

Art Therapy For Stroke Recovery - Noreen Walsh

Noreen Walsh discovered art therapy, 30 years after experiencing a stroke due to complications from **Hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS)** at 18 months old.

Socials: www.instagram.com/noreenwalshart/

Highlights:

01:01 Introduction

08:33 Hemolytic uremic syndrome

15:07 Recurring pain

20:36 Art Therapy

33:27 Stroke Survivor

41:37 Choosing the right people

51:08 One way to reach out

55:43 Find a happy place

1:05:29 Make something good out of it

1:17:19 Neuroplasticity

Transcription:

Bill 0:00

My favorite are sunflowers.

Noreen 0:05

Lots of people love the sunflowers

Bill 0:07

Man, they are so cool. I love them. And I love the ones especially the ones that are half sunflowers,

Noreen 0:12

They were always my favorite because I did them during the first wave of COVID. And I needed something within lockdown to keep my head calm. And because I was doing the petals with a palette knife, which was very therapeutic. And the dissenters with the, like a very fine liner brush. That was so mindful to me, and it

just kind of took me to a happy place.

Intro 0:48

This is the Recovery After Stroke Podcast, with Bill Gasiamis, helping you navigate recovery after stroke.

Introduction



Bill 1:01

Bill from recoveryafterstroke.com this is Episode 120 and my guest today is Noreen Walsh. Noreen was only 18 months old when she experienced a stroke that might have been a result of hemolytic uremic syndrome, which is a group of blood disorders characterized by low red blood cells, acute kidney failure, and low platelets.

Bill 1:24

Initial symptoms typically include bloody diarrhea, fever, vomiting and weakness. Almost 30 years later, Noreen still lives with a deficit from stroke, and has taken up art therapy to help manage the pain. Now it's on with the show. Noreen Walsh, welcome to the podcast.

Noreen 1:43

Hi.

Bill 1:44

Thanks for being here. I really appreciate it.

Noreen 1:47

It's definitely good to be here. I'm glad you asked me.

Bill 1:51

You're an Aussie in Brisbane. I'm an Aussie in Melbourne. And the reason why we connected is because somebody from the other side of the planet introduced us.

Noreen 2:01

Yes, yeah, I was really taken aback. I always get lovely people that I connect with via Joe. And when I did the podcast with him, he said you've got to reach out to Bill. I know he's in Australia. I just don't know where I was like, Okay.

Bill 2:23

Yeah, that's Joe Borges. From The Neuro Nerds Podcast.

Noreen 2:29

Absolutely.

Bill 2:31

He's a cool, dude. I had a real good time interviewing him as well. And he told me about you and that you guys found each other online and became mates.

Noreen 2:41

We did, it was a really, really quick friendship that was made and I I've always found friendships really difficult to maneuver through. And for me and him, we just connected on so many things so quickly. And then we ended up getting each other through a lot of rough moments in time. And, I think that built on our friendship very quickly.

Bill 3:12

Wow so he told me that you guys had a connection, I didn't realize that it became deeper because of you guys helping each other through a rough patch. So how long ago was that?

Noreen 3:28

Probably sometime last year. I was having a really rough time, I've battled depression a lot over my life. But I had a really rough time, because then my pain levels went up. And, effectively, I couldn't do the art that I wanted to do.

Noreen 3:52

And so I ended up messaging him a lot going, Oh my God, this really sucks. And I don't really know how to make it a positive thing. And in all honesty, the more I listened to his podcast, the more I felt, like, part of my story was being heard.

Noreen 4:13

You know, so it felt like a warm cup of like hot coco or something that's like, Oh, yeah, this guy gets me. And so it was really for me. And when he was going through rough patch, I helped him with affirmations and trying to get to the point where he was okay in himself too.

Noreen 4:40

Man, that is so cool. So I interviewed Joe for Episode 98. And he was so high energy he was so full on. I had trouble keeping up with him, but he's got an amazingly big heart. And you could just feel he's complete dedication to making things better for people, and I couldn't believe that I was listening to that guy, talk about the things that I was also thinking and feeling.

Noreen 5:08

And I just thought there is another person like me that thinks like me. And I feel less alone as well, like, that's what I got out of it. And I was so grateful to connect with him. So I kind of understand where you're coming from, but I never reached out to him during a hard time. So that must be even more brilliant that you are able to get that kind of support from somebody from so far away.

Noreen 5:38

Oh, definitely. Before Joe, there wasn't a stroke community for me to connect with. And because I had it so young. And, I think as I've gotten older, you know, it's a sad thing that more and more people are having strokes, but for our community, as a whole to understand each other.

Noreen 6:06

It's good, because there's always somebody out there that can say, oh I went through that, or Oh, my goodness, yep. I've fallen in public before or whatever it is. And, I couldn't believe that I made such a connection with somebody that I just sent him a piece of my artwork through a competition I did.

Noreen 6:31

And he was so enthusiastic, even wrote me and said, I put this up in my room. And it's there. And it motivates me. And so it was, both of us, I think building a very

strong connection from the get go, which was really lovely.

Bill 6:52

Yeah, you know what, I love? I love that I completely agree with what you said about, it's not good that people are having stroke. But it's good that stroke survivors are finding each other. Because I've been told as well, that people that I've had on my podcast, who have put themselves out there have made it possible for other people to reach out to them, and connect with them.

Bill 7:14

Because even though you and I are both in Australia, we don't know each other and we don't live near each other. So it's difficult to find people that are like you even nearby right? So it's unlikely that we'll come across another stroke survivor at the cafe having a coffee that gets us and that is like us. But this massive worldwide community. I mean, there's definitely somebody that's as crazy as me out there that gets me and he's like me, and I get them.

Noreen 7:45

Exactly, and I think that's what's great about Joe that he connects me with so many people so, so early on, and some of them just needed advice on how to step forward, or they needed my kind of what I went through to understand they're not on their own with this. And I even met another pediatric stroke survivor, Ella Sophia, and she's such a sweetheart. And she does motivational speaking. So it's been really, really awesome to be able to connect with so many people.

Bill 8:27

Yeah, how old were you when you had the stroke and what kind of stroke was it?

Stroke caused by Hemolytic uremic syndrome

Noreen 8:33

So, I was 18 months old when I had the stroke. But the thing with me is that I had something called Hemolytic uremic syndrome. And it's a thing that attacks your kidneys, and in my case, my red blood cells. And so the stroke wasn't even the main thing. It was like a symptom or side effect of what this condition gave me.

Bill 9:13

So you were 18 months old. I mean, that's a tough way to get introduced to life isn't it for anybody. And how old are you now?

Noreen 9:26

I'm 33. So it is a tough way to be introduced to the world. But it's also a blessing because every stroke survivor I have talked to has always talked about the before or before I could do x or before I could do this. Whereas I've always had a struggle with walking and the same way as other people or you know, when In the playground playing with my peers. So I've had that experience of, I know I'm different. And that's my normal, which is, probably slightly walked. But it's been beneficial for me because I haven't had the before and side of it.

Bill 10:20

Yeah, that's less mentally challenging in that you do less comparison, and therefore, you don't dwell on the past. And therefore you make yourself feel better, I made a post just yesterday on Instagram, which is that people should never compare themselves to somebody else to yesterday, they should, to somebody else at all, they should compare themselves only to themselves and who they were yesterday, and, as opposed to who they are compared to somebody else.

Bill 10:51

And the reason being is because if you compare yourself to other people, you're bound to get disappointed, because we don't know the circumstances under which somebody is recovering or getting better. And we only see this little picture, especially on social media.

Bill 11:07

So it's a really poor picture about what's really happening in a person's world. So it made a huge impact. Like when I posted this, I never expected that it was going to make such a massive impact on the people reading it. And it basically said, the best person to compare yourself to is you yesterday, and not somebody else today.

Bill 11:34

And you haven't had any one to compare yourself to just because you were always born that way, and I can see why you think it's a blessing, and why you're just getting on with the way things are and you're finding or looking to find solutions? Is that your kind of personality? Are you a problem solving kind of gal?

Noreen 11:56

I think I was always going to be able to solve problems because my parents were

never the type to take anything lying down. So if they were told she can't do X, Y, and Zed, and they would deliberately go out of their way to say, hey, okay, let's find things online, let's do this, or, okay, there's things, you know, we can encourage her to do this activity.

Noreen 12:33

And, and sometimes it meant going privately to, you know, an OT and a physio, but for me, problem solving has always been okay, well, this is an issue. So it's a brick wall, I can get through it, I can go around it, or I can go over it. But there is definitely a way. And I think it's partly, you know, my upbringing.

Noreen 13:04

But partly, it's been kind of forced upon me as if you've got no other choice, you can have bad days. But at the end of it, you have to pick yourself up and go right, tomorrow. How am I going to solve this? And move forward so yeah, probably a bit of both.

Bill 13:24

Yeah, I love it. So you can have bad days, I agree with you, right. And we should give people the courage to experience their bad days, and even dislike them. And I'm okay with that. But let's try and make tomorrow, slightly better. Just slightly, even if it's just a little bit, just so that you can see that you can have a positive impact on how you felt yesterday.

Bill 13:46

And therefore, hopefully, that encourages you to aim for feeling maybe 2% better on day two, and maybe 3% better on day three. And, that doesn't sound like a lot, but then that adds up. And by the end of the week, you're 7% better and that's awesome. It doesn't have to be 100% does it?

Noreen 14:09

No exactly. And I do think, you know, I'm good at being grateful for the little things like okay, well, I managed to walk to the end of my road and back without getting out breath or, you know, I managed to go to a night out that takes my sensory system to like overload, but I managed it without the anxiety that I thought I would have.

Noreen 14:42

There's there's always something you can be very grateful for and sometimes it's

a stretch, especially this year. It's been a stretch for all of us. But I lost my train of thought, oh I hate when that happens. Yeah, I think there's always something that you can be grateful for.

Recurring pain from the stroke

Bill 15:07

Yeah, I agree with you. So, you know, with regards to the pain is the pain due to spasticity? Or is it some other issues that are causing you pain?

Noreen 15:16

And so I started off having headaches when I was around 12 years old. And the doctors said this is because she's had a lot of surgeries. And a lot of things have happened to her brain. So they were basically saying it's nerve pain, but they didn't really know how to explain it to us at that point.

Noreen 15:45

And they said, when she's out of her teen teenage years, it will go away. It's just another blip that's happened. And that technically didn't go away till about four years back when I had an intervention. And I had something called a log gak tool infusion. And it's the strangest thing. But it stopped headaches completely.

Noreen 16:23

The pain I have now, compared to that is more functional pain, I believe, like I have a pelvic pain and I have a back pain. And I'm on medication for it. But it's always a tight rope to kind of kind of balance out, okay, what doctors are telling me I can do, you know, pacing yourself.

Noreen 16:53

And also realizing that you've got to do something each day. Otherwise, if we always listened to our body, I always say what I wouldn't get up in the morning, if I had to listen to it every day. So sometimes it's about balancing out what the doctors are telling you, but also what you're capable of. And because neuroplasticity is amazing.

Bill 17:24

I hear what you're saying. So what I'm getting from it is, so I have pain on my left side. And my constant thing is to go and see a chiropractor, or a massage therapist or somebody. And they might help loosen muscles, and get rid of the

tension and all of that kind of stuff, literally for a day or two, and then it comes back.

Bill 17:50

So it doesn't stop me from doing anything because my walk isn't interrupted. So my gait hasn't changed. So it's not impacting my pelvis or any part of my spine or anything like that. But it's constantly tense on the left side, both my hand and my leg and my chest and all that stuff.

Bill 18:13

So for me, it's not dramatically painful, but it's always there. And it's not something that I can stop having, I can't stop it, I can't stop from having it. So if I did stop doing things that might have painful, then I wouldn't be doing anything as well. And I find myself forgetting about pain, when I'm doing things that I love.

Bill 18:38

And the more I do what I'm loving, the less I'm focusing on my problems. And then I kind of noticed them later at the end of the day when I'm pooped when I'm exhausted, you know, as I'm winding down for an hour or so before I go to bed as I've kind of noticed that more then. But then I focus on well the day's been amazing. And I've had amazing experiences and I've done great things, and it's probably a decent price to pay.

Noreen 19:13

I think it's the mind-body connection. And that's why when I paint my pain is non-existent. But when I get up from my easel, I'm like, oh, okay, I'm pretty sore right now. And that's because the attention goes straight back on to like your default and I can understand what you're saying that it's not. It's not overly painful, but it's always there, like a background radio station that you just like yeah, I'm totally used to this, you know, but it's there.

Bill 20:05

Yeah. And sometimes you tune it out. And then sometimes you notice it. And that's the strange thing about background music, you do sometimes notice it and you go, maybe that's a song that you like that you notice. But sometimes you notice it because the song you didn't like. So I get what you're saying and. And then what comes into my mind is that art for you must be that mindfulness state, does that explain the kind of state you go into?

Art Therapy



Noreen 20:36

Oh, definitely. Art has always been a calm place for me. Even when I was a kid, I remember I couldn't really go out running with these girls that were, you know, doing, hopscotch, and whatever other little games. And then my dad bought me an acrylic paint set.

Noreen 21:03

And at the time, I was obsessed with Monet. And so I got a Monet sticker book. And honest to goodness, I forgot that there were people out there playing things that I couldn't do. Because it was like, creating a world at that point in time, it was like creating a world that really accepted me.

Noreen 21:27

So going back to me as an adult, it's definitely a mindful thing for me, because it's a safe place for me to even just, even if I'm having bad day, splash paint on the canvas. And I'm like, oh, okay, that kind of worked out, or it didn't. But either way, I've gone to an incredibly calm place in my head. And, that's always been the, I guess, the therapeutic side of things for me art.

Bill 22:02

If I can for a second, ask a question to see whether or not you know why it works on you. So I know you get out of your head. But why does it work for you? What changes in your body that makes all the pain go away while you're painting, like, what is it that occurs? How are you aware?

Noreen 22:23

I mean, I think part of it is conditioning, because art was always something that I could do. In school, it wasn't a binary subject, it was a subject that I could interpret. And it didn't matter the way I thought about it. So I think part of it is the conditioning of you're in a really safe room.

Noreen 22:58

And, anything can go here, but you're in the driver's seat. So I think part for that, for me, is someone not telling me what my pain should be like, or what it is. It's me saying, I'm in control of what's going on in my body right now. And I choose to focus on the things around me.

Noreen 23:24

And so I do think it's the background conditioning, and maybe the mind body connection that happens when I put on, I put on really good music. And I have so many songs on my Spotify, and I have this gorgeous candle. And I don't know if you find this with noises with sensory stuff, but for me, my candle crackles. And it immediately sends me into like this then kind of mind frame so even before I start painting, I'm like, oh, okay, this is nice. So I think it's a real mixture of things there.

Bill 24:12

In so many layers, I know what you're saying. And it's true. Different noises and sounds take me to different places, and they make me forget about where I am. For me, it might be the river, the wind, things like that, you know, things that I've experienced in nature when I've been kind of at one with the world and with nature, like when I go camping or something like that.

Bill 24:36

And then hearing those noises again, just takes me back there. But what it sounds like to me that you're saying is that you gain control in a place where we have so little control. You seem to get back some of your sense of control and you can control an environment that you can do when you're sitting at your easel.

Bill 24:59

Every thing just comes into line, you control all the things that are important to you that matter, everything else goes away. And then you can just create and because of the gifts that people like Monet gave us, and those types of artists

from, you know, back early in the 1900s, it meant that your artwork didn't have to look like the subject or anything, and it didn't matter, and you didn't get judged, on whether it was a perfect replica of the subject, it just mattered that there was something on the canvas.

Noreen 25:39

You're so dead on there with the Monet reference, because I love that it didn't need to look like the exact thing you were painting, it wasn't realism, it was an emotional kind of roller coaster. And, I think that's why the money became very symbolic of the joy of painting.

Noreen 26:07

And even to the extent that in my last year of primary school, everyone got like a going away award or something tangible. My teacher, got this, this massive money book and wrote in it and the date, and what I had achieved, and what I could achieve, and let this book always be, basically a moving forward point for you to refer back to.

Noreen 28:36

And then I still think it's just something that even in this day and age, with painting, and there is still this, this argument over Monet-type Impressionism and, and realism. And and it's an interesting situation, because I guess I've only been doing it for years. But I know that my artwork kind of stands out. But it can also take people by surprise because they either like it or they don't.

Noreen 26:44

And 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 now how long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse?

Intro 27:56

Doctors will explain things. But obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask. 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 [recovery after stroke.com](https://www.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 28:22

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.

Noreen 28:44

I always believe that if you like it, great. If you tell me you don't like it? Well, that's okay. I've done my job too. Because it's the emotional side of it. I've done that. Okay, cool. Tell me why you don't like it. You know, so it's interesting.

Bill 29:01

Yeah. I love the way that you relate to Monet because my, my sense of his work is that I could put something on canvas and not be concerned about how I'm going to be judged. You know, if I had to do a Caravaggio. I mean, I would never pick up the brush, it would never give me the confidence to allow myself the gift of expression. I would never ever do it.

Bill 29:26

But take a Monet or a Picasso and then just go, you know what? I can paint as terrible as Picasso can. And that worked out for him. So if it worked out for him, why wouldn't it work out for me? And that then opens up this possibility of art to everybody on the planet, not just a guy who can do an exact replica of the person that's sitting across them across from the easel.

Bill 30:00

And then what that did? Why those guys were so amazing is that that created all the things that had to happen so that in 1995, or whenever it was that somebody decided that art as therapy was an important thing that allowed for that part of the world to exist.

Bill 30:21

So that now, when you hear about art therapy, it's like, oh, yeah, yeah. And everyone knows about it, and it's not a big deal. And people want to be a part of it, and people are gaining so much from it. And this is the beauty of, of allowing people to express themselves, no matter how they do it, and what it looks like.

Noreen 30:44

Oh, absolutely. And, you know, that's kind of how I fell back in love with art, I

went through a very bad breakup, and I went to art therapy. And I thoroughly enjoyed it, but had no expectation of what I was doing. I just thought I'll just go and I'll try and enjoy this.

Noreen 31:08

And I got a lot of great feedback from people. And so I started taking extra classes, and different classes that would kind of evolve what I was doing. And I'm forever grateful for that break up, because I probably would be, maybe, you know, painting, but painting as a hobby, instead of pursuing it as a career. So yeah, art therapy is incredible.

Bill 31:42

Are you weird, like you're grateful for the breakup?

Noreen 31:47

I know, look, if you asked me at the time, I would not be. I do think some, like, I'm a big believer in the universe and universe giving kind of signs of where you should be going. And let's just say I was ignoring every sign that the universe was giving me. I'm so glad that it happened. I still to this day will say that we amicably broke up. But yeah, I think it just, I don't know, it just guided me back to where I was supposed to be going. It is bizarre. But yeah, I'm weird.

Bill 32:37

Yeah. Good. It's bizarre. And it's wonderful. Because you know what, hopefully, people who are listening and watching will get out of that. Is that sometime in the future when something terrible happens to us? It'll be terrible at the time, but it doesn't have to be terrible forever after that.

Noreen 32:56

Exactly. Exactly. I think so.

Bill 33:04

Do you got me?

Noreen 33:07

Where'd you go?

Bill 33:09

I'm here.

Noreen 33:10

You're here. Oh, okay. You can still see me. Hang on. Okay. I've got you. Oh, oh, my god. This is so weird. Okay, if I just stay here. Okay. I got you again.

Stroke Survivor

Bill 33:28

I had you the whole time. No worries. So yeah, something that we experienced now. That's bad. Now, it doesn't have to be bad for if it doesn't it?

Noreen 33:39

No, no. And, and I do think there's a lot of, you know, things that are out there that are bad for us. And that teaches us certain lessons in life. And I think those things we have to go through. Saying that I will say that I'm here for a reason. You know, so instead of it being I'm a victim of stroke.

Noreen 34:20

I say no, no, I'm a stroke survivor. And I'm thriving. And I think it's more about turning it around as much as you can. I mean, look, I think you've got to embrace the bad all the time. And if you don't, it's gonna come for you.

Bill 34:39

That is it. And it's part of acceptance. You know, I was told by a coach long time ago, I was told what you resist persists. And that's so true, right? It's like what I resist persists. And it was and she said it to me so many times Louise Gilbert's name. She's amazing lady and she said it to me so many times. In so many different situations, so she said at once, when I was being afraid of doing this thing, right, so the podcast is something that I was afraid of doing a long time ago.

Bill 35:13

And it stayed, it stayed within me, it wouldn't go away. And it bothered me that I wasn't doing it. And it used to rule my entire life that I wasn't doing it and that I was afraid to put myself out there. And she would say, what you resist persists. So that's a great thing that I was resisting. And it was persisting, right.

Bill 35:32

And then I would do something that wasn't positive. And I wouldn't overcome something, for example, like, I wouldn't be grateful for something that happened.

And I couldn't find myself to get to that point of being grateful for the lesson. And she'll say, Well, what you resist persists.

Bill 35:50

And what she was saying is that little brother, that drama that that terrible situation is causing, it's gonna be there if you don't deal with it if you don't go for it. And I learned a lot from not resisting things, because how do we resist it like, I, of course, don't want terrible experiences. But when they come, what can I do about it? Like I can't do anything about it.

Noreen 36:16

Exactly. And it's, it's about, you know, understanding that we've all got things that have happened to us in our life. And, you know, I had a friend the other day that said, Oh, I don't want to complain about my bad work week. And I said, Why not? Because, you know, you've gone through so much. And I said, it's all relative, you can have a bad work week, and still talk to me.

Noreen 36:47

I've probably had a bad lifetime, but it's fine. Because it's all relative. We all have had an I don't believe I've had a bad lifetime. But so far, it's been a hell of a frickin journey. But it's I think the stroke definitely has changed me into probably maybe a different person than I would have been. I don't know. I think about that a lot.

Bill 37:19

Yeah. look, it has me, I was 37. So there was definitely a before stroke me. And then after stroke, me and I'm, and now I'm a better version of myself. I live with this stuff constantly. And I suppose some of it's a good reminder, hey, you're not that special mate. You know, relax, put your head in, you know, take it easy, and pay attention to what's important.

Bill 37:40

So they're constant message of what's important, isn't far away. Like, it's just a moment when I sit down and pay attention to my left leg or my left arm. So it's made me a better version of myself, I never would have been doing a podcast if it wasn't for the stroke.

Bill 37:59

Honestly, you know, I never would have reached so many people around the

world, I never would have met you and all the amazing people that I've met. I was so so narrow-minded and, and closed, you know, in the way that I used to go about expressing myself and meeting people and the stroke has enhanced who I am.

Bill 38:21

So much Now, that doesn't mean it wasn't difficult. Just listen to Episode 100 of the podcasts, you know, we're interview my wife, I mean, we went through four years of shit. And, it took me eight years to get back to work and all this stuff. I mean, it hasn't been easy, but even during those difficult times, I was getting better and better at being me.

Noreen 38:47

I think that's it, it's kind of you, you mentioned your wife and I think as a family, even though you and I went through it. Family plays such a fundamental role in, like our recovery and who we are or if we need a cheerleader, I mean, my brother, there's only three years apart from us. But he was always even my dad was always my protectors, and my mom was always my confidant for anything.

Noreen 39:25

And I think that open dialogue helped a lot because it made me stronger. And, now, you know, in the past maybe four or five years after going through a lot of I guess neuroplasticity, and I went to a neuropsychiatrist, I've been able to explain these issues that I'm dealing with right now.

Noreen 39:54

Or could you please turn those lights down because it's way too bright in here. And look, I have my own. I live with my folks, but I have half the house. So if I don't like something, I can take myself into the art room or my downstairs sitting room area and just chill out. So it's a weird thing I used to think of, it's me that's going through all of it, but they were right there.

Noreen 40:28

They were kind of like a witness to everything. And I think about what it would have been like, I think it must have been hard for your wife, who had a husband before, but maybe your personality is slightly different than it was before. I think it must have been really tricky for her to work out. What was what?

Bill 40:55

Yeah, absolutely. She's got the before stroke version. And then she's got the after stroke version, and I was initially extremely rude and abrupt and short, and angry, and all sorts of things. So she did a tough, and then I've calmed down a lot. And I've learned to apologize more, and say, I love you more, and all that kind of stuff.

Bill 41:15

So right now, I'm a better version of myself than I ever was. But I was trying to get there and in those angry days, in those difficult days, I was trying to get there, I just didn't know the path, right? The message that I'm getting from you, is it it's important who you surround yourself with, and you were lucky, your parents were there because you had a stroke when you're 18 months old.

Choosing the right people for better stroke recovery



Bill 41:37

But then, if people that the listeners are hanging around and not supporting them, and I'm not saying that they feel sorry for you all the time because of your stroke, or whatever. But if they're just not the kind of person that enhances your time together, maybe it's time to just add a few more people into the mix, the type that are going to enhance your appreciation for that connection.

Bill 42:07

And what else I'm getting from you is that the awareness of how we even though we're going through the tough time, having awareness of how what we're going through is impacting other people, gives them a little bit of a break as well, like it

gives them like a, I understand you as well, you know, I know that you're feeling pain, and you're suffering while I'm suffering. And I understand you're like I get it, that would be such a great gift that you give that to your parents and your brother.

Noreen 42:40

Oh, definitely, I think it's an ongoing discussion that has to constantly happen, because I think neuroplasticity always goes on but the constant discussion with your family, so they know where you're at. But going back to what you said about friends, and people you surround yourself with. I learned the hard way. I came over to Australia when I was 18.

Noreen 43:16

And, I met a lot of people through college, and they were nice, but they weren't the type of people that I would want to go out to clubs with or that kind of thing. And the friends that I did make, were very pushy. With you should be doing this. And I think, if you have issues with your frontal lobe, which, I mean, I had a partial hemispherectomy when I was eight. So if you're always in a state of learning through action, then there is going to be a timeframe that you learn that not everybody has your best intentions.

Noreen 44:10

Not everybody will have.

Bill 44:12

You're best interests.

Noreen 44:14

Yes. And I think it's rough but the group of people that I go to coffee with now and hang out and go to art galleries. It's people that if I walk slower, they walk even slower, even if it means they're walking like next to zero. They'll do that because they get that this is the way it is or I went to the art gallery last year with a friend and we stopped about four or five times because we both have different pain levels for different things.

Noreen 44:57

And we both stopped so I think It's about. We're all getting older. And I think it's about the maturity levels of others. And, that's why, like, the podcast, your podcast, and like Joe's podcast is so important, because I feel like, it's not just for

us, it's for people that have no idea that, you know, I mean, the craziest thing is that, um, I mean, Joe has said this to me, I'm very lucky that I have the physical side of things, is definitely noticeable.

Noreen 45:40

And the thing is, I always think, Oh, no, I would much rather not have the limp or the the hemiplegic side, which is just the weakness, but people give you a lot of slack. They, they make allowances for you, because they see it. And Joe prefers people seeing it rather than not seeing it. And so it's an interesting concept.

Bill 46:10

And I know what Joe means, because I go through that, right. So if you looked at me, everything looks fine. And I used to get that a lot, I used to get what you look good. And just because I looked good, I could have looked amazing on my worst day, and nobody would have known that I was having a bad day.

Bill 46:28

So constantly having to explain how I'm having a bad day. And what that feels like, is extremely frustrating for me and the person listening, because they have no experience. They use their eyes, their eyes is giving them feedback. And then that's it. But what that gave me was an appreciation for mental illness, and what people go through when they have mental illness, which is not visible.

Bill 46:54

And they can explain it to somebody who's not been there. And it's like, okay, I can relate with you guys, now, I'm on your side, now, I totally get it. And that means I can be more gentle. And I can be more accepting and understanding and therefore can be another ally for those people.

Bill 47:17

So I got that gift from it. And I'm like, wow, I never in a million years would have been able to relate to that person, like I can now. So all I do now is when I'm feeling like I'm having a bad time or day or whatever. It's like, I just do the general conversation. Like, I'm not up for it today. But I feel like it I want to or whatever.

Bill 47:43

So I kind of compensate with the lengthy explanations by just making them short and sweet. Now I'm not up for I don't want to do that anymore. And that makes it

easier and when I need to go home because the party is too loud. Or the lights flashing are doing my head in. It's kind of like, yeah, it's time for me to go, man.

Bill 48:06

Yeah, I'm just tired and I want to go home. I didn't sleep last night or wake up early. Like I give the mundane general responses to things. And people go alright, he's going home. They don't need to know any more.

Noreen 48:21

No, and I think that's it is, it's kind of like, you know, you're in a circle knows you. But at the end of the day, the amount of times I've said I've got a headache. When I know the lights are just going off. And if I don't get out, they're not going pretty. And I'll and I'll say I'm really tired or Geez, I'm just not feeling it tonight not happening. And and people need to be able to relate to what you're saying. So if I said, Oh, I have a muscle spasm disorder, and the lights are gonna go off.

Bill 49:00

The eyes are gonna glaze over.

Noreen 49:03

Yeah, it's so much easier. And I think as I've gotten older, the you know, being open to educating people as much as I can. Without them feeling like I'm preaching to them is a good thing because people want to help but when it's not visible or where the I always find on the elephant in the room and like especially if I go to a lot of like an art gallery openings and things that people would normally go to if you're an artist.

Noreen 49:54

But if you have to go out and meet the people that have been Given the talk or on the panel, I have to pretend that their eyes don't glaze over. Because when I introduce myself, their eyes do glaze over. And I have to say, are you okay, is it hot in here? Yes it's a bit hot in here, isn't it? Yeah.

Noreen 50:18

And then redirect it back to the talk that they've been talking about. But with people my own age, it's easier to say, you know, I've been asked, like, have you broken your leg? And, you know, are you alright? Do you need any help? I'm like, No, Do you need any help?

Noreen 50:42

So I, it is a very fine balance, because I don't think society has really accepted people with disabilities, I want them to. But I do think there's a lot more education that needs to be going into, and I don't know how that's gonna work, whether it's like us, or Joe, or I don't know.

One way to reach out

Bill 51:08

It's not going to work. I hate to burst your bubble. And I don't say it because I don't think that we should stop trying. It's just because the majority of the people are well, and that's just the numbers game, right. So we have to just keep doing what we're doing and get creative, right.

Bill 51:27

So one of my amazing coaches, a guy who I've interviewed as well, for the podcast, Marvin Oka, once said to me that what he wants to do he wants to impact the most people in the world that he can, and he can do that one by one where you can go to the top.

Bill 51:44

And I did understand what that meant. So he works in organizations, where he consults, like for banks, and all that kind of stuff, right. And he's a very heart-centered, amazing kind of guy. And he said, it's too hard to go one by one from the bottom up. But if I go to the top and influence that person in a positive way, and he spreads that love down.

Bill 52:13

Then my one hour with that guy has impacted 6000 people positively 6000 hours to do that. So the point I'm trying to make is that I tried to work out how I'm going to change people's understanding about stroke and how to bring stroke survivors together. And I thought I can go to my local rotary, and I can stand there in front of 30 people, and maybe one of them is a stroke survivor.

Bill 52:49

Or I can do a podcast and reach the world. And if I do a podcast, it takes the same amount of effort as going to a rotary presentation. And if people listening don't know what rotary is, it's like Toastmasters. In that they invite people to go and

speaking. It's a charitable organization that invites people to go and speak. So if I do a podcast, this podcast has now 3000 downloads a month.

Noreen 53:19

Wow. That's amazing?

Bill 53:22

Yeah, how good is it? I say, How can I get in front of 3,000 people every month, I mean, that's near impossible. Otherwise, so this is how we win that battle. And, bring more awareness to our community and its needs. This is how we do it. And you participating makes it possible, right? That's the best way to do it.

Noreen 53:47

That's it, I want to be able to, I mean, I've even said this to Joe, I really want to be able to be that person that I needed when I was like young because I I just didn't have a reflection of myself at all. bounce back to me. So I didn't, I knew I was me. But there was no there was no group or comparison.

Noreen 54:16

And I, I think being able to voice who I am in a vulnerable state, which is hard, anyway, but to say look, this is what happened to me and this is how I feel. And to get a conversation going with people that have heard me say these things and it opens up a huge dialogue.

Noreen 54:45

And that's why I'm really grateful to you and Joe because that's what it does. It opens dialog to other people go, okay. This is, if I can, if I can positively affect somebody else's life at the moment. Or if they need somebody that they can connect with then I'm happy to, to do that. And I do incorporate that in my artwork. And because I just want to spread positivity, there's too much like, horrible things going on. At the moment. Yeah.

Bill 55:24

All right. I've been looking at your art, as we've been talking through.

Noreen 55:27

Oh, you have not, oh okay.

Bill 55:31

Now it's time for the judgement. My favorite are the sunflowers.

Find a happy place



Noreen 55:43

Lots of people love sunflowers. That's so cool.

Bill 55:46

Man. They are so cool. I love them. And I love the ones especially the ones that are half sunflowers.

Noreen 55:54

They were always my favorite, because I did them during the first wave of COVID. And I needed something within lockdown to keep my head calm. And because I was doing the petals with a palette knife, which was very therapeutic. And the centers with the, like a very fine liner brush. That was so mindful to me. And it just kind of took me to a happy place. So I think I'll always go back to some flowers, because they're so good.

Bill 56:34

And then the other one, which I really, really love, is the one where the girl in the red dress with the umbrella is walking down the Parisian street with the lights on either side and the Eiffel Tower in the distance. And the beautiful leaves that have started to change because I think maybe they're representing autumn. Or fall for the American listeners. I mean, that is an amazing piece as well. I think that is brilliant.

Noreen 57:04

Thank you so much. I love doing that piece that's called Paris awaits. And I've been to Paris a few times when I was a kid. But I wanted to bring this whole romanticized version of it, that it is in the distance and the fact that she is on her own, but it's not a romantic setting, per se. So she can be her and be herself and enjoy life without the partner. So I kind of wanted that kind of juxtaposition of, of how I painted versus what the story is.

Bill 57:44

Well, I got exactly what you just said. So to me, it reminded me of the romantic side of Paris, the and Mae, it kind of had me wondering about her. And then he had the Eiffel Tower as the place to go to like this is that where we're headed, you know, we're headed to see it up close because right now, we can see it from far.

Bill 58:06

And I see myself there. And it reminds me of a trip that we didn't get to do this year, we were planning to go to Paris this year with my wife, but because of COVID we didn't get there. And I reckon I almost would have wee'd my pants when I saw the Eiffel Tower. And I had I would have tried, like, Oh my god, there it is, like, let's go there.

Bill 58:14

Like let's get there. But she's just strolling along, I would have been in a rush. And she's just taking her time. And she's doing it nice and calmly. And I would have been like, Let's go, I want to see how big this thing is I want to stand underneath it, I would have been doing all that stuff.

Noreen 58:43

I think it's, it's a reflection of where I wanted to be in my life at that point that I wanted to enjoy the small moments and really wanted it to come across. Like she's taking it all in. I think part of my story is the journey, not the destination. So all of us who are going through recovery.

Noreen 59:10

And for me, it's like, well, let's enjoy this ride. That, you know, there's something I can do today that I wasn't able to do a week ago. And, that comes through a lot with me and I have I think part of my love life has been difficult and rocky over the years and I think that's that kind of comes across. I always put a woman in a

painting where she's elegant and on her own but she's doing it she's rocking it and it's like, you know, I am woman hear me roar kind of thing, you know.

Bill 59:46

Oh man, It's what I get from her. Let me tell you, I'm not artistic in any way. But I have put paint on a canvas just to give myself the opportunity to experience what that's like. I do go to galleries and I do look at art and I do appreciate the process that an artist goes through to do that, you know, and I'm watching your little video now of you painting a landscape, you know, it's sped up.

Noreen 1:00:17

I have a couple, or is it the one where it's got a lot of lavender on it?

Bill 1:00:23

No, it's all the yellows and red hues and goes into orange. And then it's got some rocks on the left there.

Noreen 1:00:35

Yeah, it's my desert landscape. And I went really loose. Because I've been fighting the, the kind of idea that I have to be a certain way within the art community. And those two landscapes were, okay, I have an idea. And I'm not going to write it down. And I'm not going to draw it out.

Noreen 1:01:02

I'm literally going to throw it on the canvas and see where it goes. And so for me, that was a lot of art therapy, because I just wanted to see how it was gonna turn out. But I got a lot of lovely feedback from those two pieces. And I'm wondering if my art therapy side came through a lot more, because I just wasn't worried about what people thought,

Bill 1:01:25

Yeah, it was just stuff going on a canvas. And the result, let me tell you, it's pretty awesome. I love it. It's a great image. And I'm wondering, has there been somebody reached out to you to purchase your paintings? Like, are you selling them? Like, how is that evolved? Has that become something that is happening?

Noreen 1:01:48

It's happening? It was very difficult this year, because I was selling my artwork via cafes, and coffee and coffee shops, and a lot of them shut down. Because of

COVID. So, I've been trying to push my artwork and sell it on via Instagram, because I'm still building a website.

Noreen 1:02:16

And people can still find me on Instagram and Facebook. But I think if I build the website, people are more likely to be encouraged to purchase. So at the moment, it's word of mouth. And I've had a few sales where it's been like, Oh, you're so and so from that cafe.

Noreen 1:02:43

And I had one beautiful lady, she saw my artwork in a, and a coffee shop in the West End. And she bought one piece there. And then she found me on Insta, and bought three more pieces. So I think it's also a learning curve for me on when to push a sale, and when to say, hey, it's there, it's available, you can see you can purchase it. And, you know, direct message me If you like it, I won't lie. It's a very tricky one for me to work out where the line is.

Bill 1:03:25

I think you'll work it out. I mean, because your ad speaks for itself. So they kind of sell themselves. Because they do they really do. They're, for somebody who's been at it for four years. There's a lot more going on there than I would have imagined because those landscapes and those trees with the leaves and all that kind of stuff.

Bill 1:03:50

To me, they just seem like they're pieces that I would be proud to have you know what I mean? To hang on my wall. They're just lovely. So I love it. Now we and I suppose you don't want it to be called this you know if and this is just me thinking out loud. You know prints sometimes I just buy prints.

Noreen 1:04:15

Yes, I actually I've been looking into prints and I've got a line of positive prints that I I put on a painting or an image on the print but I put a positive affirmation on there like you know I can remember some of them, some of them are like, you know, and today I will not regret anything I do today I will be present within the moment.

Noreen 1:04:52

You know, those kinds of things that I think people would especially this year I

think would really relate to, I think its saturation and its accessibility. So I think I either have to oversaturate people with the, you know, the stuff online, or I kind of like, almost like leaving a little bit of cheese and going, come on, you know, you want this. And it's a bit tricky.

Make something good out of it



Bill 1:05:29

I love it. You know, what I love about this part of the conversation is that what hopefully we're doing is demonstrating to people listening, stroke survivors who are going through a really tough time, that from a tough time, something amazing can come. And something that is joyful and brings joy to you, and other people can also come.

Bill 1:05:46

And if, you know, you're that way inclined, you know, it might even make a few hundred bucks for you or whatever. And that's really why are focused on talking about your art other than the fact that it's brilliant, I'd love to focus on the fact that it wouldn't have been possible. If something shitty didn't happen in your life.

Noreen 1:06:11

I think that that, like, I really appreciate you focusing on it, because it is a big part of what makes my art unique is a The way I see color is so different. It's so vibrant. And that's how my brain processes things. But also, because of the partial hemispherectomy I, there's a disconnect between the left side and the right side of my head. So there's like a disconnect there.

Noreen 1:06:46

So my brain has made all these other connections. But if I have to do something that involves symmetry, I have to like, do the left side and then turn the canvas upside down to see how I'm supposed to do the right side. So when I did the Eiffel Tower, that's how I had to do it. And it's a it's a big, I don't think I would have been as progressive in my artwork, if it hadn't been for the stroke.

Bill 1:07:24

Yeah. I love that. I love that. That'd be a great time lapse to see you turn it upside down to try and work it out.

Noreen 1:07:31

I'll try and do that next time in one of my videos, that'd be cool.

Bill 1:07:34

I mean, that would be awesome. With a little bit of an explanation explaining why you're turning it upside down. That would be phenomenal. I mean, and that's what people need to know about you and other artists who have a different way to put paint on a canvas or to do what they need to understand.

Bill 1:07:54

This is what makes that paces unique. It's not that I just slapped it on. And I'm good at putting paint on a canvas. Like it's a struggle, man. Like I had to turn that upside down to work this stuff out. Because I'm missing that part of my brain. I'm actually missing it. It's not there. And it doesn't do this, but it does this. And what a great What a great way to describe to somebody neuroplasticity, like, this is how you overcome stuff, you find new ways. And it's bizarre and it's weird, but it works. So who cares?

Noreen 1:08:24

Absolutely. And I think, you know, mainstream art, it's still very structured, and it still wants you to be a certain way. And like I've been called outsider art artists because and anything that especially disabilities, it's seen as good for you rather than wow. That's so cool. Yeah, I get the whole Oh, no, no, don't say anything when they say Good for you. And I just smile. Yep. Cool.

Bill 1:09:04

If I break your painting arm, who will that be good for? Will the art then become good for you or good for us. I mean, we would never do that. But I mean,

sometimes I'm that brutal in a conversation when somebody says something that is stupid, but not from meaning harm.

Bill 1:09:21

It's just from ignorance. It's they don't know any better. And I get it, it's okay. But sometimes I love being that brutal and just saying, you know, stuff like that, like, if I break your arm and then you had to paint with the other arm like, would that be good for you or good for me? Like who would that be good for?

Noreen 1:09:39

I struggle with I I used to be very much like that. And I still struggle with it. Because sometimes I'll say it and my friends will be like, you can't say that out loud. Noreen that's not something that is suitable. Like it's fine, you know, it could be as simple as I see someone on the street that is wearing something, I think for God's sake, seriously, that doesn't suit you. And I don't realize how loud I'm saying it. And I'll say that.

Bill 1:10:15

Were the same as those people I know. So it's all good. That's why we love them and we forgive them. It's no issue. It's just that the time like, you just needed to be told, and I'm happy to be told when I'm wrong. So it's not that I don't think people should ever be wrong or say the wrong thing, just out of ignorance, because I'm also ignorant from so many other things. I don't know everything.

Noreen 1:10:35

Well, I mean, I think that's the good thing about our district community, we completely accept that there are things we are not good at, and that we don't know everything. I think, a lot of like, probably from 20 to 30s. They know everything. And it's the younger crowd that I got on very well with older artists. But my peer group, I had one person actually avoid me in a show.

Noreen 1:11:07

And I was like, desperate to talk to them. And I was like, Oh, why? So I sent them a message on Instagram said, I'm sorry, we didn't get to talk. But here. I just wanted to say what you said was great on the panel, and blah, blah, blah. So I thought I am not going to be ignored. You're not, going to dodge me. And but I think also, no matter what career I went into, I was always going to have a struggle with with people being I guess, ignorant.

Bill 1:11:43

Yeah it's ignorant. And it's not a bad word, I don't want people to think that it's a bad word, it just literally means that you have no awareness of a particular situation. And sometimes you might not even have awareness that you don't have any awareness. So that's kind of what ignorance is.

Bill 1:12:00

So it's not a bad thing. It's you don't know what you don't know. So I like that you kind of a little bit cheeky in pushing the envelope with people who are uncomfortable because you're doing it from a place of being genuine, of being genuine and more, more of just going, Hey, I'm alright, you'll be alright. When you talk to me, there's nothing gonna go wrong. So get a bit more comfortable with getting to know me. And maybe that means that you can have a conversation with somebody else as well, who's like me?

Noreen 1:12:30

I think that's right. It's kind of like trying to build acceptance within a community that, that, in general, I think society's is it's getting there. It's what we're working on it. But you know, I've had, oh, my goodness, I've had taxi drivers. Say I will pray for you. And I'm like, no, mate. It's fine.

Noreen 1:13:00

It's good. And that's coming from a place of good intent. But then you have to go No, no, it's cringy, totally cringy. And this is just weird. It's so weird. And I try. I think the only way I made friends over here is that Aussies are a lot more open, and a lot less. I don't know in the UK. We don't talk about it. And we don't talk about the issue at hand.

Noreen 1:13:37

Whereas the first party barbecue I went to with friends, they introduced me to the host, and he went, Oh my god, did you break your leg? And I went, No, I'm a stroke survivor, man. And he went, cool here have a beer I'm like alright. It was the simplest way of just saying. All right, cuz that was easy. Excellent. Let's move on. And, that's, yeah, I do appreciate that about all these because.

Bill 1:14:09

We are a curious bunch. So we tend to ask out of curiosity, and if you're gonna have a physical, visible, physical issue, and you come to Australia, expect to be

asked, expect somebody to say what happened to you? And they're gonna just take it in their stride when you give them the answer. Like, they're not really, they don't really care, that something happened to you, they just, it's a way to break the ice, you know? And, yeah, and that's kind of how I see it when I go somewhere.

Bill 1:14:41

And people ask me, you know, why don't you eat cake or, or, or gluten and that kind of stuff. It's because carbs and sugars. They fry my brain instantly and I can't deal with it. Right? So I don't need it. But if you ask me that question, at dinner, I'm going to tell you the answer and it's not going to be I don't like It's gonna be, I don't need it because I had a stroke. And when I sugar and carbs, it messes with my brain. And you do whatever you want with it after that.

Noreen 1:15:08

Absolutely,

Bill 1:15:09

You know, we can talk about it, or we don't have to. But I'm not going to say just because I'm not wearing it. I'm not eating it just because like, I think people deserve to be given more genuine responses when they're asking a question, and they're not really thinking about what they're asking. I think that's how I kind of rock the boat. If you asked me a question mate you are going to get the answer.

Noreen 1:15:39

That's kind of how I am I'm like, Well, if you ask the question, Don't be shocked at the response. And don't be upset if you don't like the response, because you're the one that asked the question.

Bill 1:15:52

It's never gone bad for me, but I have got a few of those. Oh, you know, uncomfortable moments. I was like should be right, mate. Don't worry about it. It's fine.

Noreen 1:16:03

I've gotten those uncomfortable moments. And it's like, it's normally happened. You know, like, you know, years back when I used to go clubbing. And it's happened in that scenario, because people don't see it. They just see your face and they see your shoulder.

Noreen 1:16:22

They don't look like at your arm or your leg or whatever. So for me, you know, I remember a bouncer. He, almost didn't let me in a club because he said, you'd be drinking. And I went, No, mate I have a limp. I had a stroke. And he's like, Oh, yeah, move it along.

Noreen 1:16:42

I'm like, No, no, seriously. And I had to show him my leg support. And he almost wet himself. He was like, Ah, I said so can I go in? Yeah, I'm like, Alright, have a nice night. And so it has been entertaining to see how people are because, I think the more knowledge we have, though, it gets better. Like I love that book. The Brain That Changes Itself. I love it.

Neuroplasticity

Bill 1:17:19

Dr. Norman Doidge. And his other one that the yeah, I forget the other one. But the brain that changes itself? Yeah. It's a brilliant book. And Norman Doidge is one of those guys who has done a lot of work in this in the field of neuroplasticity. And, you know, he's spoken all over the world in Australia everywhere. And he's just amazing.

Bill 1:17:48

And, it's great that technology, that knowledge of neuroplasticity has only really been around, properly accepted, probably since the early 2000s. So it's in its infancy, you know, and it's the first thing that you hear about when I was in hospital in 2012. Like, that's the first thing the doctors told me about.

Bill 1:18:11

They said to me, Well, the nurses not the doctors, I said, Do you know about this thing called neuroplasticity? And and of course, I had already done that. That research and learned about it. But I also interviewed Michael Merzenich, who was one of the founding they call him like the godfather of neuroplasticity, who discovered neuroplasticity was happening when they invented the world's first cochlear implant, cause they invented this technology to attach the people's heads to restore hearing in people who have never heard before.

Bill 1:18:46

And he said it was just a machine. And that machine is pretty much useless. Unless the brain adapts to hearing from that machine, rather than from this ear. And that's kind of when the light bulb moment happened. And they went, Oh my god, like the brain is changing. And prior to that there wasn't enough evidence and the thinking was that the brain once you have it, once it's done, it's done. It doesn't change.

Bill 1:19:15

So, Norman Doidge, like looks at Mako Merzenich, as this godlike kind of person. And in the book, the brain that changes itself. He talks about him for the majority of the book, and it's like he's got a bigger man crush on him than I do. So yeah, it's a great book, anyone who's interested in learning about neuroplasticity and getting to the bottom of it.

Bill 1:19:37

What he does is he shares stories of people who achieved something amazing that they technically weren't supposed to achieve after they had a neurological injury or some kind of condition. And it's like, I think about seven or eight stories, that have become chapters and it talks about them and how those people have overcome great adversity because their brain changed. And because doctors have stopped thinking about the brain as being this solid thing that once it's done, it's done.

Noreen 1:20:11

Absolutely. And I think, you know, the more as you said, the more people understand better. Everyone else's, for I still remember what I don't personally remember my parents remember being told that, you know, your daughter's never gonna walk or talk again and get a house without any stairs, so she doesn't have to do it. And my mom, dad got house with stairs.

Noreen 1:20:42

And even if it was, if it was like, we're gonna do five steps a day. And that's, that's what we'll do. And, and I think it's, it's a testament to the fact that, that back then they really didn't they, as you said, it's only been in the early 2000s, that people have actually discovered the neuroplasticity, kind of and that the brain is forever changing. Like I I get really excited at the fact that you and I, in five years from now, could be able to do so much.

Noreen 1:21:24

Even just a year from now, we'd be like, Oh, did you know, I couldn't jet ski before but now I can, you know, it's just, it's amazing. And I think anyone who's out there that is at the beginning of their story. I would say just never ever take to obviously listen to your doctors, but never take everything as this concrete situation. Because I think doctors are used to dealing with people that don't recover, as well as you and I. And they can understand. They still don't understand that we're doing well. We're thriving.

Bill 1:22:09

You nailed it. Because they don't catch up with us. 5,6, 7, 10, years down the track. They only catch up with us if we're unwell. And while we are not unwell and not going back to them, they don't have that relationship with us. So they get to see us when we run well, but they don't get to see us when we're well.

Noreen 1:22:30

Exactly. I was in hospital last day for like, and pain. And I was on like a ketamine infusion. And all this stuff makes you so loopy and strange and almost in a state of not attached to your body at all. So it's kind of a dissociative kind of feeling. And you have all these people talking to you.

Noreen 1:23:00

And I said to my OT, could you slow down like you're just talking way too fast. And he wasn't, but because my brain was taking the medication. So I find it difficult because I always justified OT's and physios oh it's not fair because you only see me when I'm really struggling. And I've been able to do so much before this. And they just, they normally say to me Oh, that's great. Noreen and they're looking going, no.

Bill 1:23:35

They don't believe you. Maybe it's because you don't appear trustworthy or something? Well, you're on drugs, like you probably weren't trustworthy. You know.

Noreen 1:23:50

That's true. When you're on those drugs. You get checks. It's like being in prison, you get checks every couple of hours.

Bill 1:23:59

Hey, Noreen. I've really appreciated getting to know you and chatting to you. Thank you for being on the podcast. I'm so glad Joe connected us and I'm gonna let him know that the first 10 minutes of this episode was really pretty much it was a Joe Borges love fest really is what it was.

Noreen 1:24:20

Oh, it was, it was, I mean, we're crushing on him hard. No, this was really great. And I'm so glad he connected me with you and, to understand your story as well. And just what you do is you connecting a lot of people with others and helping them through it all and, we can definitely be grateful for that.

Bill 1:24:45

Ah, it's my pleasure. I really enjoy it. Because so far I've got to meet about 120 people that are like me, and that was never, I never knew that many people could possibly be like me.

Noreen 1:25:00

So it's um, it is as we're going through life, we're meeting more and more because the internet's connecting us through. I think that's a wonderful thing about it. It's connected as all.

Bill 1:25:14

Yeah, absolutely. And I'm glad we connected. So thank you so much.

Noreen 1:25:18

No worries Thank you.

Intro 1:25:27

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Intro 1:25:32

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Intro 1:26:07

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Intro 1:26:32

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Intro 1:26:56

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