

Blood Clot Stroke - Donna Bouten

Stroke Podcast Episode 30 - Donna Bouten is a carer for her partner and recently experienced a blood clot stroke that she is recovering well from.

Some stroke foundations report that up to 87% of strokes are caused by blood clots. It is the most common form of stroke.

Donna contacted me after she came across a Facebook post I did some time ago, on Neural Plasticity with Dr. Michael Merzenich.

She found the interview very compelling and decided to get in touch with me for a chat, in the hope of connecting with more people that have been through something similar to herself.

I asked Donna to be a part of the program because I know from first-hand experience, that talking about the stroke that happened to us can be very therapeutic and can help others going through something similar.

If you have experienced a stroke and got a lot out of this interview please get in touch. Also please feel free to share this interview with others that you feel may benefit. I am always glad when people contact me about their experience with stroke it's the reason why I started the stroke podcast.

Please share this blood clot stroke episode.

If you are a subscriber to my YouTube channel hit the thumbs up button on the bottom right of the video. This will help the video rank better and become more likely to be found by others searching for this kind of content. Thanks for watching on youtube thanks for listening on iTunes and thanks for visiting the website www.recoveryafterstroke.com

If you like hearing more episodes of stroke recovery check out the great interview with Antonio Iannella who is recovering from a brain stem stroke.

Transcript:

Intro 0:05

Recovery After Stroke Podcast helps you go from where you are to where you'd

rather be.

Bill 0:14

Well, good day everybody and welcome to another episode of the Recovery After Stroke podcast. My guest today is Donna Bouten. Donna Bouten is a carer for her partner and recently experienced a blood clot stroke that she's recovering well from. Donna contacted me after she came across a Facebook post that I did some time ago on neuroplasticity. And it was an episode that I recorded with Dr. Michael Merzenich the father of neuroplasticity.

Bill 0:44

She found the interview very compelling and decided to get in touch with me through chat in the hope of connecting with more people that have been through some similar to herself. I asked Donna to be part of the program because I know from firsthand experience of talking about the stroke that has happened to us can be very therapeutic and can help others going through something similar. If you or someone you care about has experienced a stroke and has started their recovery, you'll know what a scary time you could be.

Bill 1:13

There are all these questions going through your mind, like, how long will it take to recover? We like actually recover? What things should I avoid in case I make it worse? My doctors and therapists will always be helpful in explaining things but obviously, I've never had a stroke before. I didn't know what questions to ask. And so I worried a lot and missed out on doing things that could have sped up my recovery.

Bill 1:38

So if you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to <https://recoveryafterstroke.com/> where you can download a guide that will help you. It's called seven questions to ask your doctor after a stroke. These seven questions are the ones that I wished I had asked when I had my stroke because they not only helped me understand my condition.

Bill 2:02

They also help me take a more active role in my recovery, rather than just waiting to be told what to do at my next appointment. head to the website now, thetransitloungepodcast.com, and download the guide. It's free. And now it's on

with the show.

Bill 2:21

Tell me a little bit about you and how was it you got to experience the stroke and what happened.

Donna Bouten 2:29

Well, last November, I went in for a short procedure at a colic hospital to have a marina inserted. And three days later, I woke up at five o'clock, about five o'clock in the morning and I opened the door to head to the loo, and everything was sort of wasn't straight, everything was crooked. Everything was wavy. That's the only way I can explain it. And I felt very dizzy and felt like I was going to fall over. So if I close my eyes, it was fine.

Donna Bouten 3:10

So the problem was the loo diagonally opposite the house. So I had to try and get there. She could mean that I still was a smoker at that stage and I thought if I went outside to try and have a cigarette, I might feel better. Well, I nearly fell over outside so then I had to try and make it back into the house where I started feeling sick. So I grabbed a bucket set on the toilet for a while. Yes, I don't know how long I was. They might be half an hour.

Donna Bouten 3:44

I don't know how I made it back to bed but I didn't. Same way by closing my eyes and putting my hands on the wall and feeling my way back to the bedroom. Well, went back to bed and woke up about Two hours later with extreme pain in my little finger on my right hand, and it had gone black. And that's what me up and just feeling really weed and wanting to just want to sleep. But this pain in my hand wouldn't let me and I just said to Colin, I said something's not right.

Donna Bouten 4:25

And he said I will get you to the doctor. Anyway, I was able to get in very early in the morning before he started saying any patients and he just said get straight to DeLonge hospital. He said too many. You've got too many different symptoms. He said I don't like what I'm saying. He said so it takes about an hour to an hour to drive up there and on an hour I wasn't in the waiting room very long. Because Colin drove me up there.

Donna Bouten 4:55

We didn't get an ambulance and the next thing they were offering doing tests I had an MRI and a CAT scan. And next thing I discovered I had a clot in the main artery that was at the base of where the two arteries that go to the brain, the carotid. Yeah, so part of it broke off and affected the back of my brain. And the other part that broke off and get my right arm hits a finger it had no it blocked the blood flow to my finger.

Bill 5:32

Wow. So that's very different from a lot of the other people I've spoken to about the struggle that they've experienced. Now you had a club that went two directions, one to you, Brian, one to your finger.

Donna Bouten 5:45

Well, the clock was still in the tree. It's just beats had broken off from art. And they tossed up whether they would actually operate and put a shunt in me Well hang on that was that was further that was because I was two days into a long hospital and they decided they didn't have the equipment to look after me if anything further happened. So when they decided to put me in an ambulance and send me to some Vincent's right now. So because I live in Call x

Bill 6:20

A good man that just walked past.

Donna Bouten 6:23

My brother in law

Bill 6:28

I'm curious, do you always go to a cigarette in the past when you felt unwell to make you feel better?

Donna Bouten 6:37

out and I was just

Donna Bouten 6:40

I don't know why I wanted a cigarette. That's the odd thing. I'm really pleased. I don't do that anymore. It's nearly 12 months since I had that last rated cigarette so and I'm feeling so much better for it. So So yeah, they transferred me to some Vincent's where the doctors had 18 further tests and there they are member I'd not long after got into the room and it was midnight and they were taking me to

have more tests and I thinking I just want to go to sleep. So and it was there they discovered the clock was still in my artery. And after about must have been about 10 days I had it there. Nine days that's when they went going to operate to put the shunt on, but they decided to check again to see whether it had moved and it actually dissolved

Bill 7:42

by whites. But it's such a good result, isn't it?

Donna Bouten 7:46

Oh, that was just, I'll never forget the day my sister was with me because she's in Melbourne. It was a day because I'd said to Colin don't come up every day it was becoming too much for him driving from Color to Cindy, every day, and yeah, and it was the day that my sister was with me. And yeah, we just both broke into teeth. So because I said it was very rare the clot that I had where it was, and then all of a sudden it just dissolved. So thank goodness cuz we're going to do the app through the groin and had made through the, through the grind, and through the arm, I think that Ted is going to get to it.

Bill 8:32

Yes sir. What they do is they take the artery through the groin, they go all the way up a bypass the heart and up into your neck. I had a procedure like that to chicken safe though. My head was still bleeding. It is that went through the groin that went all the way up and then I entered into the brain and they squirt a little, a little bit of what I call like contrast, and then right under certain can audition in an MRI special MRI, they can see whether the contrast comes out of the blood vessels and in this particular case, it didn't but that's how they do it and it's a quite a

Donna Bouten 9:12

contrast a few times with the MRI so I don't enjoy that feeling that awful sensation of that hot and that needing to go to the toilet and that just that we and it's just like I hate it Do I have to go through that and I go yeah oh Hurry up get over with you know so yeah, I know if I've got a calculator in it usually means that

Bill 9:39

high Tell me what, what's it like? Can you for somebody who's listening and who doesn't understand what a stroke is like? Perhaps the caring for somebody etc.

What's it What was it like for you to get firstly the diagnosis and then have to deal with what the diagnosis could mean? What was that like for you?

Donna Bouten 10:03

A bit of a shock and a bit unreal and

Donna Bouten 10:08

understand the severity of it. Till sit down, we're going to move me to some Vincent from Dylan that sort of gave me a big scare. And then when I said my youngest daughter was traveling and was flying in to see me that was the icing on the cake and I went, Okay, this is serious. You know, I suppose, felt unreal, I suppose, because I wasn't really

Donna Bouten 10:36

paralyzed. Because I really have been very lucky.

Donna Bouten 10:42

Apart from hand tremors, forgetting words, and still, I've still got a weakness in my left side, but that's because of the other condition that I was diagnosed with. Before I had the stroke last year when I was done. knives with shotguns definitely. And probably micro IRA, which actually shows and definitely means I had a stroke in utero.

So before I was even born, well, either I had a stroke. So which, you know, at 52 to this, it explained a lot. But how, how I felt in the hospital, I suppose. Yeah, I suppose I didn't realize the severity and how serious it was. And then when I got up there, and I had a team of like, 10 doctors or come and see me at once, and it's just like, my Chi VCs, and you know, they're all talking to themselves and it's like, you're a number and it's like, Hello, and he can you put that show I can understand. So.

Bill 11:54

What I know you're, I remember you told me a couple of weeks ago, when also We spoke over the phone that you're a carer as well for your husband. So this is a really big issue now for you to be unwell. You're also caring for your husband. So what's what happens there? How have you managed all of that?

Donna Bouten 12:15

Um, yeah, it's been very interesting. I suppose. I've just had to learn to slow

down. take things easy if things aren't done well, you know what, it's always tomorrow See how you feel tomorrow. Colin's been a great help though. And because we live with his brother as well so the the two guys have sort of they sort of you know they put the washing on or you know they

Bill 12:47

Stepped up to the plate.

Donna Bouten 12:49

Well, Colin like to cook anyway. We used to get in the kitchen and cook together anyway. So yeah, there was a bit of cooking but then became a few Why didn't This is so but I suppose it was hard for him and a big shock for him well, cuz we've only been together about five years. So yeah, it's it was a huge shock for him too. So, we've managed to get there and we're both still here. We can talk about it.

Donna Bouten 13:28

We support each other so and who knows if I've got to go and back up to DeLonge and go to the hospital and say somebody else so because I was back in hospital quite a few times issues with other issues. I had an issue. what they thought was a blockage to the bladder was actually an infected kidney for 10 weeks. Yeah, so I've had a few issues and, yeah, I'm about two months now or two and a half months. Since I had a full hysterectomy so yay. So it's been an in-and-out-of-hospital year. So, but Colin's been pretty brave and looking after me, so really pretty lucky.

Bill 14:14

So hopefully the majority of what you've had to go through is it for now and nails onto the healing and recovery side. Speaking of healing and recovery, did you find yourself kind of missing certain things that you felt would have made your recovery easier? So information from the doctors or what were you challenged with other than your health now that you were sent home then? Was this stuff going on that you were sort of wishing you had more information on?

Donna Bouten 14:47

Um, no, not really. Um, I can't. I can't think of that now. I'm, it's funny, it might. If I think of it, it might come up, and might be able to think of something lighter, but at the moment it reminds me about Hey, remember when I hear That's right. I

do get a bit forgetful like that and call things the wrong names. And, you know, he says, darling, okay. I know I said, I know I've called it the wrong name, you know, to forgive me, you know.

Bill 15:27

I found myself also struggling with memory and all those types of things. And what was really good for me was when people did remind me that was good for me, but something happened. But also I've spoken to a lot of stroke survivors of stroke patients who have told me that what they've done is they've had somebody do a journal for them. Or they've said had somebody video them to see so they can have a comparison to see how they're recovering from when it began to three months later and six months later, etc. Especially people who have got speech challenges. And people who are struggling to walk at the beginning, or really learning how to use their arm, and they get to see this change occur and then they get to go. Well, I have come a long way. I do feel a lot better about where I've come and I'm probably further than I thought I was.

Donna Bouten 16:18

Okay. Yeah, that's, that's interesting. I will say I still go. Well, I've just recently gone back to doing physio, because I do physio once a week here at the local area Health Center, and I've got a very good physio and I've gone back to getting on the bike. I do 15 minutes on the bike and then I do I call it the arm bike where you know, you get you to put your hands. It feels like you're on a boat or something, you know, with what I do. 15 minutes I'm back up to doing 15 minutes of that as well.

Donna Bouten 16:56

And yes, she mentioned yesterday she said to me, wow. You're actually talking while you're doing that, and not a not out of breath too much. She said You're definitely feeling better. So, yeah. But last week, I was really tired after I'd been there. And I came home and Colin said to me go and have a lie-down. I slept for three hours. So I still have moments where just the tide hits me out of nowhere. And that's, I think that's the one thing I find very, the most challenging I get.

Bill 17:33

Yeah, that's interesting, because that was me at the beginning as well. So what I found was that I would go, I would go really well, and then I would kind of hit a wall and I would hit this wall very, very rapidly. And I would need to just stop

immediately, otherwise, I would burn myself out for the day, and that would last a couple of days. So if I got to rest immediately, then I didn't get to that burnout stage and I didn't take a very long time to read Cover.

Bill 18:01

So it's interesting that you say that now you go to sleep for three hours at the moment, what you'll find is that will start to decrease the amount of time that you need to rest. And the amount of time you need to regain to recharge your batteries will sort of get smaller and smaller. And it's a good thing that you've stopped smoking. Oh, yeah. Because that's not helping anybody in any way, shape, or form. Firstly, did you find it easy to quit smoking when you went to hospital with the Janine some help?

Donna Bouten 18:31

Um, well, they put patches on me while I was in the hospital. But because I was in hospital for the first 12 days and I think that was good. I wasn't tempted to go outside and try and have fun. I think I was just more trying to understand what was going on. Give my body calm to rest and heal. And as and then when I got home bit of a challenge coast, calling Still smokes. So yeah, but I haven't been tempted. I hate the smell of it. He stopped.

Donna Bouten 19:07

Well, we always smoke outside anyway, so he's still doing that. But we both used to smoke in the car and he stopped smoking in the car now so which is good he has to you know if we go out anywhere you know even going up to DeLonge today usually has one before we leave and then he needs one by the time we get there so yeah, at least it's good that you know, he considers it that way. But now I I've actually I've tried a few other times to give up but I think this was the easiest and the best way to give up it really was. Yeah, interesting.

Bill 19:45

And how about drinking? Are you drinking any alcohol or were you given any advice about alcohol? Um,

Donna Bouten 19:52

The last time I had a drink was the night pro and I had a Strongbow cider my last alcoholic drink was in April so I'm not missing it. I used to drink too much. I will admit that now. But I I've given that up as well and I've but not that I was

drinking a lot when I came home I think Christmas day I had a couple of be shanties where I had sort of you know that much beer in a glass of lemonade and you know they're going that's not a shaman Yeah, that's fine. That's enough but I had to on Christmas Day and that was eat so no, not so. So then I have hardly had a drink between then and April and I just feel so much better for forgiving them both.

Bill 20:45

Yeah. So you know what's interesting? There are people listening here that will be from the US and they want to know what a shame these Can you tell them a shame

Donna Bouten 20:53

it's with lemonade.

Bill 20:56

And if you haven't tried it if you're in the US or any other country have to try it once at least, and what kind of Russia

Donna Bouten 21:05

especially on a hot day, it's really nice and it's quite refreshing actually. So we had a hot day last Christmas. So

Bill 21:12

What kind of mixture how much beer and hot lemonade?

Donna Bouten 21:15

I only had that much beer. And I had like, lemonade, lemonade and beer. But you can, I mean, rule on how much he can have, he can, you know, mix it up to the way you like it. So, I was just,

Bill 21:33

I'm gonna, I'm gonna claim the shandi as an Ozzy invention, just in case. Anyone else decides to claim it I already have. And if you don't know, and if you do know what shame is, and you think that it's not an invention, let us know. Give us a comment at the bottom of the video.

Donna Bouten 21:51

Yeah, that idea.

Bill 21:53

Yeah. Now the reason I ask is I'm not one to. I'm not one to lecture, but I am one to give information. And just explain why, why it's important that people stop smoking and drinking, especially after a stroke because there are a lot of studies, and I'm hoping to interview one of the researchers from one of the universities here in Melbourne, that shows that there's a big connection to dementia later on in life for people who have experienced a significant brain injury, and especially if they are smoking and drinking after that brain injury, more likelihood of becoming demented later on in life.

Bill 22:34

So it's really important that people who've experienced a strike no matter how young they were, understand that what they want to do is create an environment for the brain to heal rather than an environment for the brain to deteriorate. And we don't want to also accelerate the deterioration because unfortunately, that's what we're susceptible to now. We're susceptible to having Things that perhaps would take longer to impact other people will actually impact us a lot quicker.

Bill 23:06

And I know that when I get tempted to have a drink, and I haven't had more than about five drinks in the last five years, it makes me feel like I'm having a stroke again. And that feeling is not something that I enjoy. Because obviously, that's scary, right? So I don't want to go down that path. So that was my motivation to stop drinking, and then and then stop smoking. That was pretty, pretty easy for me to basically when I went to hospital realized that my blood was Bree, that my brain was bleeding. I realized that smoking wasn't going to be something that I needed to continue to do if I wanted to be around beyond my 40.

Donna Bouten 23:43

Did you have a fall or something that caused your blade or was it just

Bill 23:48

I had a faulty blood vessel and the technical term is arteriovenous venous malformation. And what it is, is instead of the blood vessel forming correctly and in nice shape It kind of forms in, like a squiggly shape in the shape of a cup of steel will I get, and instead of being nice and thick and flexible, it's usually a lot thinner and a little bit more rigid. Right? And you're born with that. And most of the time for most people, nothing happens.

Bill 24:21

They don't. They don't play up or cause a problem. But in my case, what happened was, the blood vessel is the weakest blood vessel within my body. And when it experienced, for example, a high blood pressure episode, whether it's through sport or exerting myself in any way, or smoking or drinking, what happens is it was the weakest link and it decided that it was going to give in and I just let go of some blood. Wow. And that's what was so for me, that usually happens to a lot of people and it stops the first time it bleeds. It goes away within 60 12 weeks the person is really well on their way to recovery. And it wasn't expected to bleed again, but it bled six weeks later.

Bill 25:08

And then, it continued to bleed between February 2012 and November 2014. All the time constantly while I was having what I would call micro blades. And the best way to describe it was I would have a really good day, and then I would have a really bad day. And the really bad I was all those feelings of exhaustion and weird sensations and tingly and just really strange things occurring in my body and that was probably when it was bleeding a little. And then in November 2014, I had a really big blade because I thought I was getting better and I went for my first bike ride after nearly three years.

Bill 25:54

And as I was riding the bike, everything felt great, but the next morning when I woke up, I went to work blade and this time I felt like I had to my left side was burning like I had been sunburned. Yeah, and with the hospital and I said, there's another blade. And this time, it's quite significant. And we're not going to let it go any further, we have to remove the blood vessel, otherwise, you're going to be at risk of causing dying from it and causing if you're driving problems to people around you or the people in your car or whatever. And I had a property maintenance business then and that meant that if I was on a ladder and working in a blade, I could pull up the ladder and cause more damage.

Bill 26:38

So I had surgery in November 2014. And when I woke up from surgery, my entire left side was a complication from the surgery and from the position of the faulty blood vessel, which was four centimeters in from my ear. The damage from going into there and trying to get it out. meant that I couldn't feel my left side when I work. It was, yeah, it was numb and I couldn't walk. So I had to learn how to walk

again.

Bill 27:09

And I had to learn how to use my arm again. And I spent a month in, in a rehab hospital, which was a month less than most people, well, only a month, which a lot of people are in there for many, many more months than I was. And I got released and I went home, and then I did outpatient rehab. And I've been recovering ever since because the recovery is still ongoing, you know, just like you. You don't go home from a stroke, and all of a sudden, everything's fine. Unfortunately, it's not fun, and it takes a long time to get better. So that's my story. the short version of my story.

Donna Bouten 27:44

Is there mine? That's the thing. I wonder if I mean, is there a time limit that obviously for you this happened in 2012. And here we are, this is five years later. We're still having problems. I mean, this is five years can Knees infinity is infinite?

Bill 28:03

Well, see, I feel like what happened to me is not gonna be leaving me soon. Because my heart, my arm, and my leg are still numb, although I can walk on them and use them. So now the brain has retrained itself to know, when my arm is holding something, for example, when my foot is on the ground, it now knows the new version of that. So I can walk and I can get around. But I have a lot of friends and a lot of other people who have interviewed on their version of their stroke, and they're 10 years down, and they still recovering and their walk is still trying to improve and the, you know, vision is improving and the speech is still improving.

Bill 28:53

And I had a very interesting conversation with a guy just yesterday who I haven't interviewed yet, but I'll be interviewing in a couple of weeks. who experienced a strike when he was four? He's there 30. And he told me that he just got his ability to interact with people in a public place. So, in a room with a lot of people, he just cut that ability back three or four years ago. Yeah, where he was able to understand that he was in a room where people were communicating backward and forwards, and that he was part of that, and that there was this whole, you know, interesting thing going on. And he just recovered the ability to do that four

or five years ago, and he's now 30. Wow.

Donna Bouten 29:41

So I think

Bill 29:43

it is right. So one of the things that stroke survivors feel like is they've plateaued for a long time. But the recovery and the healing are still happening. And if you're creating the right environment for healing, then what's going to happen is the brain will continue. He'll it'll continue to recover, it will continue to really learn things and do things. And even 25 years down the track, some people will go well, I am actually very different than what it was five years ago. And it just depends, I spoke to you a long time ago. And I've also interviewed Dr. Mark Merzenich, who is one of the doctors who is behind the movement that became known as neuroplasticity and proved a lot of the work early on about how the brain is able to change and is able to really learn tasks that it's lost.

Bill 30:36

And he said to me, what it depends on and the most critical thing is the amount of damage caused and the amount of time that you have. So he basically saw it as well. If 95% of your brain is damaged, and you've only got a short amount of time to heal that. Well. It's likely that you're not going to experience a lot of healing a lot of people cover if you're fit and well, regardless of your age, and you've got the ability for the brain to continue to heal, well, then time is on your side. So the longer it goes, the more likely you are to notice recovery occurring and notice changes occurring for the better.

Bill 31:20

Yes, so it's really about just being responsible for your own healing over and above what the doctors can do. And I say the role of the doctors is that they save our lives. I heal us to go home without the technology, I wouldn't be here for sure. And then after that, it's our responsibility to learn what we can do to support ourselves and make the doctor's lives a lot easier, because they can't control whether we smoke, they can't control whether we drink, they can't control whether we ate the right foods or the wrong foods.

Bill 31:57

So that's kind of how I say that. The whole healing thing occurs. It's lifelong.

Yeah, hopefully, one day we get to a point where people are healing quicker. And we're able to address those things sooner. But I think research has a long way to go to get to that point where they can actually access accelerate healing. You know,

Donna Bouten 32:24

what you said before about dementia. My mother had dementia. So it's, I suppose that was the scariest part after I had the stroke. Because knowing the woman she was to the woman she became in the end. I don't. I'm now trying to avoid everything I can from going down that same path. I'm very wary and I really don't want it to happen. So nothing at the Stage is showing that but hopefully with no more, you know, there's no more strokes and no more damage.

Donna Bouten 33:07

I shouldn't be okay. But that's my other incentive to not smoke to not drink to exercise more. Not only my body but, my mind and my brain as well. I love jigsaw puzzles. Yeah, I try and do word puzzles and things on the computer. I've got a couple of programs that I do those sorts of things, Mahjong, that sort of thing. It's just daily trying to keep the brain active. Active.

Bill 33:39

Yeah, it's so true. If you don't use it, you lose it. I mean, it really does apply to the brain and applies to healthy brains. And, and also, you know, nutrition is really important. So again, one of the things that I advise people to do is to find a way to decrease the amount of carbohydrates that they consume. That included wait and see And, and anything that contains gluten, because it is shown that gluten impacts the brain in a negative way, and it doesn't start at the brain, per se, it actually starts in the gut.

Bill 34:14

And that studies have found that the healthier your gut microbiome, so the, the, the belly bacteria know, the less damaging episodes of stroke, and other brain injuries are to the brain. So what they do is they found this connection between the health of the gut and the health of the brain and that not one of them works separately. They actually work together. And what I found really interesting was when my brain was injured, and I went offline and went offline.

Bill 34:51

That's how I call it it was offline while it was bleeding and doing all of that stuff. My gut also went offline and I experienced constipation. And I experienced belly shoes and I experienced bloating and I experienced all these things. And when I addressed that by taking certain foods out in what I call inflammatory foods that include sugar, carbohydrates, weight, all that type of thing, and sometimes even dairy for some people, what happened was my brain came back online a lot quicker.

Bill 35:25

And I found a significant shift between stopping the consumption of sugar and how quickly my fatigue decreased. I was able to get rid of the fatigue. And when I've looked into why that is, there's a whole host of reasons why quitting sugar is beneficial for brain health. I can't go into them now because it takes a very long discussion.

Bill 35:46

But, how it's got something to do with the way that insulin impacts the damaged brain. So when we eat sugar, we get an insulin spike to deal with the sugar and that actual spike actually impacts the way that the Brain responds and the levels of fatigue that somebody is going to experience. You take away the sugar, you decrease the amount of insulin spikes that you have on a daily basis. And the fatigue seems to take control of itself and the brain starts to heal a little bit easier.

Donna Bouten 36:19

And interesting because um, yeah, I suppose well over the last week, I've noticed I've really been craving like white bread normally of having, you know, a whole meal or a multi-grain or something but it must be something in the white bread that my body's wanting, needing or not sure, but I'm not having too much of it. I can't say you know, I'm eating a whole life a day type thing. You know, like this morning I need actually have had some toast, you know, I had some they had one Vegemite mama jam or something, you know. So it's that sort of thing. You know where I'd DiNozzo for meeting you. heaps of it but don't worry I went shopping today and I bought another light right so I'm back on the back on coffee but I suppose my sweet and I had my sweet tooth again since giving up smoking and what my vices of ice cream? Yep, yep.

Bill 37:19

Interesting. Yeah interesting I'm not saying that people should give up all the foods but now I just sort of want to raise awareness of some things that helped me and yeah they might be things that help other people and I

Donna Bouten 37:35

I'm very careful anyway because I have an I have issues with my gut and with my account now I'm having can't think of the name of the word. But I'm very careful with I can't eat things like avocado, anything in high fat, even though avocado is full of fat healthy a good fat It upsets my gallbladder. Yeah, that's what I was trying to think of. So I don't have a crane, anything heavy in you know, all those really good nice things. So, you know, I'm very wary of those things because they give me a really bad I get these attacks in my stomach and into the pain. So was

Bill 38:22

Is there something recent or something that you've always had?

Donna Bouten 38:26

Um, I suppose I became more aware of it about eight that on years ago, and not that it's actually been fully diagnosed. But I did have a couple of girlfriends who were nurses, and theater nurses, and when I explained my symptoms, they said to me, it's your gallbladder. And so when I discovered the things that were upsetting me, I just stopped eating and it stopped eating those things, and I don't have any more attacks. So yeah,

Bill 38:57

yeah. So sometimes what happens And I've got something a similar challenge with mica. And certain foods are harder to digest than others. Okay? And what it is, is sometimes you can treat it. And obviously, before you do anything that I say don't take anything that I say as advice, but some of the things that I've read because I've also had this similar issue is that sometimes some people that have a gallbladder removed or a gallbladder that's not working properly, can't make hydrochloric acid as well. As they

Donna Bouten 39:31

made that in the gut don't

Bill 39:33

we need that in the stomach and in to help digest the food so that's one of the things that you can supplement with that is if you go to a good natural path, there

is a good digestive enzyme product that you could purchase that could help during the meal. So you have a before-the-bill and then you have before every meal and it helps to create the digestive enzymes to get the digestible happening a little bit easier. So what I'm saying is, is that now you're at that point where if you can get on top of a few of these things that will actually help your brain to recover. So when you have the energy doesn't all have to be right now, let's not give you a whole bunch of tasks to do. But when they had the energy and the Curiosity gets, gets you to do a little bit of research, and see if they can find someone to advise them about the right way to go about supporting their gallbladder to do what isn't doing as effectively.

Donna Bouten 40:40

Might be Maybe I should say, Cata a natural path and look at something more natural, rather than just going to the gap. Might be a good thing, Yeah, to look at an investigator anyway. I've already said myself a goal. I know that the stroke foundation in Australia had the stride for stroke happening. And I spoke to my GP and he said, I think it's a bit soon for you to try and do anything like that, Donna. So hopefully next year, that's one of my goals is to be fit enough so I can partake in that and raise some much-needed funds for our stroke, as you know, the straight panda in Australia. So because I think they do a great job.

Bill 41:34

Yeah, I suppose the good thing about striving for stroke is that you don't have a deadline. You don't have the US time or the number of kilometers you have to do all you got to do is do what you can and therefore it's really easy to succeed. And what you've already said is that you're just got back up to 15 minutes of doing the hand cycling without losing your breath. Yeah, which means that you're slowly doing the exact right things to get to that point where you're feeling a little bit healthier, the longer you go without a cigarette, the better and better your lungs are going to get and the more and more stamina you'll achieve.

Bill 42:11

And you just get to that point where you can go, Well, you know what, I'm going to go and do half an hour or two kilometers or whatever I can. And if I can do it, I can't do it. But it's not about pushing yourself. It's just about getting involved in the community and doing something positive and feeling good about yourself. And the stroke foundation. I'm a volunteer for the stroke foundation as well. Okay, so I'm an ambassador. So I go out and we do talks on raising awareness about stroke

and how to prevent a stroke and what to do if someone's having a stroke.

Bill 42:44

So they are doing a lot of work in the background, and the money goes directly to research and into projects that support people recovering from stroke and then the biggest body in Australia. They have a lot to do with a lot of the hospitals in Australia and a lot of the things that are happening to support stroke patients is as a result of the really good work that the stroke Foundation has done since the 80s. I'm pretty sure they've been around for a long time.

Donna Bouten 43:13

I have been around for a long time. I actually, I've, since going through the site participated in a few research programs and I was actually I'm waiting for the stroke foundation to include me. I couldn't make it. I was part of a group but next year apparently I will become more involved with this year. It's just sort of been questionnaires and things like that. But next year, apparently it will become more seminars and talks and support and things like that.

Bill 43:49

And if you're listening from overseas, well, in Australia stroke foundation is National, so but there are also a lot of state-based bodies and support groups. So if you are online and you want to find someone in your local community, just, you know, do a Google search on stroke support or stroke recovery, something like that. And they'll come up. I know in the UK, there's the Stroke Association. In the US, I think it's the Heart and Stroke Foundation or something like that.

Bill 44:21

And there's a lot of great research organizations and support bodies that people can go to, as a first point of contact is in, you know, what do I do now? Like I've had a stroke, you know, what do I do? How do I deal with this, but not as not only for people going through the stroke and recovering from it but also have carers I think it's really important.

Bill 44:41

And also for carers, who are dealing with stroke survivors that are far worse off than you and me that the local councils offer help where people can come and make a meal. Well, that can do some cleaning, and at a very low-cost service. Contact your local council as well and see if you can find somebody to give you a

package that supports you as a carer, to get some time away from constantly caring for somebody else and not caring for yourself, right?

Donna Bouten 45:14

Yes. Well, I must say while I've recently recovered from this hysterectomy, the council actually my local council contacted me and offered me four weeks for four weeks I would have a clean and come in for an hour. So at least got the vacuuming done and the floor mopped and the toilet cleaned and yet, those were the important things for me that I couldn't do because I couldn't lift anything. I couldn't over-exert myself and they were things that Colin was unable to do so. Yeah, so that that was really that was really great. So yeah, for those four weeks, that was very handy. So yeah, if you can get that help go for it and ask for help. It's amazing. There is help out there. All you've got to do is ask.

Bill 46:07

Yeah, that's it, and sometimes, you know, stroke and caring for somebody with a stroke can be really isolating.

Donna Bouten 46:15

I can be

Bill 46:17

And not only stroke, I'm sure for people suffering from other conditions, but I can't speak for those conditions. I can only speak about stroke. So, you know, just reach out, you know what even send me an email. Because you know, what I love about the podcast is amazing people like you contact me, just to touch base just to have another conversation with another person who understands them. And I'm so glad that you did.

Bill 46:42

And it's inspired me to keep doing these interviews because at one point I was going to stop doing it and I thought, How can I I'm providing such an amazing service, which doesn't cost anybody anything to come on board and listen to an interview or get in touch and ask a question. I'm trying to find a way to make it possible for more and more people to become involved and become a community.

Bill 47:06

So hopefully soon I'll be launching a membership site where people can come and join up and become members of the site. And at the beginning, there won't be a

lot of people, but they'll be enough to create some conversations about, you know, what do I do for this? And how do I get help about that, etc? And I don't know what's going to come of it.

Bill 47:26

But I just say that there is a big need for people to come together and be able to share, get feedback, get support, get encouragement, especially, especially for carers. who became a carer let's face it overnight, when they were not trained, not skilled, to be a carer and unfortunately, you know, they don't get skilled that anger try and get supported to learn how to care for other people.

Donna Bouten 47:59

Yep, Well, I went through that with my mother with her dementia. You know, yay, I sort of I became her Kara. So that was interesting, tell me about not, you know, being thrown in the deep end type thing. So, yeah, but again I was able to, not only through the doctor but he, the doctor at the time, put us on to a lot of help that was out there.

Donna Bouten 48:28

So we were able to get mom into programs where care would come and pick her up and take her out for the day and keep her involved with and then they might go out and go to bingo or something and then maybe a few days later the care would come and pick her up with a group and they would go out to a garden somewhere. Can that sort of thing and it was just interacting with other other other dementia sufferers as well. So yeah, I know what you mean. That being a cara. Yeah, that's a hard job as well. Yes,

Bill 49:05

it is. And well, my heart goes out to people like that, and I thank my wife for doing the task when she had to do it. But, you know, nurses go to uni University for four or five years, I don't know how many years ago to learn how to care for somebody, I know, they do lots of different tasks, you know, that include medications, and, you know, you know, injecting things and all that kind of stuff. But I know there's a lot of carriers that have to inject insulin that have to take temperatures that have to do all these things.

Donna Bouten 49:36

And they're not trained and they're not

Bill 49:37

trained, and it's just crazy. They offer such a great service, you know, so I really just want to encourage people to get in touch and whether they get in touch with me or somebody else just do it. Please just do it can help.

Donna Bouten 49:51

Ask these help out the we've got to do is ask.

Bill 49:55

Yeah, well, I'm looking forward to getting to know more about you as time goes on. And I'm really pleased to see you up and about and getting through the things that you've experienced. And even after some other conditions and surgeries that you've had to go through, you're looking fit and well, thank you. I just want to I want to congratulate you for taking responsibility for your own recovery. And being willing to give up some things that perhaps, you know, we probably shouldn't have taken up in the first place.

Donna Bouten 50:31

Yeah, yeah, I probably shouldn't have but I've, I suppose the way I look at it is I've had my wake-up call. You know, it's time to, you know, if, if you want, if you don't want to be here, keep going down that other path. But if you want to be around for a lot longer, you know what you've got to do. So. Yeah, I still want to be here for a few more years yet. So, you know, each day I'm grateful that I wake up and you know, I just Don't have any more of those episodes.

Donna Bouten 51:04

And I've got support and love from family and friends. And yeah. And now getting into groups like this is great. So hopefully we get to I get to meet a few more people out there it was. It was strange how I got to know you, Bill because I saw something on Facebook come up with you doing your podcast with Dr. Michael. Right. Yeah. So that's sort of what got me started. And I sat and sort of watched that podcast and that was interesting. And I thought, Okay, I'm going to get in contact with the sky. Yeah.

Bill 51:40

Yeah, thank you. He's an amazing guy and really generous with his time. I've met him in Melbourne two times now and he comes to Melbourne from time to time and speaks on a topic that's related to healing the brain and recovering from

brain-related challenges. Thank you for getting in touch. Thank you for being on the podcast as well in sharing your story, it's going to make a big difference to people. And I really just want to encourage you just keep doing what you're doing. I really appreciate it.

Donna Bouten 52:08

Thanks, Bill. I knew you keep doing the same thing. Obviously you you're recovering very well. Being able to get around and are you back to work now?

Bill 52:17

Yeah, I am back to work on back to work in a different capacity. I'm not on the tools as a trade anymore. I'm more managing the business. And I had a lot of time off work and a hell of a lot of time mainly backtalk backers part-time, I'm very fortunate that my wife works so we're able to, you know, make a bit of change to the family, you know, finances and be okay with it. So we're kind of, you know, we're just sort of started to come out of it now, five years later. And

Donna Bouten 52:50

young children as well.

Bill 52:52

Yeah, I've got two boys. My oldest is 21. My youngest is 17. And that's probably the biggest challenge for me is kind of dealing with teenagers and yes, young adults that don't understand what it's like and being anything other than normal themselves. But that's a little bit harder for people who are sort of dealing with a healing brain to put up with because it's a little bit more, you know, it consumes a lot of energy.

Bill 53:25

And we really sort of need to hold on to as much energy for our own tasks that we need to so other than that book, the great kids and I'm very blessed, so I don't really have anything to complain about, like I'm doing pretty well. I'm pretty, pretty happy. Yeah, that's good. Well, thank you again, let's keep in touch. And I really appreciate you taking some time to be on the program.

Donna Bouten 53:54

Okay, thanks for having me. And look forward to talking to you again soon.

Bill 53:59

Well, I hope you enjoyed another episode of the Recovery after Stroke podcast. If you have experienced a stroke and got a laugh, and got a lot out of this interview, please do get in touch. Also, feel free to share this with others so that you may feel my benefit. Finally, if you're watching on the YouTube channel, hit the thumbs-up button on the bottom right of the video. This will help the video rank better and become more widely by others searching for this kind of content. Thanks for watching. Thanks for listening. And thanks for visiting the website. w w dot the trends.

Intro 54:40

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