit, what am I supposed to do now? My purpose, if my identity is so narrow, and it's only ever focused on a needs to provide for my family, and for my kids, you're going to be disappointed in about 20 years or so. And then you might have another 40 or 50 years to go. And you have to find another way to occupy your time that's purposeful, and meaningful, and it might not be grandchildren because although grandchildren kind of come, they're the ones that you're happy to hand back.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:01

They get somebody else's problem. So that's interesting. I've also kind of find that people fall into purpose at work, for example, they might start off in the first job they ever get, and then that job may lead to a promotion. And that may lead to promotion, they might even like their job specifically. But a pays well, that pays the bill helps them achieve their purpose of raising the family, if they've got a family if they haven't, it's where they create their communities where they create connections.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:36

That's where they, do all their living. And then they get to retirement or just before retirement or some crazy corporate takeover, or redundancy or whatever. And then everything they've ever done, the purpose for going to work and for living abruptly comes to an end. And then it's like, I'm 40 Something I'm at maybe midlife crisis stage. What the hell do I do now? Like, who am I? How do I go about life without what I've known for the last 20 years, and I haven't put any thought into, I haven't put any thought to what comes after that phase of my life.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:18

And I've been naive and thinking that that phase is forever a forever phase. It's like, as if, as if something was going to last forever. And last that long, that I don't have to put any work into thinking about what may come later or what or how I need to position you know, the, the parts so that they can serve me down the track. It's like being it's kind of living life without purpose, but thinking that you have one.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:55

And then you realize I actually didn't really have a purpose, I had a task and my task was to raise my children to pay the bills to support my family, etc. And then it's like, well, what do I do now stroke does that stroke, illness, whatever it is,

takes people from identifying as they did the day before, to not knowing how they identify not knowing any more who they are.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:24

And not knowing how stroke or how illness, you know, can be blended in and made part of life's purpose or, or life's lessons or life's blessings. And it's just a real challenging and battling and can lead to despair can cause unnecessary mental suffering and anguish and, you know, without applying appropriate meaning to it can lead to despair.

Bill Lee Emery 1:14:55

Yeah, and for me, and you'll be familiar with this term. It's an evolving thing. So, you know, my purpose or the things that I found meaning in my 20s, or 30s is different from now. And in my early 70s, you know, my purpose and meaning is very different from 20 years ago, there are connections and threads along the way. But we are human beings, you know, we are evolving, we're not a static thing I'm not 20 year old anymore, I'm not a 25 year old anymore or 35, so, we're always evolving.

Bill Lee Emery 1:15:36

And so if we allow ourselves to, to step into that, and to allow change, and to embrace what is there, and what's coming up, that is, for me much healthier than hanging on to my identity as the CEO of an organization, or this or that, or an actor or an actress, or whatever it might be, you know, and I was just thinking you're in, we've been watching a series on on Apple TV, and it really got us engrossed. And there's a couple of older actors there.

Bill Lee Emery 1:16:14

And you know, the story about, you know, old actors in the 70s and 80s, watching the movie of them 30 or 40 years ago, when they were young and healthy, and, and pining for how they used to be, and staying in the past, rather than embracing the fact that there might be at and gorgeous, and old and wrinkly. And what a shame that we, we sometimes go back into the past got a whole wish, I was just like this, you know, I'm the age that I am.

Bill Lee Emery 1:16:43

And I love the age that I am, I'll, you know, I'll never be this age again, you know, tomorrow, I'll be a day older. And so, but I'm really enjoying my aging body. Well,

some parts, but you know, sometimes I wish I could swim a little bit more or whatever, etc. but you know, that's part of me also accepting my aging, my mortality, and not to fight it, but to go, but to bless it.

The Three Things

Bill Lee Emery 1:17:16

What's that saying about old age is something that not everyone gets to have. So, I'm here on this listening to my heart, I really love my body, we have a really nice time on the inside of us. I have a beautiful partner, we live in a beautiful part of the world, we have a gorgeous community that we live in, there are so many blessings in my life. And Julie and I, when we go for a walk around our village, here we, we often say.

Bill Lee Emery 1:17:49

Okay, three things, what are the three things that we're grateful for. And those things helped me to remind, sometimes of the little things. Just the little things that can bring so much joy doesn't have to be a big thing. It can be a simple, simple thing. But that, to me brings more richness than some of the big milestones in my life. I've got to appreciate the little things more and more and more.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:17

Gratitude is part of meaning like it's one of those things that it's the antidote to despair. It's what takes suffering and mental anguish and mental suffering, and makes it less powerful and less able to take hold, you know, being grateful for the fact that you have a just a flower, just the flower that you noticed, you know, when you needed to notice it, so that you could take your mind away from all the other stuff you're going on.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:50

And to have that trippy moment where you noticed your plants and you're going wow, like that's amazing. That that's something that you can be grateful for, because he actually made it possible for you to occupy your mind elsewhere at a time when it was really important and necessary for you to do so. That supposedly insignificant flower not only gives life to you, but it gives life to us because of that bees existed because bees exist.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:20

They pollinate other plants, and they give us honey and we learn from them and and then birds exist because of that, like the whole thing is not little it's such a big thing of such a massive thing. And it's the ability to have the wisdom to notice that little thing, which is not little it's actually actually very huge, you know, and it's so beneficial to you in a moment where you needed nothing else.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:57

You didn't need medical intervention. You didn't need If you didn't need we were intervention, you didn't need naturopathic intervention, you didn't need alternative intervention, you needed a flower to notice. So that it can take your mind off it. I mean, what a gift what an amazing thing to have. That serves us. Yes, just for the sake that it grew there.

Bill Lee Emery 1:20:26

And thank you, there's one thing when I have my first PET scan, and it was five days before I had the results, I was almost like having a near death experience and my awareness was like on maximum. And, as I was going through this, and there was no ordinary guy, I began, wow, it's almost like, I'm high. And I want to help everyone to hold on to that state of consciousness, I want to keep this with me forever.

Bill Lee Emery 1:21:02

And I know that everything was passed, you know, I won't have that same heightened state of consciousness. But I was able to go, Huh, here's one thing that helps me get back to that. And that one thing was focusing on detail, small, infinitesimal detail. And I can go into my garden, and there's a crape myrtle there and it's flowering. And there's ths big bees and little bees.

Bill Lee Emery 1:21:31

And I can just focus in on the detail of every single pedal, and I'll be back, not may be in the same way. But I'll take tap back into that state of consciousness, or wonder of nothing else in this entire world, except for that little petal, that little bee, that little bee in that little petal in their little dance together, and the whole world goes away. And that's kind of like this, you know, kind of trippy space. And I go, that's it detail. It's not the big picture is the detail of small, small little things that can be quite trippy.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:10

And in that moment, you're not depressed, nothing, there's no anxiety, there's no past, there's no future, there's just the moment the present, and it's the most ideal place to be. In that time, it's definitely that time, when you're in the doctor surgery, you might be thinking about what you've done in the past, so that you can stop doing that, so you can support your future. And that's okay. But when you're in the moment in the garden, and that's really that time where everything goes away, and you can just be and that's it.

Bill Lee Emery 1:22:53

The bees going, Yup I'm just gonna be.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:02

I love it, I love it. I'm gonna ask you one last thing, because it's great to see you kind of being back in this space, I feel like not because of what you had to go through with your health. But it feels like there was a bit of a pause between what you were doing when I knew you, say 10 years ago.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:27

And then the middle kind of stage and then what I know of you now that to me, between you and me feels like there was a little bit of a pause between what I knew about you and how I knew you were going about life. But I knew generally what you're doing and what you're up to and how things were.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:44

And you made a couple of posts in that first post that you made that really, that kind of brought you into my awareness again, was the one that you made about the seven weeks of your treatment, and then the work that you're going to continue to do which we spoke about the men stuff. And then a little while later, you made this post on Facebook. And it was really deep and meaningful to me.

If You're Not Following Your Heart



Bill Gasiamis 1:24:12

And I want to unpack it a little bit. Because when I mentioned it, some people are going to think, oh, yeah, that's deep. Some people are going to think oh, well, doesn't really mean much. But when we look into it, we philosophize a little bit about it it's really cool. And you ask this question. And it went, "If you're not following your heart, then where are you headed?"

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:41

And I know that when a question like that is asked by you, it's not just a surface question. I know that there's so much more depth to that and I know exactly where you're coming from. But can we unpack that a little bit if you're not following your heart where are you headed? What does that mean?

Bill Lee Emery 1:25:02

Okay, so I'll tell you when this quote came from. And this is when I just been involved in mBraining as we both are.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25:16

Which is multiple brain integration techniques, if anyone wants to know what mBraining is just Google it, perhaps by the book, it's called using a multiple brains to do cool stuff, it is one of the most profound books you'll ever read. That being said, go ahead.

Bill Lee Emery 1:25:42

Okay, so it's by Grant Soosalu, and Marvin Oka. And so I was just sitting and meditating. And, the phrase just popped into my head. And it said, and it was a question of myself of myself. So if I'm not following my heart, then literally, where is my head, taking me? And when I've allowed my head brain, to rule the roost, to decide my direction or life, decide what I'm going to do.

Bill Lee Emery 1:26:20

It hasn't been a happy ending. And my physiotherapist around about the same time, said to me, when, when someone who is standing with correct posture, you will notice that their heart is slightly ahead of their head. So we are structurally and biologically designed to live from our heart. So in our heart is deep meaning is core values is compassion, compassion, for self compassion for others.

Bill Lee Emery 1:26:50

And our head brain and our gut brain are both there to serve our heart. So if I'm not following my heart, and I'm following my head, I'm going to be going into the jungle. And I'm gonna be doing what angsty and more suffering than I need to. And when I go in and ask my heart, hey, heart, what's going to make you sing what makes you come alive, what brings joy is going to, it's going to go into that place of compassion, compassion for myself first, and compassion for others.

Bill Lee Emery 1:27:26

And from this will come my direction, purpose and meaning, and joy and all those and fulfillment and satisfaction. So for a lot of people that I work with in the corporate field, you know, they've been driven by ambition, you know, by an idea might be fascinating. So the head brain, the gut brain kind of got together and cleansed this, what are we going to do in life, and they've gone through three divorces, their kids hate them, you know, their bodies in a mess. But they've got all these material possessions. Nothing wrong with those things.

Bill Lee Emery 1:27:59

But when they're taken in place of what brings the heart joy, for me, that is true. Suffering and despairing. So it was really a question for me it was, so Bill, you're going to follow your head, or you're going to listen to what your heart wants. And it was a reminder for me to come back and check into my heart is what's what's filling you with joy. And, and when, when I connect with this in my head brain can get really creative on how to what to do, you know, organize the logistics, manage, research, whatever.

Bill Lee Emery 1:28:42

And then my beautiful gut brain, which is around boundaries, deep core sense of self can organize itself on my actions to deliver those things that my heart won't and when I mentioned before that you know me and my body have a really good intimate relationship. You know, my head and my heart and my gut have a beautiful relationship with a really learned to come check in with each other. How

are you going? What do you need from me? And so we had this little happy dance inside of us and I know when my head is leading with something.

Bill Lee Emery 1:29:18

But if it's disconnected, if it's directionalized by my heart, that's fine. But if it's going on a little journey, all by itself, I'm going to be in shit somewhere along the track that I had to bring myself back to does my heart is this what my heart truly wants? Because my heart can be fickle. The fickle you know, when I go to Bunnings, for example, and we go for take my heart rate with because I'll want this and we're all gonna have this and my gut brain going well, do we actually need it?

Bill Lee Emery 1:29:48

You know, like, we've got three already, do we really need another one? I guess not. So but underneath the fickleness is the deeper things, the deep and meaningful things so things that are connected to purpose, deeper, evolving purpose, you know what brings meaning what brings satisfaction, deep satisfaction, not superficial stuff. And for me if you know, and this was really a reminder of, if I'm not following my heart, then Where am I headed? And for me, I need, I need reminders, you know, I fish around and stuff for a while, but I still need reminders. What does my heart want?

Bill Gasiamis 1:30:29

You're not perfect.

Bill Lee Emery 1:30:34

Despite what I told you.

Bill Gasiamis 1:30:39

It's been really lovely having this conversation with you and catching up with you after some time, I reckon about five or six years, at least. Getting to be around you and learning from you, as a wise elder that you are. Was really a pleasure at the time, you know, I got a lot out of being in a room with you, having you at my place, you know, connecting with you with other brains and that it was really good. The one thing that I remember about you that I loved the most was your hugs.

Bill Lee Emery 1:31:23

Yes, I have a bit of a reputation for that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:31:25

And best hugs ever Bill.

Bill Lee Emery 1:31:30

Yeah, and you know, why? So I learned to hug 40 something years ago. And what I learned, the secret of a good hug, is not gender related. It it's human to human. And it is breathing the same air as the other person. And being fully in my body, in the present moment.,with nothing else, my internal dialogue would be always nil. And I just, and I breathe, and I'd feel the other human being in front of me close to me, and I'd feel my human being. And it just be to human beings enjoying presence together that's it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:32:32

You know what that experience taught me? It taught me that I was keen to get out of a hug pretty quickly. I was just coming. I was just doing the old come in, get it get out. And I remember having to kind of having to stay there with you.

Bill Lee Emery 1:32:54

I wasn't gonna let you go.

Bill Gasiamis 1:32:55

Yeah. And then allowing myself to stay there and then experiencing the hug. And then going, when we're in a room in a training room, or coaching, or when we were learning together, then it was like, Okay, time for the hugs. And I was like, okay, straight to, Bill, go over there and get a hug over there. Because that's the standard, you know, that we all need to aspire to.

Bill Gasiamis 1:33:22

It was truly an interesting learning experience that to connect with somebody, you know, you do have to be out of your head in that moment. You do have to be present. And you do have to make it about the other person, as much as it is about you, you know, has to be about the other person. And it's interesting to remember one thing about something somebody who is more than, you know, one thing above all else about somebody asked for to be the hug.

Bill Gasiamis 1:33:57

I don't know anybody else for the hugs, you know, I know some people for their terrible handshakes and some for their overbearing, hard handshakes. But the hug is it's a really interesting thing. You know, it's kind of, it's the one thing that

Zoom, when I interview people from all around the world. It's one thing that Zoom doesn't allow me to do and it's the one thing that I've hoped that I wished I could do more. But you know, we have this distance, and we have all the stuff that we can't get that Zoom doesn't offer, but it's the one thing you know, it's like the one thing.

Bill Lee Emery 1:34:41

Yeah. And that's like, it's pure connection. That's it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:34:45

Yeah. Bill, thank you so much for being on the podcast.

Bill Lee Emery 1:34:50

My pleasure Bill. I have to say I always enjoy being in your presence. We have a good time. together in for me doesn't matter the years passing of how often we talk. It's just coming back to that playful five year old space.

Bill Gasiamis 1:35:13

Yeah, I agree. Thanks, Bill. Thank you, Bill. Thanks for joining us on today's episode, sharing the show with family and friends on social media will make it possible for people who may need this type of content to find it easier. And that may make a massive difference to someone that is on the road to recovery after own experience with stroke. If you're a stroke survivor with a story to share about your experience, come and join me on the show.

Bill Gasiamis 1:35:40

The interviews are not scripted, you don't have to plan for them. All you need to do to qualify is be a stroke survivor, or be a caregiver for someone who has had a stroke. Or be one of the fabulous people in the medical field that help people who are stroke survivors. Go to recoveryafterstroke.com/contact fill out the contact form. And as soon as I receive it I will respond with more details on how you can choose a time that works for you and me to meet over zoom. Thanks again for being here and listening. I really appreciate you see you on the next episode.

Intro 1:36:16

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Intro 1:36:46

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Intro 1:37:11

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Intro 1:37:35

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