

AVM Rupture And Recovery 11 Years On - Juan Gonzales

Juan Gonzales experienced a hemorrhagic stroke due to a ruptured AVM at age 21. At the time of recording this interview, he is 11 years post-stroke and in training for an ultra marathon.

Socials:

http://www.instagram.com/centralparkrunner_

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Juan 0:00

So actually I went back to try to play indoor soccer in New York and as well as basketball, but actually two years later after I had the AVM I actually torn my right ACL and after I torn my ACL You know, I think I was very familiar with the process of going to the hospital during the surgery and the recovery and I did it again.

Juan 0:25

But after that I was like I'm done with like, after two years you get those two big surgeries you're like I'm just done of hospital so I just decided just not to play you know when there's like contact sports and maybe just decide to just take something more individual like running where even though you could definitely get an injury but at least there's a little bit less risk than there is in contact sports.

Bill Gasiamis 0:49

Was the ACL injured on the affected leg of the other leg?

Juan 0:58

The other leg but honestly I personally I strongly believe that it was probably from I think the stroke obviously had to do with it because probably just like a balancing thing where you try not to this part, it's just not as strong and it was just getting a rebound and I'm sure that it just found it incorrectly because one side is weaker than the other one.

Intro 1:20

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

Bill Gasiamis 1:34

Hello and welcome to recovery after stroke a podcast full of answers, advice and practical tools for stroke survivors to help you take back your life after a stroke and build a stronger future.

Bill Gasiamis 1:45

I'm your host three time stroke survivor Bill Gasiamis. After my life was turned upside down, and I went from being an active farmer to being stuck in hospital, I knew if I wanted to get my life back to the life I loved before my recovery was up to me.

Bill Gasiamis 2:01

After years of researching and discovering, I learned how to heal my brain and rebuild a healthier and happier life than I ever dreamed possible. And now I've made it my mission to empower other stroke survivors like you to recover faster, achieve your goals and take back the freedom you deserve.

Bill Gasiamis 2:19

If you enjoy this episode and want more resource, accessible training, and hands on support, check out my recovery after stroke membership community created especially for stroke survivors and caregivers, this is your clear pathway to transform your symptoms, reduce your anxiety, and navigate your journey to recovery with confidence.

Introduction - Juan Gonzales



Bill Gasiamis 2:40

Head to recoveryafterstroke.com To find out more after this podcast. But for now, let's dive right into today's episode. This is Episode 163. And my guest today is Juan Gonzales who had an AVM rupture in his head at age 21. These days, 11 years poststroke. Juan is training for an ultra marathon. Juan Gonzales welcome to the podcast.

Juan 3:09

Thank you so much for having me here Bill.

Bill Gasiamis 3:12

My pleasure, man. Tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

AVM Rupture

Juan 3:16

Sure, absolutely. So actually, what happened to me is, when I was around 21 years old, I actually ended up having an AVM, which as you probably know, essentially, in unusual and unusual day, essentially, you know, basically arteries just you know, they transport of oxygen through the blood from the heart to the brain.

Juan 3:43

And then veins basically do the same in the opposite direction. So away from the brain back to the heart. But when you have an AVM, what happens is there's a tangle between these blood vessels.

Juan 3:55

And that's exactly what happened. I had that in my brain. And a lot of people are actually are born with this. And a lot of people go throughout their whole life without even knowing that they have this, it may not explode or in my specific case it did explode.

Juan 4:10

And so in 2021, for whatever reason, unfortunately, in my case, it exploded. And when that's exploded, then it caused a stroke. And when that happened, then essentially I lost basically mobility on my left side. And then basically I had to go through the whole process of surgery. So they had to remove the AVM, got brain surgery, and then from there do all the whole recovery to try to gain the mobility back again.

Bill Gasiamis 4:38

Wow, man. Juan, it's 2021 now we are in September of 2021 while we're recording this, so how many months ago was this man?

Juan 4:50

So this was this was back in May of 2008. So it's been almost 11 years now.

Bill Gasiamis 4:58

And you were 21 years old at the time?

Juan 5:01

Correct, I was 21 years old at the time.

Bill Gasiamis 5:04

Okay, so you're 21 where were you when it happened? Were you in public were you at home? Where did it happen?

Juan 5:13

Absolutely so actually I came to New York because I was actually going to start an internship in the city on Friday and I remember perfectly because actually it was a Wednesday when this happened and it was the final of the Champions League

and Barcelona was playing against Manchester United being a big Real Madrid fan I was like okay, I'm gonna watch this game and hopefully Barcelona is gonna lose.

Juan 5:37

So I remember perfectly and then as I started to watch the game I was just normally just sitting down having some you know some chips and guacamole and when that happened essentially I started feeling this tingling sensation and your legs you know when it gets numbed pins and needles sensation which you know, I think usually happens when you're you know, for whatever reason I thought I was sitting incorrectly or was just in the same position for too long or something was going on.

Juan 6:05

But then that sensation just started from the legs and it just kept going up up and up. And it went for the first time ever actually went to the core to my stomach and I was like, well that's interesting that never happened before. And that same sensation just kept going up up up and up again and actually just went directly all the way through the brain.

Juan 6:25

And so when that happened, I just felt very dizzy like, you know, I can only compare it to like sort of when you get very drunk and you're very very dizzy and that's what I felt I was like well I'm not even drinking like something's definitely wrong.

Juan 6:41

So I stood up and I was like I need to lay down because maybe if I lay down maybe that's gonna help but then as soon as I lay down as soon as my left shoulder just touch the bed where I was it just like I think just the connections just dropped so it just became very heavy the left side just became extremely heavy.

Juan 7:03

And to be honest, that's never happened to me before obviously I've never heard of anything like that when I was 21 years old so like I just wasn't sure what it was. So I didn't took it that serious I was like, I don't know, not sure what to do, let me try to lay down let me drink some Gatorade maybe that'll help.

Juan 7:22

Then I called my brother who also lives in the city at the time. And he was like, I'm not sure what's going on Juan like let me let me finish up a meeting and then you know, I'll be right there as soon as I can.

Juan 7:35

So I was still trying to figure out what it was and then actually Barcelona scored a goal so that was just like I don't even know what's going on here like maybe I'll just take a nap which as you know, it's like the worst thing you can do when you're in the middle of a stroke right?

Juan 7:51

But my head actually hurts significant enough that I actually even though I tried to go to sleep I just couldn't do it because the headache seems to be a little bit too too strong so I still wasn't sure what to do I called my brother again and then he was okay I'm on my way and so once he got to the apartment and he saw that I was in the couch but like I really I just even if I tried it was just too heavy.

Juan 8:16

I just couldn't move my body he was like alright let me call an ambulance and let's see what's actually going on and so essentially called an ambulance they took me on you know on the stroller and then once we're in the hospital they were able to say kind of what was going on so they had to act fast.

Juan 8:33

So they were like you know we need to basically get brain surgery in the next 48 hours or so essentially we went to the operating room as fast as we can get removed that and it's kind of what happened.

Bill Gasiamis 8:45

Wow man, that's pretty intense. When you're explaining it to me just now you made it sound like that you had had similar strange experiences in the past but not the entire side of your body. Was that the first time you experienced that or did you have signs before the big episode that there was something going wrong?

Juan 9:07

That's a great question. And there wasn't anything like this before I think I suffered just maybe a couple headaches but I think it was very normal but interesting enough I think that after the stroke happened like I've never had any

headache like that just on a random day. So I don't know, that could have been related to the fact that I did have it and that it was there lingering but like just very short extent. And then for whatever reason that day it just came out.

Bill Gasiamis 9:39

Did it happen in minutes? Or did it take a long time? Or did you have no idea of time did you have no concept of time?

Juan 9:48

I think it just happened in little in seconds. So I think like, that whole thing that whole episode was like maybe 30 seconds, and then when I went to bed, lay down that was maybe another 10 seconds from the chair to the bed so I think in a matter of minutes the connection was gone.

Bill Gasiamis 10:05

You explained exactly what happened to me. But it took seven days for me.

Juan 10:12

How come?

Bill Gasiamis 10:14

The bleed must have been little and must have been bleeding a small amount, but by the time I noticed my entire left side was gone. It took seven days, and I ignored it for seven days, I went to work, you know, I went to the gym, I drove my car, I did everything.

Bill Gasiamis 10:31

And it was really strange, because I was walking differently, but I was ignoring it. So you didn't have much time to act at all. But you had enough time to call your brother. How long did it take before he got there?

Juan 10:46

I think maybe 30-45 minutes.

Bill Gasiamis 10:52

And before you know what you're in hospital, so it wasn't that long. Within about an hour or so it sounds like you were well on the way to being cared for properly. Did they take you straight into an MRI? or CT scan?

Juan 11:05

Absolutely. Yeah. So the first thing they did even I think in the ambulance, they kind of know what it was, but they just weren't allowed to tell you because you know, they're not doctors. So they couldn't say to you right there, hey, you're having a stroke, you're losing your brain.

Juan 11:18

So they were like, we can't tell you about it, we just need to get to the to the hospital. Then once in the hospital, the first thing was, hey, let's take this guy directly to an MRI and see what's going on there. Actually maybe first was a CAT scan, and then the MRI.

Bill Gasiamis 11:32

Yeah, most of the time it's a CAT scan the CAT scan is the quickest immediately would have revealed a shadow in your brain. And then the next step would be let's work out what made that shadow, and then the next step would be surgery.

Bill Gasiamis 11:46

So within two days, you're in surgery. So what about the rest of your family? How does it go? How did you have that conversation? Were you able to have that conversation?

Juan 11:57

I wasn't able to I think my brother essentially took care of everything. But I just remember like, you know, once I was in the hospital, there was a lot of pain, and they just started giving me a lot of painkillers.

Juan 12:08

The time so I just remember that out of nowhere, The first day passed by really fast. And then I opened my eyes and my parents were already there for support. And then so I guess my brother essentially did everything for me.

Bill Gasiamis 12:23

Wow man 21 years old, you're watching Barcelona and Manchester United. Barcelona scored a goal. So things are not good and then you have a bleed in the brain.

Juan Gonzales Was Oblivious About Stroke



Juan 12:39

Yeah, again, I think that at the time I just didn't even know what a stroke was or what it actually, the implications of it. So like, I couldn't get a grasp on it. And I think to be honest, like I go to surgery, then I wake up and my head is very, very warm.

Juan 12:57

Obviously the brain is subsequently you know inflamed. So it's gonna take weeks, if not months for it to come down. But at the time, I didn't even know what the implications again.

Juan 13:10

So like, I'm like, okay, I woke up and I'm like, I need to go to the bathroom. So I was Alright, let me go to the bathroom. But then as soon as, I go straight to the end of the bed to try to go to the bathroom. The nurse that is, kind of watching me say, Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, where do you think you're going? You can't go to the bathroom.

Juan 13:10

Like, why not? He's like, you can't walk. And so they're like, What do you mean, I can't walk? Of course I can walk. But then when I send that signal to the feet, hey, let's go and it just didn't happen. That just feel like a very big shock in the brain. I just went through the whole show. Like, this thing is real. Like, I don't know

what's gonna happen from now on. But I wasn't able to walk. And that's when it really hit me like, woah.

Bill Gasiamis 13:52

Something serious have just happened. I remember the same thing except that the nurse thought that she was going to help me go to the bathroom and she's half my size, just little petite lady.

Bill Gasiamis 14:05

And she said, put your arm around me. And I stepped out and I put my arm around her my left arm around her, and I stepped onto my left foot. But there was nothing it wasn't working. So I was bang straight onto the ground. Like, hours after brain surgery. After I woke up from brain surgery.

Bill Gasiamis 14:25

I screamed the place down, the nurse was horrified. And they picked me up and put me back in into the bed. And yeah, it was absolutely horrific. And it was a nightmare. So I know exactly what you mean that moment just that moment when you realize oh stuffs just got real now. What happens from now on so many uncertainties. So I mean, how long before they took you into rehab?

Juan 14:57

I think it was I want to say three or four weeks probably in the hospital, and then at the end, I think we started therapy as soon as we physically could. But I think that I was lucky enough because there was the Rehabilitation Center here in New York City.

Juan 15:16

And so I think it's known very well for his first recovery. So I started there and it was very intense, it was basically like going to school from like, almost 9am all the way to like 4 or 5pm of just different, you know, either physical therapy or occupational therapy, both of those therapies luckily, I think the speech was affected, but not significant enough to have like, specifically therapy about that. And then essentially, the whole summer was basically just going through that therapy.

Bill Gasiamis 15:47

Yeah, those times in therapy, I remember being alone a lot of the time, and having a lot of time on my mind. Did you spend a lot of time alone? And what were your

thoughts going on in your head? What was happening there?

Juan 16:01

Yeah, absolutely. I think that it was just a lot of like, how, how do we go from here and just try to see like, and also I think I became a more religious person, I suppose just trying to see like, you know, how can we go from here?

Juan 16:17

And just accepting it for what it could be assuming the worst, but also at the same time, trying to be very positive and, and seeing all the like, fortunately enough, I think I was very young. So I could see the recovery, I could see it almost on an everyday basis. So very good to see the progress going on or every day.

Juan 16:34

But it's also very hard, because I was also with a lot of patients that had strokes. But there are different ages, they're not young, strong survivors. And it was it was very hard to see, because a lot of these people, they've been there for months, and they did not have as much recovery as myself.

Juan 16:52

So even though like I started from scratch to walk again, and you know, for me, just walking the corridor was like a big deal. I did saw that, you know, in a matter of months, but there's been people that just walking from, you know, from the bed to the bathroom. And it's been like months or even years, and they still haven't been able to so it's a lot of emotions that go with that.

Bill Gasiamis 17:12

Yeah, I remember the first time I ended up in hospital was in February of 2012. And because there was maybe a shortage of beds in the stroke ward, or they didn't know how to treat me or where to take me or something like that. I ended up in the ward, where people were disabled from the neck down, where they had spinal injuries.

Bill Gasiamis 17:35

And man, I thought that was going to be me, I thought that was gonna happen to me, I didn't realize what I was dealing with. In my head. I had no idea. I didn't know exactly what was wrong with those people. But I was in the ward with them. And they were being fed by somebody and the only thing that was moving for them was everything above their shoulders.

Bill Gasiamis 17:56

And I'm like, far out like is this means that what's going to happen to me? So it was really challenging. And then they moved me to another Ward, where my only experience was with all the people as well who were struggling. And we were having discussions because I was in there for seven days. We're having discussions.

Bill Gasiamis 18:17

But then one of the ladies kept getting asked, you know, all the questions that they asked you what day is it? You know, who is the prime minister in Australia, but in you know, in the United States might be who's the president? I always tried to forget who was the Prime Minister, because they don't interest me whatsoever.

Bill Gasiamis 18:35

So I'm, and they're asking this lady, all these questions, what day is it? What's your name? And every day, she's doing well, she's answering them. And then one day, she doesn't answer them. And she doesn't know any answers to any of the questions. And within an hour of not answering the questions correctly, she was gone.

Bill Gasiamis 18:56

And not, didn't pass away. But she was gone probably to surgery, and we never saw her, spoke to her again, or knew what happened to her. So we were thinking the worst the people that were around me were thinking the worst that perhaps something bad happened to this lady, which clearly it did, because there must have been checking her for ongoing blood clot or something like that impacting her brain.

Bill Gasiamis 19:20

So it wasn't fun to be in a general Ward with people who were sick like me, but at different levels of sickness, and I was able to comprehend, that it was going bad for them or things were bad for them.

Intro 19:34

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'll make matters worse?

Intro 19:51

Doctors will explain things that 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 recoveryafterstroke.com where you can download a guide that will help you.

Intro 20:14

It's called the seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke these seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke they'll not only help you better understand your condition and 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

Fear For The Worst

Bill Gasiamis 20:37

And it makes you play it in your mind it makes you think about the worst case scenario and for a time most stroke survivors I imagine thought it was over that you know life's over did you have that thought of this could be it, my life could be over?

Juan 20:55

I thought about that actually before going to surgery maybe a little bit just because so many things come to mind and even though you know they did put me under the anesthesia. But you know there's still a couple times where it's like okay, like I'm gonna go under anesthesia. This is it right? So there was a couple minutes absolutely for sure. And when that happens I think that I just saw basically your life just goes very fast through your mind.

Bill Gasiamis 21:25

Yeah, absolutely. I can relate to that. I think most people listening to this can also relate to it. So you come out of surgery you're into rehab and at some point you get sent home What did you get sent home with how much movement did you have back and what were the deficits that you had?

Juan 21:48

I think I would say maybe like at that point after three months or maybe 70% 75%

was almost back I think obviously the biggest deficit it's just I think it's it was hard to tell but I think it's still this right it's just the hand the one side is stronger than the other one but no there was definitely deficits because just just doing any type of exercise or anything like you can definitely tell that the left side was definitely weaker 100%.

Juan 22:21

But apart from that I was supposed to I continue with even though I went at home and I had like a maybe like another month before I actually decided that I wanted to go and try to finish school that same year that the stroke happened so actually during that month I came to therapy with my parents where I was very lucky that they were able to help me all the time.

Juan 22:41

So we actually work a lot of that month as well trying to just basically keep the same discipline that we did in the hospital and I think that that also helped because you know right before I went back for my last year to college like I was basically able to be almost like an 80% 85% I think of recovered.

Bill Gasiamis 22:58

Yeah. And what was it like going back to college were you able to focus, do the work, was the fatigue involved there what was happening?

Juan 23:07

Absolutely, there was definitely a significant amount of fatigue I think that I realized that I definitely needed my eight hours of sleep at the minimum so essentially like you know during at least at the beginning the first six months when I was there like I you know I think that I studied and then just you know try to go to bed early and I have people coming over or my roommate had people like he knew that I you know after what happened like around you know 10-11pm like I just had to absolutely shut down and get some sleep.

Bill Gasiamis 23:37

That would have been difficult 21 legally allowed to drink in the USA and no partying for you.

Juan 23:44

No partying.

Bill Gasiamis 23:47

That's not the worst thing is it?

Juan 23:50

You realize that it's not absolutely,

Bill Gasiamis 23:54

Yeah. So who ended up winning the game?

Juan 23:59

Barcelona did with that amazing header by Leo Messi was one. I think it was a 2-0 game.

Bill Gasiamis 24:05

Yeah okay. So you didn't get the result that you wanted. I imagine that if you're such a fanatic of football. You're also probably somebody who was very active and played football. Would that be right?

Juan 24:19

I did. Yes. I played football. And also actually, even though I follow a lot of football, I was actually born and raised in Colombia in South America. But I also play basketball and when I was in high school, as well.

Bill Gasiamis 24:32

Okay. So you were very active, probably physically fit.

Juan 24:40

Absolutely. And yeah. And essentially that's where the running part starts coming into as well.

Bill Gasiamis 24:46

Yeah. Did you end up getting back to playing football? Have you given that a shot is that possible?

Low-risk Activities For Juan Gonzales



Juan 24:54

So actually, I went back to try to play indoor soccer in New York, and as well as basketball. But actually two years later after I had this, after had the AVM, I actually torn my right ACL.

Juan 25:10

And after I tore my ACL, you know, I think I was very familiar with the process of hospital during the surgery and the recovery, and they did it again. But after that, I was like, I'm done with like, after two years, you get those two big surgeries, you're like, I'm just done with hospital.

Juan 25:27

So I just decided just not to play you know, contact sports, and maybe just decide to just take something and more individual like running where even though you could definitely get injured, but at least there's a little bit less risk, than there is in contact sports.

Bill Gasiamis 25:43

Was the ACL injured on the affected leg of the other leg?

Juan 25:49

The other leg, but honestly, I strongly believe that it was probably I think the stroke obviously had to do with it biggest probably just like a balancing thing where you try not to, this part is just not as strong, and it was just getting a rebound. And I'm sure that it just landed incorrectly, because one side is weaker than the other one,

Bill Gasiamis 25:53

I can really relate to that. I know what you're saying. So basically, it's overcompensating on one side, your form, and your structure and your gait is not exactly as it should be, and therefore you're creating more wear and tear on one side of your body than the other one.

Juan 26:27

Absolutely.

Bill Gasiamis 26:28

Yeah, that makes sense. I was physically active, I went to the gym, I did all those things. I played soccer until I was about 28, 29, but only for a few years. And, at 37, when I had the stroke, you know, I've tried to run around on the football field, kick the ball or whatever.

Bill Gasiamis 26:53

But it feels really strange, it always feels like I'm out of balance. And it always feels like I'm going the wrong way, it kind of feels like I'm going always to the left, which is my weak side. And it doesn't feel nice to try and experience that. So I haven't gone back to any sports at all.

Bill Gasiamis 27:15

And the only thing I do now is ride my bike, and I found an electric bike that makes it possible to pedal for you at the beginning. And because it pedals for you, and it's assisted pedaling, it makes it so that my left side doesn't get tired.

Bill Gasiamis 27:31

Because until I found the electric bike, I was riding a regular bike but my left side, would get tired very, very quickly. And I would lose my balance. And often I would go to put my foot on the ground to rest. And I couldn't feel my leg, and I'd fall over on the bike. So I started to get nervous about it. And I stopped riding for about two years. And then I found that electric bike and started riding again.

Bill Gasiamis 27:55

That's the physical form of exercise that I do. But I only ride for about an hour or two hours per day, very light riding very gentle. And because it's electric assisted, there's no problem going up hills, or anything like that. It's very nice and smooth the whole entire way.

Bill Gasiamis 28:14

And I never could imagine doing the kinds of running that you do, or somebody else who's decided to be a marathon runner does after stroke, I can't imagine ever doing that. What goes on in your mind, after you've had the stroke to say I'm going to start running now? What's all that about?

Juan 28:39

It's a lot of things. But I think that definitely gives you believe it or not, definitely a lot of motivation comes from it. Because just seeing that, you know, you could lose the ability to walk or to run that is just very powerful obviously, as you know, your mind is the most powerful muscle that we have.

Juan 28:58

And there's just too much power right there. So like, just thinking about the fact that I could lose this again. And I don't want that. So I just want to enjoy that. So that just definitely makes me that's enough motivation to you know, get out there anytime during the day, regardless of the weather, and just take on the challenges.

Juan 29:14

That's definitely a lot. And then I also think about a lot of people that they want to be able to do this. But unfortunately for them, they could have a similar episode like myself, and they're just not able to do it. And that also gives you a lot of motivation as well.

Bill Gasiamis 29:29

Yeah. So it's the fact that it was almost taken away from you forever. And because it hasn't been taken away and you can do it, you're not going to take it for granted anymore. I do something similar, but on a very small scale. I always use the steps when I'm going to a building up and down the steps instead of the escalator.

Bill Gasiamis 29:51

And I only do that because once upon a time I couldn't do it. And now that I can do it, even though it's hard and very tiring. I have to hold on to the rail. I still use the steps because I can, that's the only reason why I do it.

Juan 30:08

Again, I think people, everyone I think takes a lot of things for granted. And one of the things is like, I really struggle a lot right after stroke with just putting a

shirt on, like, it's so hard to put a shirt on when half of your body you can move it is extremely hard just to put a shirt on. So I feel very lucky when I actually do it in the morning. It's feels great just to be able to do that.

Bill Gasiamis 30:32

Yeah. What's it like with your friends? So you're 21 your friends saw you go through this, how did they respond? How did your relationships change?

Juan 30:45

I mean, I think that they saw me go through this again, because a lot of my friends were actually in different countries and ones that you know, that I grew up with. They saw a little bit from the distance, but they were very supportive all the time.

Juan 31:01

And, I think that they understand the seriousness of it. So obviously I think every time I go back there, they were very supportive of it. And they just adapt a little bit to my needs at the time.

Juan Gonzales The Central Park Runner



Bill Gasiamis 31:15

So these days, you're called the Central Park Runner on Instagram. That's your Instagram handle.

Juan 31:21

Correct.

Bill Gasiamis 31:22

Tell me about how often do you run around Central Park?

Juan 31:28

Absolutely. So I had a stroke in 2009. And I actually ended up getting the job that I couldn't intern that summer. So I moved to New York in 2010. And I've been since then in New York.

Juan 31:46

And around, that's so long ago, I would say like around 2016 or so I actually started to run in the park, because I live very close to parks, I start to run a lot in the park. And then it just became like my training headquarters. So just try to run almost every other day in the park.

Juan 32:06

And then a couple of my coworkers actually invited me in New York City has the New York Road Runners Association, which they do races in the park every other weekend as well. And so once I actually went to one of those races, the environment everything was just there's so much energy there and that just felt perfectly for me.

Juan 32:26

And after that it was just like I just started to run even more and started to get into these competitive races as well. So I basically go to the park as much as they can, but at least you know three to four days now I discovered you can also do it, there's also like other different routes in New York City, but the park will always be where I run the most 100%.

Bill Gasiamis 32:47

I've been to Central Park in 2013. And it is an amazing place in the middle of a crazy concrete jungle. It's just like immediately you're stepping into a different world. It's like so strange that it's so close to all that craziness and it makes you feel like you're so far away from it.

Bill Gasiamis 33:06

And we were in there in summer and it was quite nice. No we were there in winter and it was quite cold and there wasn't a lot of people around but the sun

was out and it was so beautiful.

Bill Gasiamis 33:19

I imagine it as a place that people go to sit quietly and to meditate. You know, we went to Strawberry Fields where the John Lennon memorial is and it was so quiet there and it was so peaceful and it was like being in a meditation is that part of it for you? Do you get that sense from it as well?

Juan 33:39

What time did you go?

Bill Gasiamis 33:41

We went in the afternoon and it was January the first or January the second something like that.

Juan 33:49

Okay I mean I wish it was like that peaceful all the time. I think when I go I run in the mornings and I run very early in the mornings and one of the reasons is because I want that peacefulness but I also feel like the park just like you mentioned it's just such an attraction, it's so beautiful.

Juan 34:07

The park in the afternoons actually it's pretty busy, in my opinion, there's just a lot of people especially in the summer, but I think in the winter, you could probably definitely get that feeling because it could get very cold so I can definitely see, especially in that area of Strawberry Fields, like people are respectful of that specific area as well.

Bill Gasiamis 34:26

Yeah, it was probably, you know, freezing zero was the temperature. So we were very rugged up there wasn't a lot of people around. It was very sunny, but it was very cold. So we decided to go down there and check out Strawberry Fields and it was just a really bizarre and strange place and felt amazing.

Bill Gasiamis 34:52

I would also love to experience the park in summer and when it's busy because that's a different kind of energy again I imagine people go there for the same reason they go there to get recharged by that place or the trees or the grass or the lake or something.

Juan 35:11

Absolutely. Again like you mentioned just the fact that it is such a concrete jungle and the fact that you have this space which is still pretty big right because essentially like one loop is basically 10k which I think it's a lot right?

Juan 35:24

Just 10k without cars, just bicycles and just runners I think that's a very decent amount of distance for you to just run so it's is a pretty big park I'll be surprised like I've been running there for almost 10 years and I don't think I discovered a lot of things that I have about it until maybe after running it for four or five years.

Juan 35:43

I didn't know when there was a castle inside all the different ponds so there's not just one ice skating there's also another one way all the way in the back. Harlem Hill like there's like another like little area picnic area that is all the way in Harlem Hill like it's a very vast space to be in the concrete jungle.

Bill Gasiamis 36:06

Yeah, absolutely. So the other people that you run with who are some of the people that you've met there? Are they just normal regular people? Are they who got something special that's been going on in their life? What are they like? Tell me about some of the friendships that you've made there?

Juan 36:21

I usually actually run by myself the people that I run with are actually friends that I already know somehow but again I think that i think it's just more because of the convenience that a lot of this running clubs you know you have to run a certain schedule a certain time and I think that I just have my own kind of like schedule.

Juan 36:44

But I also think like after going through something like a stroke I think that I can definitely mentally speaking I think that I definitely like to be on my own when I run for the most part.

Bill Gasiamis 36:57

Okay are you somebody that prefers to have less contact with people generally speaking? Do you just like to be on your own is that something that was like that before or is it something new after the stroke?

Juan 37:12

No that's actually quite the opposite I feel like I like to be around people I think that is the one thing that gives me energy it's just being around people I mean one of the reasons why I love to do it like all these races is because the environment of the people but maybe just running I just prefer to do it by myself.

Bill Gasiamis 37:34

It sounds like a more spiritual thing then, it's interesting you know what do you get out of it?

Juan 37:42

Maybe I kind of just like to talk to myself when I'm running. So it's kind of like I'm just running with someone else but it's basically myself and just you know, just thinking basically.

Bill Gasiamis 37:54

Are you solving problems? Are you meeting your goals? Are you pushing through pain? What are you doing?

Juan 38:01

I think it's a little bit of everything I think you know, it could be one of those races where I'm just thinking about planning stuff you know for the weekend, maybe it's something at work that I kind of you know like problem solving that I just want to discover when I'm running maybe I can solve it better, think a little bit outside the box rather than you know when you're in your computer and just think about work.

Juan 38:25

I think what else and then just maybe just thinking about what's the next move or what's the next vacation that I'm going to do or you know, basically anything it could be anything.

Bill Gasiamis 38:35

Good place to just go out and get some fitness get some exercise and also think and just escape.

Juan 38:44

Yeah, and I also think like I don't know I mean, when you do this long runs I think that you you definitely get to this at some point you get to discover a lot about

more about yourself and actually even go all the way you know, when they're very long runs I feel like you're just discovering more about your soul and it can get a little bit more deeper than that. So I definitely enjoy that as well.

Bill Gasiamis 39:03

Were you the kind of guy before stroke, you know, before 21 were you the kind of guy that went to those places the deep places, what are there things you didn't think about until after the stroke until it was almost taken away from you.

Juan 39:18

Absolutely. I think again, before the stroke I think that even though almost the same but like I just don't think that you just don't have that sense of what it actually is to be taken away from you the fact that you can move which again, like it's just people just take it for granted, which I mean obviously everyone has that but like, we just have no idea what it actually feels like it's quite something.

Bill Gasiamis 39:43

How did your parents cope with all of the drama of your stroke when you were 21?

Juan 39:48

It was absolutely very hard on both of them. Definitely. I think that my mom absolutely It was very hard on my mom and I think it still is I think that you know once we start talking about stroke she gets very sensitive about it. And obviously that also comes to my dad as well.

Emotional Trauma

Juan 40:06

And even to myself as well, it's just, it was definitely something very hard to have when you're 21 year old to see your son going through that, you know, to the point like I know a lot of people, like we just wanted to put it in the past and move forward.

Juan 40:20

So there's not like a lot of, you know, videos or pictures about what happened. I think there was just more like, you know, let's get over this. And let's move on. And let's go back to how things were before.

Bill Gasiamis 40:31

Yeah, it sounds like some of those things have been achieved. But it sounds like it's still a big issue for people emotionally. It's caused trauma by the sound of it.

Juan 40:42

Absolutely. And I think I actually saw one of your episodes as well. But I feel like it also definitely makes you more sensitive about it about just, you can get very emotional very easily. Which it was something that before stroke. I don't think I was but I can get emotionally very easy compared to before.

Bill Gasiamis 41:00

Yeah. And your brother, is he older or younger than you?

Juan 41:03

He's older than me. Almost four years.

Bill Gasiamis 41:07

Yeah. And how is he these days? Is he okay with it? Did he struggle with it? What was the situation for him?

Juan 41:15

I think that we were lucky because he's usually you know, he's the older one. So he's the one that you know, try to, keep the poise together. And I think he did a very good job. Because it was a lot to handle for him. Just I don't know where you know, your small brother is going through all this. And then you see your parents who have to also suffer through all this, it's also very painful, so I'm just very grateful that he was in my life.

Bill Gasiamis 41:39

Yeah, he did a good job, of course. And he did the right thing. A lot of people I know at least with me when I was telling people about the situation and how serious it was. I told them, it wasn't that serious at all. And I wasn't making a point of getting people to help me out or to act for me or to do anything.

Bill Gasiamis 42:00

So they didn't really know what was happening. They were hearing a story from me that was very different from what they were seeing. And it was confusing them because I wasn't giving them accurate information about what was actually going on. The doctors were, but then I was behaving like I was perfectly normal.

Bill Gasiamis 42:18

And people were just so confused that would come to see me, and say what did the doctors say? I can't say that on the outside of you. Like it doesn't seem like you're that bad. It shouldn't be that bad, right? But then after three years, when I had brain surgery, they finally realized that it was that bad. And I think it's when I realized that it was that bad because I was in denial for a long time that there was anything wrong with me as well, you know?

Juan 42:49

And why did it take like three years before you get that surgery?

Bill Gasiamis 42:53

Yeah, because I had one bleed, and then they wanted to wait to see if it would stop bleeding. Because it took such a long time to happen. They thought maybe the blood vessel will close over and it won't bleed again. But then six weeks after the first time it happened again.

Bill Gasiamis 43:11

And this time, it was a pretty big episode, I didn't know who my wife was, I couldn't remember my name. I couldn't drive, go to work type an email, I was gone. You know, I didn't remember who came to visit me for quite a long time for about nine or so months. But what they were doing was monitoring my situation.

Bill Gasiamis 43:29

And every month I was having an MRI and I would just check to see if it changed in size. And if it got smaller or bigger, and the bleed was decreasing in size, the body was getting rid of it slowly slowly out of my brain. So after about a year and a little bit, I was doing quite well.

Bill Gasiamis 43:46

Everything was going back to normal, I started to go back to work focus drive. And I was really healthy, I stopped smoking and drinking and eating junk and I became really lean and also healthy I was the healthiest I've ever been. And then about nearly three years after the first bleed.

Bill Gasiamis 44:07

So the first bleed was in February 2012. The second one was six weeks later. And the third one was in November 2014. It happened again. And after I had confused everybody by making them think that Bill's, okay, everything is back to normal.

We got the had to ring them again and tell them I'm in the hospital again.

Bill Gasiamis 44:30

And this time they're going to operate and they need to get this thing out of my head. So I was messing with people the whole time. making them think that everything's better. Everything's better, everything's better. And then after surgery, of course, when people came to visit me and I couldn't walk, they realize that things were pretty serious.

Bill Gasiamis 44:51

And I think that's the first time that I really thought it was serious, but I planned for the possibility that it might happen again. In my own mind, I thought if I can be as healthy as possible, if it happens again, my window of recovery will be shorter. Hopefully, it's just an idea that I had and I just went with it, what can I do to support myself in my own recovery, if it happens again, and I'll be the healthiest person I can be.

Bill Gasiamis 45:17

So I'm not contributing to my disease, I'm doing the opposite, I'm trying to fight it the other way. So that's what I did. And, it still, you know, bled again. And it had to be removed. So I went through all the rehabilitation like you, and went through all similar problems.

Bill Gasiamis 45:38

And then I think it took me about a year before I was feeling comfortable in myself again, and get able to get back to work properly, and to do all the things that I thought I wanted to do. And by middle of 2015, is when I finally told all my doctors and all that like, I don't want to see you guys anymore, like I'm over, I'm over it.

Bill Gasiamis 46:03

And I'm gonna take over from here, and I'm gonna put myself first and I'll get better. But then, like you, I didn't have an ACL surgery, but I had a thyroid surgery, which was in 2016. So the middle of 2016, half of my thyroid gland was removed because it was enlarged.

Bill Gasiamis 46:23

So now, I've just got over all of this recovery, you know, from the stroke, from the brain surgery from all of that kind of thing. And now I'm in hospital again, another

surgery, so I'm freaking my family out again. And I'm just confusing him and driving him nuts again, and at the same time trying to keep them calm, you know, okay, we'll get through this, we'll get over this, as well.

Bill Gasiamis 46:44

So it's such a long journey, man. And I'm not sure what they're thinking not many of my family members have been brave enough to have a conversation like this with me like that's deep and meaningful about the whole situation like your family, they just want to put it behind them and move on.

Juan 47:07

Yeah, I can definitely agree with you like, it's just it's painful to put them again through another surgery right after you have such a major surgery I just like, we've done this before. Like, it just felt like we've done this before. Don't worry, it's the other one was much worse. But yeah, it's just it's like this. It's terrible to put them on the egg. Under that kind of situation.

Bill Gasiamis 47:30

Yeah. Hopefully, we don't do that for a long, long, long time to come.

Juan 47:36

No, and also, like you said, I think that I'm basically trying to do that as well. Like the whole point was like, I need to be strong also. Like I have to so like I try you know, after the stroke I needed to go to the gym no matter what every day just to make sure that you know that the left side keep strong.

Juan 47:52

Because if not, then you know, you never know what could happen again, right? So definitely try to do that. And then I think the running obviously, I love it. And it also I think that also just helps in general to try to keep strong as well. But definitely it's like you said it's about also like, also became more conscious about what I eat what I don't eat.

Juan 48:12

As a matter of fact, like I'm actually also I wanted to get a nutritionist certification, which I'm working on and I also became actually a running coach at the beginning of this year as well. So the idea is to be both a running coach and also a nutrition coach.

Bill Gasiamis 48:29

That's an awesome combination. Because part of being fit and healthy is not just the fact that you're moving and doing a lot of running it's also what you put into your mouth garbage in garbage out good stuffing good stuff out.

Juan 48:42

Absolutely, exactly.

Unhealthy Diet

Bill Gasiamis 48:44

I feel like a lot of the stuff that we've been educated about to think is good has become has come from, you know, Coca Cola, or from Doritos or from organizations that are selling those products and telling you that they are good.

Bill Gasiamis 48:58

At least that was my education. That's what I thought was good for me. All the stuff that you buy in a packet off a shelf, you know, I didn't realize that my diet was actually very unhealthy until I was about 37 when I had to stop and take a big look back and go Okay, what am I doing that's impacting me negatively?

Bill Gasiamis 49:19

Could it be the food and yeah, sure enough, it was, you know, Coca Cola, man, I used to drink you know, I'm not sure like a quarter of a gallon a day like a liter in a bit of day sometimes. And I just thought it was quite normal and if I went to somebody's house and they didn't have Coca Cola to offer me, I would tell them next time I come over please have Coca Cola don't have Pepsi, I don't like Pepsi.

Juan 49:45

Then that is funny. I think my great great grandmother would always have Coca Cola for us for it was just for whatever reason and they just believe that that was you know, that was just a normal thing to do. But again definitely I think the media definitely contributed for a very long time about like, what nutrition what good means. But I mean, I'm happy that things are definitely changing in recent time.

Bill Gasiamis 50:14

Yeah, there's a lot more information available to people isn't there we can access

amazing coaches and nutritionists on Instagram, on the internet on YouTube, and we could really learn from them about what the right way to go about our health and well being is the one, the version that suits us at least so I feel very blessed that we've kind of I often say we've had a stroke at the right time on the planet, you know, 50 years ago, it might not have been the same outcome for us.

Juan 50:47

Absolutely not. I think it could have been, you know, different, they may use a different technique. I think that for an AVM, I think that you have the option of either actually, you know, having brain surgery and kicking it out. Or you can also have the option of like, I'm probably the same as you just let it drain by itself little by little, like control or something. And most likely, maybe that was the way to go 50 years ago, instead of you know, well, let's just open, let's just do brain surgery and take it off and get it fixed once and for all.

Bill Gasiamis 51:18

Might have been a much bigger problem. So what are the plans going forward? Is there any big runs coming up any big competitions?

Juan 51:30

This fall, actually, like in a month already comes the Chicago Marathon, which I'm going to run. And then I'm also going to run the New York City marathon, which is November so I think the first time we're going to run two marathons that close, you know, I trained this whole year after becoming a coach and I'm just trying to see hopefully, the training went really well so that I'd be able to run competitively on both of those marathons and the body can take it.

Bill Gasiamis 51:59

So have you done a marathon before?

Juan 52:02

I haven't done I did the New York City Marathon in 2019. I did the virtual marathon last year as well.

Bill Gasiamis 52:09

On a treadmill?

Juan 52:11

No in Central Park, actually.

Bill Gasiamis 52:14

Okay, so you just run around Central Park four times?

Juan 52:18

Oh, almost four. Yep, exactly.

Bill Gasiamis 52:22

Wow, man. That's crazy. I just think people who run marathons are crazy, but in a good way. Like good crazy. So what is your fastest time so far? Or how quickly did you run it?

Juan 52:35

So, I ran it in 3 hours and 17 minutes. That's the fastest one.

Bill Gasiamis 52:39

3 hours and 17 minutes. That's pretty good.

Juan 52:46

It's pretty good time. And then the idea is to get ideas to one run, there's six major marathons in the world. And so the idea is to essentially be able to run those six major marathons, which are you know, you got in New York, Chicago, you got London, you got Tokyo, you got Berlin, and you got Boston, which is like the most historic one is the most iconic one.

Juan 53:12

But in order to go to Boston, you have to qualify under certain time. And that time, it's actually three hours. So essentially, you have to work your way there to be able to qualify to Boston.

Bill Gasiamis 53:26

So not anybody can run the Boston Marathon, you have to be up there with the best.

Juan 53:31

You have to be the best, or I think charity, you can also pay if you raise charity as well.

Bill Gasiamis 53:37

Yeah. Okay, so I'm looking on the internet here. And it's got the really good times for people who run marathons. Less than three hours, only 4% of men are able to

run a marathon under three hours. And 1% of women who compete Now, under three hours and five minutes, it spikes to 18%.

Bill Gasiamis 54:05

So 18% of men, 5% of women can run a marathon, less than three hours and five minutes. So less than four hours 43% of men and 21% of women. So you are only seven minutes away from being less than three hours and five minutes and you will join the top 22% of people who have run a marathon. At that level, you will be the top 23%.

Juan 54:43

And that's the plan and even better like imagine something that I think to myself is like how many of those had actually had a stroke?

Bill Gasiamis 54:51

Yeah, man, not many. I would say not many. When you put it that way. Anything that's Amazing, right? Just from the beginning, it's amazing. But when you put it that way, it's even more amazing. It just goes to show how lucky you are, how blessed you are. You know how you got away with it relatively lightly, although it's a traumatic experience, and it's difficult and you had to overcome a lot.

Bill Gasiamis 55:16

Man, it's such a good story. However many years down the track to be having a conversation with a guy and he says to me, yeah, man, I'm running a marathon at three hours in 17 minutes. And I had a stroke, man. That's brilliant.

Juan 55:30

Thank you. Yeah, again, very grateful. Thank God, you know what, whatever happened had to happen at that at that time. And just give me that perspective to where I am now.

Bill Gasiamis 55:41

Yeah. I mean, as a 21 year old, you probably haven't got much brains anyway. I know, I didn't when I was 21. But did it grow you up at 21? Did you become grown up much quicker?

Juan 55:55

I think a little bit. Absolutely. I think that if it wasn't for that, then it will take a little bit more time to mature but no, It does. It absolutely does. You basically

almost were very close to losing everything. So absolutely. Even if you don't want to it definitely grows you up. 100%.

Juan 56:13

Again, like I think that I mentioned before, like, I don't take anything for granted. But at the same time, it makes you live different, you could just get a different perspective on life. And I just, I don't focus, I try not to focus on you know, something, any type of problems that can lead to like, you know, like, actually big problems, which, I think in that sense, it's a little bit interesting, because, like, a lot of problems that people have now.

Juan 56:43

Like, I just don't think that they are problems because what we've been through is actually a real problem. So all these little things like they just don't, interest me. You know, you know, there's worse things in life like you cannot just be hold up on like very small details. Like there's actually other stuff that needs to be done. So it definitely just makes your perspective, much more interesting compared to other people.

Bill Gasiamis 57:10

Yeah, I'm comparing myself to you at 21. I didn't have that kind of a brain. And, of course, I was 21. But I became a dad at 21, a few months after my 21st birthday no 22 years of data 22. So a year after my 21st. And I had a lot of problems. I mean, I'm a 22 year old with a with a son and a mortgage and a wife that was at home and wasn't working at the time.

Bill Gasiamis 57:39

And everything was a problem you can imagine, like I made everything in my head was a problem. And that behavior lasted until I was 37 and had a stroke. And I feel like you You missed out on having those negative mindsets that some of us get caught up in for such a long time. And we don't realize that we're doing that I didn't realize I was doing until I was 37.

Bill Gasiamis 58:02

I was complaining about everything before the stroke. And then a day later, I'm in hospital. And this thing is serious. And we don't know what what's going to happen. All of a sudden, all those problems went away, I forgot that I even had them. And there were no problems anymore.

Bill Gasiamis 57:57

So I don't know why I was spending so much time focusing on them. But I did I spent such a long time focusing on the wrong things, instead of focusing on how to make myself feel better and achieve the things that I wanted to achieve. And, you know, let go of the troubles the things that troubled me, I just focused on the troubles.

Juan 58:40

That's great way to put it. Yeah.

Overcoming Stroke At A Young Age



Bill Gasiamis 58:43

I like where you're at at 21. Unfortunately, you had to go through some really difficult times. But coming out of that, amongst other things, you've got this perspective that was able to stop you from wasting time, putting energy into things that were not constructive and helping you achieve your outcomes. It's a really lovely thing to come out of something so dramatic and so terrible.

Juan 59:10

I agree. 100% Yeah, like, like, I think you put it in a very right way. Like it just I just don't focus anymore. And you know, and the negative like you should just be grateful of a lot of things that you have and you know, whatever happens to you, it's about what you know, it's more about how you react to it more than you know, just, you know, take it but just it's about how you act from here on rather than start focusing on the negatives and what could go wrong, just straight up, be

positive or always and focus on how to get how to move from power move forward.

Bill Gasiamis 59:41

Yeah. For me, it's about solving problems, rather than focusing on the problem. It's about finding, looking for solutions, spending all my time focusing on solutions instead of focusing on the problem which my God is such a waste of time. It's such a silly thing to do, but you know.

Juan 1:00:00

And like, you know, like life is just too short and it can change in two seconds, right. So like that's also where that perspectives come into.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:10

The Romans had a Latin term that they used to say they used to say memento mori. And in Latin memento mori means it's a reminder that you're going to die, that death is inevitable. And they create a symbol of this memory, so that you can remember, and sometimes they're worn around the neck, like on a chain, or some people putting it as tattoos, it's basically a skull.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:40

And the skull is just a reminder to that person, that one day they're going to die. And I love the idea that such an ancient time, you know, long time ago, they just knew that death was going to happen to us, it was inevitable, and to remember that, every time you come up against a problem, that's not really a problem, just think about how time is short, and how we can focus on the solution rather than the problem.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:05

And move forward and beyond that, you know, so I just came across that memento mori in a book, only last week, and it has made such a difference to that part of me that understanding of the fact that life's short, I always knew that since I was 37. I understand that now since the stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:29

But this reminder that they had every day that they looked at, so that they would never forget, under any circumstances difficult, you know, challenging losses, or whatever they was, they always had this reminder that life's short. So, you know, think about the possibility of the solution rather than sticking in the problem.

Juan 1:01:52

What book was that?

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:54

It's right here, I'll get it for you. It's called the obstacle is the way the ancient art of turning adversity into advantage. And it's by an American author, Ryan Holiday. And it is a very easy read. But he talks about the ancient Romans, the ancient Greeks, and he talks about a way of life called being stoic, or the stoics.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:32

And it's, some people confuse it as a religion, but it's more about our way of life. And some of the emperors of the Roman Empire were stoics. And they learned in conjunction with a lot of the Greek philosophers, and it was about understanding that whatever is in your way, the obstacle is the way the obstacle is not meant to be what stops you from actually going forward, the obstacle is the thing that you're supposed to solve, overcome, and go through, to get to the other side.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:08

So when you get to an obstacle, what they're saying to you is, , the obstacle is the lesson, it's meant to be there, that's what's going to help you grow and become a better version of yourself and overcome, whatever it is that's challenging you, and then you with that lesson, with that lesson, you'll be able to take that lesson into the next obstacle.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:29

And another one that might come up in the future that you never know, is around the corner. So I just loved that idea. I mean, this has been such an impactful book, and I've read it, I've read some very impactful books, but this one is one of the most, you know, the obstacle is the way when you get to it, you should be happy that you saw the obstacle because now you know that after the obstacle is the answer is the solution. And all you got to do is find a way through it. For me, it's just blown my mind.

Juan 1:04:00

I'm very interested, yeah, probably gonna read it looks very interesting, actually.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:05

Yeah, it's a very easy read. It's very straightforward. You know, I've highlighted all the bits that were important to me, that I think, you know, make a difference to

me that I needed to learn or I needed to understand. And, it's only about 180 pages. So it took me you know, less than a four weeks to read it in a few pages every day.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:32

And I think it's one of those books that I'm going to have to pick up and look at again and read again, because the lessons are very profound, and they come from this ancient wisdom. You know, they come from people who achieved great things in ancient times that they must have been great, you know, because still 2000 years later, we're still talking about them.

Juan 1:04:57

Very true. Very interesting. Yeah, you know, I like all that stuff when you talk about, you know, ancient Rome and the Greeks. I think that's something that really interests me. So I'm totally gonna read that book. obstacle is the way.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:11

Obstacle is the way I'll have some links for people to check it out some photos of that. Where's a great place for people to find you if they want to connect with you on Instagram? What is your Instagram page?

Juan 1:05:25

So it's Central Park Runner, and then just the bottom, the bottom line?

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:32

Underscore Central Park Runner underscore.

Juan 1:05:35

Central park runner underscore Yeah, obviously central park runner was really taken when I wanted that name. But yeah, that's absolutely people can reach out and then I think the going forward. The idea is I do want to run like even longer races or like an ultra marathon after a run the marathons.

Juan 1:05:54

Because I think that the more I think that the more mental challenges you've been through, the longer you're able to support long races I think that mentally speaking that I should be able to run an ultramarathon. So that's definitely something that is exciting for the next couple years.

Juan 1:06:11

But also the Idea is, as become a coach, the biggest thing that I eventually wanna do is focus on young stroke survivors that may probably have to do some similar event because obviously I can relate to them and it's important they know that just because you had a stroke you can still run if you really want to and would love to help that kind of people.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:38

That's beautiful, man. I mean, what a perfect way to end the podcast, what a gift to give to the community as well. You're doing a great thing. You're getting fit, you're learning about your own challenges. You're overcoming your own mental blocks, and health. How long is an ultra marathon?

Juan 1:06:55

So technically speaking, it's anything that beyond 26.2. But essentially a lot of people I'm thinking I'm gonna go for 50 or 60k. That's the idea there's one race in Central Park, actually, which I think is it's around 50k. That's 30 something miles. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:14

Wow, man. Well, I wish you all the best for that. I really appreciate you being on the podcast. Thanks for sharing your story. And I look forward to following you and learning more about you. And if anyone wants to connect with you, they could just reach out via Instagram. We'll have all the links on the podcast page there for anyone who wants to find it. Juan Gonzales man, thank you so much for being on the podcast.

Juan 1:07:39

No. Thank you very much. It was absolutely my pleasure.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:43

Thanks so much for joining me on today's recovery after stroke podcast. Do you ever wish there was one place to go for resources, advice and support in your stroke recovery? Whether you've been navigating your journey for weeks, months or years, I know firsthand how difficult it can be to get the answers you need.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:00

This road is both physically and mentally challenging from reclaiming your independence to getting back to work to rebuilding your confidence and more.

Your symptoms don't follow a rulebook and as soon as you leave the hospital you no longer have medical professionals on tap.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:15

I know for me It felt as if I was teaching myself a new language from scratch with no native speaker in sight. If this sounds like you, I'm here to tell you that you're not alone and there is a better way to navigate your recovery and build a fulfilling life that you love. I've created an inclusive, supportive and accessible membership community called recovery after stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:37

This all in one support and resource program is designed to help you take your health into your own hands. This is your guide walk through every step in your journey from reducing fatigue, to strengthening your brain health to overcoming anxiety and more. To find out more and to join the community for just \$1 head to recoveryafterstroke.com See you on the next episode.

Intro 1:09:00

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Intro 1:09:17

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Intro 1:09:40

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Intro 1:09:54

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Intro 1:10:19

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