

Brain Stem At 20 Years Old | Tristan Gibson

Tristan Gibson experienced a brain stem stroke at the age of 20 and is on a journey to become the best person he can be.

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Tristan Gibson 0:00

Something that was massively massively massively important and my journey to overcome depression, and anxiety and become the best version of myself. I started challenging myself to take cold showers what I started with once I realized that the reason why are one of the reasons why I felt so depressed and anxious, was because my life was easy.

Tristan Gibson 0:24

You know, I had nothing to do nothing to think about other than the depression and anxiety. And when I started challenging myself, it, really, really started showing me that I can overcome my initial feeling of this. What else can I

overcome? You know, and I took my first ice bath in May of this year 20.3, And holy crap. The adrenaline rush that I got after that, was amazing.

Tristan Gibson 0:57

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

Bill 1:10

Hello, everybody, and welcome to the recovery aftershock podcast. This, for the people who are on YouTube watching, is the first copy of my book, which means I'm one step closer to finally making it available for purchase. But it's not ready yet. And it's not my fault. There were a few errors that we picked up in the printing, the front cover is a little bit not exactly as I'd like it to be. And the colored pages inside the book, have a couple of little errors with the color.

Bill 1:42

Now that means that we're one step closer, once again, another step closer another step. I didn't know that was going to be there. But it should be ready soon and it will go live and I promise as soon as it is ready. I will let everybody know. Thank you to everybody who has already downloaded the first chapter more than 100 people have already downloaded the first step the feedback has been great. So thank you for that.

Bill 2:10

The three chapter is still available, you can still go to recoveryafterstroke.com/book and fill out the form and you will receive the first chapter free in your email. A few moments later. The book is called The Unexpected Way That The Stroke Became The Best Thing That Happened.

Bill 2:29

And it shares 10 secrets from stroke survivors that will transform your life. If you are a stroke survivor with a story to share about your stroke experience. Now is the perfect time to join me on the show that interviews are not scripted, you do not have to plan for them.

Bill 2:46

All you need to do to qualify is be a stroke survivor who wants to share your story in the hope that it will help someone else who is going through something similar. If you are a researcher who wants to share the findings of a recent study, or you

are looking to recruit people into studies, you may also wish to reach out and be a guest on my show.

Bill 3:05

If you have a commercial product that you would like to promote, that is related to supporting stroke survivors to recover. There is also a path for you to join me on a sponsored episode of the show.

Introduction - Brain Stem Stroke Recovery



Bill 3:16

Just go to recoveryafterstroke.com/contact and fill out the form explaining briefly which category you belong to. And now we'll respond with more details about how we can connect via Zoom. This is episode 276. And my guest today is Tristan Gibson, who was just 20 years old when he experienced a brain stem stroke in 2019. And is now on a journey of personal transformation to be the best it can be. Tristan Gibson, welcome to the podcast.

Tristan Gibson 3:46

Thank you, Mr. Bill. I'm honored to be here.

Bill 3:49

It's my pleasure, this is your first podcast. This is my first podcast where somebody is sitting in a room that has a red light on. And it looks weird. It looks like it's one of those filters that people put on their images these days. But we'll

talk about that a little bit later. Tell us first a little bit about what happened to you.

Tristan Gibson 4:15

So actually, I was talking to my family today. And they corrected me I was told that I've had eight brain surgeries. They said it was eight brain procedures. So I'm not sure how to distinguish that. I consider it 8 brain surgeries because that's what I was told. However, shots, revisions, and stuff like that aren't considered surgery, which I'm not sure about anyway.

Bill 4:44

You've had you've had you've had people go into your head eight times.

Tristan Gibson 4:50

Yeah basically.

Bill 4:51

Okay, let's stick with that.

Tristan Gibson 4:52

So I played soccer most of my life, and falling in love with the sport became my identity. In high school in 11th grade had a weird I don't want to say migraine, it was a, I was sitting at the table. I remember this vividly, I was sitting at the table with my family. And I was eating, spaghetti. Watching, I think it was Big Brother we were big into Big Brother at the time. And I looked up from my plate and looked at the TV.

Tristan Gibson 5:25

And I could only see the right half the TV could only see the right half of whatever I was looking at. So I kept calling finished my food, went to my room to play video games could only see the right half TV. So I went to my mom who's a nurse. And I was like, I can only see the right half of whatever I'm looking at. She looked at my eyes. They were unevenly dilated, whatever she said, rushed me to the hospital, kind of found out after brain cyst.

Tristan Gibson 5:50

The doctor said it shouldn't grow because it's made out of skin cells or something. And he told me, I could keep playing soccer, just to watch him hitting the ball. I said, okay, cool.

Overcoming depression and anxiety through language



Tristan Gibson 6:02

So in 12th grade, a Washington ball. Well, I became the second or third soccer athlete in high school, and the first person in my family to play college soccer or college sports. And this whole reason I went to college, I was very, very, very motivated to become a starter on the team. So freshman, sophomore years, I was busting my butt every day on the practice field, doing whatever it took to get me a little closer to go, you know. And one day, toward the end of my sophomore year of college, I got hit extremely hard.

Tristan Gibson 6:41

The hardest boy I've ever had. Had a sure concussion. I stepped out of the practice for about five minutes, a kind of game, and my surroundings jumped back into practice. And then I went back to my dorm to study but like knives are just piercing my brain takes them on. It's like what is this, she told me to rush to the hospital to find out the cystic is grown. And it was blocking a spinal fluid flow, which was called hydrocephalus. And the doctor said that if I didn't have the surgery, within six months, I would be in a coma.

Tristan Gibson 7:24

Looking back almost seems a little bit like fear fear-mongering kind of thing, you know. Because Mom and I didn't get a second opinion. We just went through with it because we're like, Oh God, I don't want to be in a coma in six months, you

know.

Tristan Gibson 7:40

So we went through with the surgery. And I was back in the hospital. I was going through the surgery. The next day, it was a little difficult for me to walk.

Tristan Gibson 7:55

But I got it back down and I was released an excellent. Within a week, I had meningitis, was rushed back to the hospital spent a week in the hospital for meningitis. And it was released after that. So went back to college. And I was getting back in shape for soccer. I was working every day. Just out there with my brothers and all that. Then one morning one night whatever. At 3 am, I just felt like a fire was burning from the base of the shot in my head to the end of my shot in my abdomen. And my roommate rustling hospital. I don't remember anything.

Tristan Gibson 8:39

The only thing that I remember from each of my hospital stays whenever I had surgery was the way I like to frame it think back to your first memory before we were born. What do you remember seeing and feeling? Nothing. Exactly. I had what I like to consider the peaceful dark abyss saw nothing felt nothing. It was the most peace have ever felt in my life.

Tristan Gibson 9:09

So you can imagine the stress and anxiety and my depression that are the stress, anxiety, and depression that I felt when it seemed like I went to sleep one night in my apartment, woke up and my grandparent's place and half of my body wasn't working. And my head hurts. And I have this weird thing sticking out of my head. And I just don't know what happened, you know?

Bill 9:39

Was was let's pause for a second. I just want to pick you up on something. You said, my anxiety and my depression and then you changed your words. You said yes. That anxiety and that depression. What? Yeah, tell me what you just did, because it's really important to hear.

Tristan Gibson 9:56

Yes, so I see struggled with crippling depression and anxiety for almost a year. And it's still something that I'm kind of working on, you know, but I've overcome it. When you identify with whatever you have whatever's holding you back, like

saying, my depression, my anxiety, my diabetes, whatever it is, you are identifying with it, therefore making it part of you. When you stop doing that, when you say, the depression, the anxiety, the diabetes, whatever it is, that's when you start to create a little bit of a separation.

Tristan Gibson 10:39

And then you can, later on, put a little wedge in there and create more and more and more until it's completely gone. You know, like, I,

Bill 10:48

My, when you say mine, but anxiety, you're embodying it. And you're setting it in stone and your words, every time you repeat that, going down that path and setting it further and further and further. So the idea is to not make it yours, just talk about it as if it's something that you have, that you're dealing with temporarily, that you're going to get better from overcoming work with transform, whatever the term you want to use is rather than making it embodied, and a part of you, sir.

Tristan Gibson 11:28

So the moments that I learned the importance of the language that we used, I immediately started implementing that. And it's not easy to fix, you know, after 2021 22 years of talking that we talked, I mean, three or four years later, I'm still working on it, you know. And, I mean, it's just, it's a difficult thing to change. But it is so worth it. That is the first thing that I started doing to overcome that depression and anxiety, you know, and I'm glad that you stopped me on that because that's a great explanation.

Brain stem Stroke Recovery and identity shift

Bill 12:03

When you woke up at your grandparent's house, how old were you?

Tristan Gibson 12:08

I was 20. So I went through all of that at 20 years old.

Bill 12:12

And what do you keep an obvious question? To Captain orangutangs? And we'll

talk about it?

Tristan Gibson 12:21

Yes, sir.

Bill 12:25

What caused you to experience anxiety? And depression at age 20? What was the underlying deep? Cause? Not? I couldn't play soccer anymore. But there was more to that, right? Oh, yeah.

Tristan Gibson 12:43

So I believe, I haven't done much deep diving into this part of the depression and anxiety. As far as I know, it wasn't because half of my body couldn't work, you know, I was an athlete my whole life. And I become, I don't wanna say I've mastered but I was better at using my body than most people, because I was a college athlete, you know, and apologies, but um, I was better at using my body than most people.

Tristan Gibson 13:13

And then all of a sudden, my left side, just like the mind-muscle connection was completely gone, you know, I'm still working on that connection. It's just losing that ability, and having to relearn how to do it. It was so frustrating, I frustrated myself over it. I gave myself anxiety. I depress myself, and all that. It was I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy.

Bill 13:40

Pretty logical as well, considering the level of activity that you up to your age and all the things that normal kids do at 19 20 21. And then it's taken away. And then you're stuck with water warm? What am I supposed to do with this body of mine?

Bill 14:04

And then how do I hang out and be a part of the community that I was a part of in this state? You can't attend soccer matches anymore training, all the things that make you you? How did you shift out of the anxiety and depression? How did you become aware of it and then start to shift out of it?

Tristan Gibson 14:33

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. How long will it take to recover? Will I recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse, doctors will explain things that you've never had a stroke before.

Tristan Gibson 14:55

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. It's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Tristan Gibson 15:17

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, but they'll also help you take a more active role in your recovery. Head to the website. Now, recoveryafterstroke.com and download the guide. It's free.

Tristan Gibson 15:36

I think I was always aware of it. But I had accepted it as okay, this is how I am you know. And when I realized that I'm not the same person I was before the surgeries, because the neurosurgeon, placed a shunt on the right side of my brain.

Tristan Gibson 15:57

And then the second shot that he placed after it failed, was on the left side of my brain and my frontal lobe. And that cause as far as I know, that's what I was told, cause the brainstem stroke and cause my left side become like, yeah.

Tristan Gibson 16:13

And part of the function of the frontal lobe from the research I've done is personality. So when he placed that shunt right there, read, as I call the athlete, Persona dot, you know, Tristan, or Catherine Ranga, Tang, you know, that was basically like a rebirthing, you know, and once I created the separation from who I was to who I am, that's when I started being able to overcome the depression, anxiety, that's when I learned the importance of words and all this other stuff.

Tristan Gibson overcoming depression and anxiety



Bill 16:48

Wow, that's huge. So once you understood that you're, you're far more than the identity you had given yourself and committed to, then things started to shift for the better.

Tristan Gibson 17:01

Sir, I fully believe that personality and who we are, are fluid, you can change at any time, no matter what age, if you want to, you know?

Bill 17:12

Yeah, I did. I did. 37 posts, three brain blades, and brain surgery. The guy before me, didn't wasn't a podcaster didn't have a coaching practice that he was providing. People didn't, didn't have lots of things, we could go into what I didn't do forever. But the reality is, is that post-stroke, I was able to reimagine myself and kind of take a risk to dream big on something that should not have been possible for the guy that I thought I used to be. And turns out.

Tristan Gibson 17:58

Oh, yeah. And when you said that, I got chills, because once I've changed my thought, process, and view on what I've been through, I was able to, like start embodying and becoming the highest version of myself. And I changed my mindset from Why me? This sucks. I hate this. I don't like my life, too. Why not

me? You know? Why not? Me? So I can show other people that as possible, why not me? So I can help guide people through this process, you know, why not me?

Tristan Gibson 18:38

So I can help people overcome the depression and anxiety that they suffer or struggle with, you know, and I wanted to be a coach, before the surgery, I want to be a soccer coach. Now, I am going to be a coach to help people overcome depression and anxiety. Wow,

Bill 18:58

that's so cool. For somebody who's been there, who's for somebody who's had what you've had, and at the age that you've had, you're going to be a little bit annoying to some of your clients, because they're going to find you. They're gonna find you. Second, a wise wise beyond your years at say, 30 years old, right? And they'll be coming to you. And they're 40 and 50. And they're going to be going well. Why are you depressed man, and they'll be going, I don't know, you know, life's not what I thought it would be.

Bill 19:29

But they may not have had a serious physical condition or issue or any of that might just be regular life that's getting them down and the fact that they're gone, that they haven't gone and pursued their dreams and haven't got a purpose or something like that. And and then you're going to have to gently tell them that there's nothing wrong with them that they're capable of doing anything that want to do even at 40 or 50 pounds.

Bill 19:55

And that once upon a time you overcome at 19 you overcome this mess have health issues and they've got no excuse and they're gonna go, wow, what do I do now? Well just move forward and find a way to overcome it. I like your idea, you seem to be a person who focuses on solutions rather than problems. And I suppose you need to focus on the problem a little bit because you need to be aware that there's something you need to rectify.

Tristan Gibson 20:29

Yeah, so the thing with that is, I wouldn't say focus on the problem, I would say, analyze the problem or analyze the situation, that way you can come up with a little game plan to I don't want to say fix it, but overcome it, you know, like I say,

overcome very specifically, because I'm not gonna say I fixed the depression or anxiety that I had because I still get days from get a little down.

Tristan Gibson 20:54

However, I know how to bring myself back about, you know, that's not completely fixable, in my opinion, unless you just sever whatever connection it is in your brain and become complete, whatever, lack of empathy for people or something, you know.

Bill 21:12

And it's important that you feel things because it's cute, it's a cue for something, you need to do something about it. Yeah.

Tristan Gibson 21:20

I ran from my thoughts, or those thoughts, and those feelings for two years, I used alcohol, video games, sex, certain websites, you know, habitually, you know, if I wasn't doing what I was doing, you know, and I was constantly distracting myself. And I was digging that hole deeper, you know, I was, I had reached a point to where I was, like, I am so miserable. I, I'm going to bring myself out, you know, and I had almost let it get to, some, I get a little emotional talking about this part.

Tristan Gibson 22:05

But the only time that I became suicidal in my life when I had genuine suicidal thoughts and wanted to take myself off this earth, was when I was on antidepressants. And I know that there are a lot of people out there who have success, and the antidepressants work for them. That's completely fine. You know, you do whatever works for you, of course, however, I did not like wanting to take myself, officer, you know, I was so scared. One that I would leave my family, and my little sister and my little brother, too.

Tristan Gibson 22:43

I wasn't sure where I was going to go. You know, at that point, I went to a Christian college, and they pushed me completely away from religion and God. And I was, I did not want to end up somewhere I didn't like, you know. So I laid it all out on the line forgotten, you know, God, the universe, whatever you want to call it. What helped me know that I have a purpose after going through everything, because I hated myself for years, for it helps me know that I have a

purpose was hearing that voice talk to me and say, everything happens for a reason.

Tristan Gibson 23:34

And ever since that day, I have been I, I kind of neglected it at first. And for a while when I was just tracking myself. And then I fully embodied it. And I started analyzing why everything happened in my life. And what I learned from everything, what I could learn from everything, you know, and ever since I fully accepted it and embodied that saying, my life has been so much better.

Tristan Gibson 24:06

You know, I want to say it's a majority of your life is perspective, how you view things that happen to you? No, because that's within your control. You can't control what happens to you all the time. You can't control whether you learn from it, whether you react to it, you know?

Brain stem stroke recovery and personal growth

Bill 24:29

It's how you respond that counts for sure. And then, and then what you do is if you celebrate the wins, and you pay attention to those, then you'll start to get the momentum behind noticing more and more wins and the wins need to be little wins as well. I woke up for the first time and I slept well. Had a great weekend. I slept well, and I'll sleep well again. Hopefully in the next week. I'll sleep well one more time.

Bill 25:01

That's it, you know, that's a win. And then you just keep adding to that. And you might say, well, I picked up a bag of groceries on my own one bag, it was half a bag, but it was a bag. And that's a win.

Tristan Gibson 25:16

Whatever you did before, you couldn't even pick up the half bag. That's it. That's it. It's just a small baby step.

Bill 25:24

Yeah, it's just about empowering yourself and encouraging yourself and treating

yourself as if you would, it was one of your best friends that was going through the struggle, and you wanted to encourage them, and let them know that they are overcoming this and they are going to be able to solve some problems, and they're going to be able to have some recovery and improve. And all the things that your view would encourage your friend about is the McCanns.

Tristan Gibson 26:02

Friend. Yeah. And my grandparents both had a stroke. Have a baby sister. So one way that I like to remind them that their body is relearning how to work is I'll tell them, how would you talk to Kindle in this situation? I was unlike, would you get mad at Kindle for dropping the glass or dropping the ball or whatever? I know. Okay. Think of your side as a child, learning how to work.

Tristan Gibson 26:33

You know, that's basically what it is. That's what helps me accept and recover from the stroke and all that a lot faster than the doctor said I would was I stopped finding it. I accepted it. And I treated it like it was my little sibling, you know? Yeah.

Bill 26:51

So what did they say to the doctors, how did they think you were going to move forward?

Tristan Gibson 26:56

So as far as the best I can remember, I was told that I wouldn't be fully functional and society wouldn't be able to necessarily participate. Because at that point, the hospital, I look at videos and pictures of myself in the hospital and I tear up almost every time. I was a zombie. If that would work. I was responsive. I thought my body was working. But my mind wasn't, you know, I don't remember much of anything at all, in the hospital, maybe one or two things. Other than that, that was just my bodywork.

Tristan Gibson 27:44

You know, I was out in that dark abyss. My body was doing whatever it was in the hospital, you know. And I was released. I went to the hospital the second time in mid-September, I was released beginning of November, and I started becoming conscious. My first memory was Christmas of that year, and then started becoming conscious in mid-January from all of the I guess the combination of the

surgeries and the medications they had me on, you know. But yeah.

Bill 28:21

So when you when you say conscious? Explain that. Because I know I think I know what you mean, and mini-stroke survivors might but were you kind of a haze? Were you in a way spaced out? How would you describe the part you were in before you started to become conscious?

Tristan Gibson 28:43

I don't know how I would describe it. I wasn't necessarily conscious in this space. I wasn't aware that I was in that space until I started becoming conscious in this space, you know, it was more like at that point, I had no beginning. It's like I was waiting to be put inside of the body, you know, I like to refer to who I am now as a different soul to enter this body. You know, because that's how I feel, you know, going from having no beginning.

Tristan Gibson 29:18

Then appearing in this body, and having no memory, no recollection of who I am, who anybody is. And then all of a sudden having all those memories hit me with specific keywords. I'm not sure if you can relate to that. But it was weird. Like, every time somebody said a keyword, like somebody said something about a scar a month after I became conscious. And all of a sudden it just popped into my head.

Tristan Gibson 29:44

That's why I was back in the hospital because scar tissue had built up around the end of my suit or into the tube, you know, and I had a whole wave of emotions like I cried after I remembered that because it was like a piece of me I came back with each piece that came back with key words, I was becoming I thought I was becoming red again. However, I was becoming me with red memories, you know, whose red, red is the athlete persona that lived my life for 20 years.

Tristan Gibson 30:28

Okay, I like to make that distinction because I look at that version of myself and who I am now as two completely different people, you know, that version of myself, was very reactive, had no control over his emotions, had no knowledge about health at all. Anything like that. After everything I've been through, I became very conscious of health, all aspects, mental, emotional, and physical,

because I am working to become the best version of myself

Tristan Gibson 31:05

So that I can pass on those traits and knowledge to my future kids, and break a bunch of generational curses that may not necessarily be in my family. But in society as a whole, you know.

Personal growth and self-improvement



Bill 31:21

That's a pretty cool, cool thing, man. I love that. That's a pretty good mission statement. , the thing I got out of that, amongst other things was that your version one, and version two are very separate and distinct. That's kind of how it is for me too. And a lot of stroke survivors talk about their version two, this is version two, or this is my new life, or this is me after the stroke there's a separation. And they do go for a better version of themselves, or an upgraded version of themselves, or an enhanced version, or whatever the word is.

Bill 32:05

But for me, I use the word better version of myself. And it's a constant. It's a constant journey to improve everyday day to just find ways to improve. And it's a successful journey, it's just a very, it's a big responsibility. Because when you take, when you take the step to say, I'm going to become a better version of myself, you start noticing all the things you need to fix. And then there's so many of them, you have to get good at going, Oh, I'm going to fix this one.

Bill 32:42

Because if I fix this one, this one is going to sort out all these other little peripheral ones. But it's a big job because you're forever working on improving. I'm in therapy once a month. I mean, that's psychology, right? A psychologist once a month, I'm forever online researching and reading and discovering, I'm always trying to dial in my nutrition. Always trying to be a better podcaster and improve my sound quality, and what I put out in the world so that people can consume it. And it's positive, and it's supportive.

Bill 33:29

And it's not junk consumption. Because, you know, what we consume becomes us. So, I hear you, but it's a big task to be the person who's going to become a better version of themselves. And I think it's okay, that it's a big task because it's life's work. And then you've forever got something to do. And it's never going to make you bored.

Bill 33:59

And you're never going to have space for unnecessary thoughts that are going to persevere and be there for a long, long time they get replaced, because there's no space for that because we're working on improving. So how can you those those thoughts can't proliferate? So my thing is, I love your approach.

Tristan Gibson 34:22

Well, thank you. And I've got a couple of things on what you just said, which was amazing. So one, this is extremely difficult work. And if it was easy, then everybody would be doing it. You know, there's a phrase out there and I can't remember exactly what it is, but my spin on it is the most fulfilling tat or a most fulfilling road is the one less traveled. You know.

Tristan Gibson 34:55

I forget what the old saying is or whatever. But um, yeah. And then when you're focused on becoming the best version of yourself, you lose a lot of people in your life. Yes, it was. And that was extremely hard for me to accept, you know, when I finally accepted that, I was like, okay, cool, you know, I'm serving what's best for me. They're serving what's best for them, that no longer lines. So, you know, it was easier for me to pursue my goal.

Bill 35:36

Stops a lot of people from change, though. How does it? How did you overcome that, that's an issue that I find, and I'm still finding that. So my circle has decreased in size, and it keeps decreasing and it keeps decreasing. And it's frustrating and challenging. And I'm not doing anything to make my interaction with you feel strange. I'm just just, I'm just improving me, I'm not making you improve anything or telling you to do anything.

Bill 36:07

I like you the way you are. I love you the way you probably do that, but I turn up and people. It's kind of like this is not the most appropriate way. But it's kind of like our repel them, or push them away or something like that. It's really strange.

Tristan Gibson 36:26

I wouldn't, I wouldn't say that you repel them. I do think that I don't want to say this to everybody. Let me be careful about how we're doing this. So I think we get intimidated by the people that we think are on a mission, you know, whether that's to improve ourselves, or whatever else, you know. And something I noticed, or I think I noticed at least was when I fully committed to improving myself.

Tristan Gibson 37:02

A lot of people stopped talking to me, you know, like, they'll check and check up on me every once in a while. And that's cool. Like, I still consider them friends. I just think that after the surgeries after the stroke and all that. Like I said, I became a different person. And I was already pushing my friends away because I thought I was the same. And I was trying to act how read did.

Tristan Gibson overcoming limiting beliefs

Tristan Gibson 37:30

However, I was way over the top, you know, I was trying to be someone I wasn't. And I was pushing away all the people that loved and cared for me. And that was a big motivator and why I started like finding who I am, you know. And it became a lot easier when I found this one men's community, which is now open to everybody. It's a hold-the-crew by Taylor Morgan. And I have that group has helped me tremendously. And my journey to improve myself is that of an online community. Yeah, so it's a telegram community.

Tristan Gibson 38:12

So if you find his Instagram, it's Captain, I think it's Captain underscore Taylor underscore Morgan, or something like that. Let me look real quick. Yeah, that's that's a group of people. Got a fabulous beard. Let's see. Yes, Captain underscores Taylor underscores Morgan. Right. His community is extremely helpful and extremely knowledgeable. And it has recently opened up to everybody. Right.

Bill 38:53

Fair enough. So that kind of gives you some Is it some guidance gives you some.

Tristan Gibson 39:04

Gave me it gave me a brotherhood that I could feel a part of because I felt alone on this journey. And once I found a group, a community that was like, I know where you've been or where you are, I can guide you through this. I was like, okay, so they are truly supportive. And they'll also hold you accountable. Which is amazing. Yeah.

Bill 39:38

The one red flag for me when I look at groups like this, is that these guys get put on a pedestal and very early on in my journey to kind of be a better version of myself. I got I got caught up With the Tony Robbins crowd, not in a bad way, Tony Robbins is one of the biggest motivational. Oh, yeah, superhero, wow rah kind of guy. And he has a massive, massive billion-dollar business about trying to improve people, you know.

Bill 40:25

He came through the early 80s, where he was considered the the guy who could fix anything, transform anything, remove fears, from people, all that kind of stuff. And he's good at what he does. And he's written a couple of books but he's best known for his massive stadium-sized four-day courses or events where you do a whole bunch of transformational stuff. And then you can sign up and go through a whole bunch of other stuff. And I didn't go that much further.

Bill 41:04

But I was very interested in listening to his back his cassette tapes, his CDs, and his videos. And it was all about language and about how you go about paying attention to the things that you're doing, that are getting in the way of your own,

of your journey that you're not noticing. And, you know, he's studied through the NLP crowd he came through as a neurolinguistic programmer and all this kind of stuff.

Bill 41:35

So it's cool. But then he did some things that burst my bubble about him. And I felt like it was just a, just the kind of shame. But it wasn't a shame, it was just that I had him on such a pedestal, and I was only 25 or 26, or something like that. I had him on such a pedestal that when he was shown to me to be human, I took it the wrong way. I got offended and upset and thought that the whole thing was just a way to grab money, which it was.

Bill 42:14

There's a portion of that to monetize. There's no, no, absolutely no issue with that. But I was, it took a while for me to regroup and to find my bearings. And to give this guy a little bit of leniency a little bit of a break and to say, Hey, I think what I did was I must have embodied that as part of my identity more than was appropriate. And then, and then it was a jolt to my identity, to be able to see this guy as being human and then adjust.

Bill 42:50

And I did, and I know this now I can explain it now. But I didn't know it then. But it was really hard. So I noticed that this guy is here. He looks superhuman. He looks like a Viking almost.

Tristan Gibson 43:04

And he's got he looks like a. Yeah, it looks like a badass pirate.

Bill 43:09

Can you talk to a good-looking liver king? You know, like.

Tristan Gibson 43:14

He's going to like that one. No. So I think what you were just like the phrase that popped in my head when you were explaining your story was never meet your heroes. Right? It sounded like he had become your hero, right? Yes. But in this community. It's an active community where just about everyone's active, right? And you're talking to each other.

Tristan Gibson 43:39

So you're already seeing the human aspects of the people that are guiding you through it, you're seeing the human aspects of everybody else, you know, and that is something that helped my journey. Because I wasn't putting them on a pedestal. I was like, okay, they understand where I'm at. They're helping me get through it. You know?

Bill 44:01

I hear what you're saying it's more interactive, whereas I got to interact with Tony Robbins once, which was at a fire walk. So on day, two of his big four-day event, you do a fire walk, they set up the fire during the day. And then at night, everyone lines up, and I'm talking to 1000s of people lined up and yeah, walked on this hot coals. And that was the real big moment in my life that sort of shifted in my head when I walked along the hot coals. And I know technically there's supposed to be a way that most people can get it done.

Bill 44:36

But my belief system wasn't that I could do it. And when I did do it, I didn't get burned. There was a line in the sand kind of moment. They it was like if you did that, which is supposed to be completely well, you're not supposed to walk on hot coals. Yeah, any length of distance. And if you're able to do that, and it didn't affect you or change your life negatively, or damage you or hurt you, then you must be able to be capable of other things.

Bill 45:12

Now, I wasn't anywhere near my stroke journey yet, but I was probably 10 away 10 years away from my structure in it. But what that did was, that gave me something to reflect on that I had achieved in the past that was massively beyond Bill's capability. And you can see how you are then. And then at the end of that line was Tony Robbins, and I shook his hand. And then you can see how, in a moment of such amazing achievement like the real huge moment in my life, I've got it outside, and there's this guy there, and I'm giving him all the credit for doing it.

Bill 45:52

And I'm doing well, it was because of him. It was because he, now he's not the person that created that for me, he's made the platform available. He didn't make me walk. I walked. I achieved that was my achievement. But I outsourced it to him thinking that I wasn't capable of that he must have done it for me. And then when

he turned out to be a human, and he wasn't my hero anymore, it was like, yeah, it was a real letdown.

Bill 46:22

And I had to reassess and try and work my way around overcoming that. So I get what you're saying, as you guys have more regular interactions.

Dealing with the challenges of Brain Stem Stroke Recovery



Tristan Gibson 46:34

So, therefore, you get the human side of the person. Oh, yeah. And I want to add something, I want to emphasize what you were saying. So walking on the hot coals, and doing something that you thought was impossible, or shouldn't be done. Something that was massively, massively, massively important, and my journey to overcome depression, and anxiety and become the best version of myself.

Tristan Gibson 47:08

I started challenging myself, taking cold showers what I started with, you know, doing workouts which, after the stroke, I'm not sure if you know, anybody that could teach this, my left side has not gained muscle that I've noticed, like, no matter how much I workout, my right side will, on the side won't, will get back to that. Like I was saying, challenging myself, you know, once I realized that, the reason why, or one of the reasons why I felt so depressed and anxious, was because my life was easy.

Tristan Gibson 47:44

You know, I had nothing to do nothing to think about other than the depression and anxiety. And when I started challenging myself, it, really, really started showing me that I can overcome my initial feeling of this. What else can I overcome? You know, and I took my first ice bath in May of this year, 2023. And holy crap. The adrenaline rush that I got after that. It was amazing.

Tristan Gibson 48:23

It was with Taylor Morgan. I was at one of his immersions. And that was the most challenging and the most amazing feeling I've ever had. Because ice baths, you're like, who would sit there in a bath of cold water, who would sit there in a bath surrounded by ice? And then you do it. And you're like, I'm that MF er, that will sit in a bath and ice. You know, I did that. And, okay, that showed me that I could overcome.

Bill 48:59

You know, you've just done a huge thing for me. So I just realized that what I was, because I've been thinking about ice baths for years. And what I've done is I've created the same mystery and this is not what Bill does around an ice bath. And just now when we talked about that, the firewalk and I overcome that and that bill doesn't do that sort of stuff. Well, that's what I've done with the ice bath I've put the ice bath in this category that Bill doesn't do.

Bill 49:32

And the ice is cold. But the time that you sit in there can't burn your skin, it can damage your skin and there's less potential for harm in kidney cancer on the hotspot. Then there is walking on fire. So I think you might have helped me just overcome and realize that I've created this thing around An ice bath that and cold. That was not necessarily true, sir.

Tristan Gibson 50:08

And I will add something to that. The very first ice baths I took, I fought the feeling right. I did not like the feeling. I got in and I got out for the author. Once I learned to accept the feeling of cold water all around me that was encompassing my body, and realized there was no point in fighting it just releasing and surrendering to that feeling. They almost become no, not almost, they do become therapeutic.

Tristan Gibson 50:41

Yeah. Once you learn to accept that feeling, because hot and cold, give the same sensation in different ways, you know, or at least how I perceive it. And you can surrender to the feeling of warmth. So once you learn to surrender the feeling of cold. It's very therapeutic. Yeah.

Bill 51:05

So then let's talk about the elephant in the room. You're sitting by what now? I think I've realized there is a sauna.

Tristan Gibson 51:20

No, this is my room.

Bill 51:23

All right. Good. Instead of sauna. I thought if it was that was going to be a first for this podcast in your room. And you are sitting with what looks like a red filter.

Tristan Gibson 51:37

Oh, yeah, it looks like it.

Bill 51:38

But it's not a red filter. Tell me about what you're doing in your room and what's going on your,

Tristan Gibson 51:43

Oh, first off, I am very, very broke. I'm very brokering and saying stay with my grandparents right now. I have this red light in my room because I learned back in May. That red light can help support circadian rhythm, health, and function and your circadian rhythm is your internal clock your sleep cycle, you know. And having this on at night isn't nearly as detrimental to your sleep health and all that as having a fluorescent or LED light on?

Tristan Gibson 52:22

Yeah, because it's a calmer wavelength. And it's Oh, yeah, I can give you a couple of Instagram accounts to follow and some things to look up to find more information on it the information slipping my mind.

Bill 52:39

But um, yeah, it's kind of the artificial way to mimic the campfire.

Tristan Gibson 52:46

Yes, that's perfect. That's a perfect explanation. Yes. And it's, I've heard it's even even more beneficial if you have it below. eye level. Because it's like mimicking the sun setting. Yeah. However, I don't have anything that can put it below eye level.

Self-care and mindfulness

Bill 53:06

Yeah, he's just you just need a lamp. One of the lamps looks like I've got in the background here. That's just just there. Oh, yeah. I've got so at night, in my house, if we're sitting down watching TV or whatever it is that lights above my head go off. And they are warm lights, there's still warm lights, but they're led downlights, we call them here. And the lamp comes on. I've got it on the timer. So as soon as it kicks into sunset the warm lights in the lamp switch on. They're not read like this that I'd have read my wife wouldn't be able to Yeah.

Bill 54:00

And outside of our little dining lounge and kitchen area, there's we've got six glass doors, and you can see the courtyard. And in the courtyard, I've set up what they call fairy lights typically. But they have a similar warm, red glow red hue. And they come on at sunset whenever sunset happens throughout the year. And then they switch off a quarter past a quarter to 11 at night automatically and they just wrote they're on and off every day. And it's our signal to switch off the lights above the head. And that's awesome.

Bill 54:47

Yeah, and it makes such a massive difference because it helps to decrease the overstimulation in my head with bright lights. They are just absolutely fluorescent lights and They just made terrible or can't cope with them. So what's interesting is when I just finished by saying that when the overhead lights stopped working at one stage, it was a noticeable difference to the way I felt about being able to see them outside the glass.

Bill 55:21

It was something that the darkness outside the glass kind of wasn't as comfortable. As I was seeing those warm orange glowing lamps before I went to

bed, it was interesting.

Tristan Gibson 55:42

It's very crazy how something is, well, what we perceive as small in our lives, such as light and our lights, surroundings, and all that plays an effect on our health. You know, it's astounding. I was gonna say something, I forgot what you said, that popped into my head. Anyway, it will just.

Bill 56:10

I interrupt myself if it comes back. So we've kind of referred to the Ranga Tang a little bit now. I think you're an awesome play on words here for you. Because you're a ginger.

Tristan Gibson 56:24

Alright, let me let me interrupt you there. So I'm a ginger. And I am what I call a full-blooded ninja. Right? I have blood running through Yeah, I have blood running through almost every follicle a hair on my body, right? You know, like most of the hair, maybe like 10 strands, except maybe 10 strands is red. So that's why I call myself I've been calling myself an orangutan for years. But I went through the Taylor mortgage program, captains lifestyle, and became the captain of Mountain Life. So now I am Captain Ranga. Tang. And I picked this one because it's funny. It's memorable, too.

Tristan Gibson 57:02

Nobody else in the world is using it. It's very unique. You know, like I said, nobody else in the world was using it. And the program that I'm creating is called the Ranga Tang way of teaching people the way that I overcame depression and anxiety. Yes.

Bill 57:19

All right. Now it's it's huge, your program is huge, right? Because you have a lot of steps. We won't talk about all of them. But basically, the steps are words that have emerged from the letters of the orangutangs away, okay, so that is not part of it, it's just orangutangs away. And at the o r a n GUTAN. Their words are associated with that. And then word way, there are also words associated with it. So pick out of the words, and I'll provide, some images on the show notes of this so that people watching and listening who are curious, can go and have a bit of a look.

Bill 58:07

Also, all the links will be there. But we'll put all your links to the show notes. So give me a few of the words that you want to kind of share or tell us about that came out of those letters of the arena. teanaway.

Tristan Gibson 58:25

Yeah, so first, I just want to say it was extremely difficult coming up with words that kind of work with all this. My friend, Carolyn Caroline, is sorry. She's gonna get mad at that. But, Caroline, I met her through a mutual friend. She's had a TBI, and I sent her your podcast and was like, you know, this is awesome. And so maybe she'll hit you up to talk. Maybe look up. However, she helped me come up with this. And all of them. Can I go through the whole list?

Bill 59:01

Yeah, go through more and then just pick out a couple. So we could chat a little bit deeper for the next time.

Tristan Gibson 59:06

Arang is saying way right? There's no G and Ranga Tang? I don't know why it's pronounced with a G but oh, sorry.

Bill 59:14

At the end during a tank, it's not a J at the end.

Tristan Gibson 59:17

There is no No Yeah, well. Learning a lot of stuff on this, dude. Yeah, it's weird. But it's not it doesn't have a G 49.

Bill 59:33

Years just.

Overcoming challenges and optimizing life after a stroke

Tristan Gibson 59:37

Yeah, it's crazy man. But, so rank and sang rank is Hanway How about that? Oh, outside. Our rest accepts and conforms to G grounds. You understand? T transform, affirmations, and never W welcome. Hey, acquire Why you? Okay.

Bill 1:00:02

I think I know which ones I want to talk about. Okay. Okay, in Nonconformist, what's that all about?

Tristan Gibson 1:00:10

So society, the way I view it's after doing a lot of deep inner work, and I like analyzing how I think and why I think the way I think and how I perceive others to think and why they think what they think, non conform, my version of it is don't conform to the idea that you can't overcome whatever you're going through right? Now, there might be some things that are impossible for you to overcome.

Tristan Gibson 1:00:43

But the fact that you think that you can't overcome, it makes it a hell of a lot harder for anything, right? Depression, anxiety, a lot of people think it's a mental illness. And if they give it that title, then it makes them feel like it's impossible to overcome it, you know? So conformed to the idea that you can't overcome whatever you have. Right. What's the next one?

Bill 1:01:09

The next one I like is welcome.

Tristan Gibson 1:01:14

Welcome, James. Welcome. better times?

Bill 1:01:21

Yeah, yeah. The good ones are like the nonconforming, because if you did come, particularly if you particularly did conform, in the early days to what the doctors said, you might have proved them right, simply because they said.

Tristan Gibson 1:01:39

Exactly. And yeah, yeah, you're exactly right on that.

Bill 1:01:44

Yeah. And welcome change is, change is probably inevitable. And the thing that's going to be happening the most, is more. It's more definite than taxes because some people can find ways to avoid taxes, but you can't avoid change.

Tristan Gibson 1:02:05

So I want to point something out. So you said it's probably inevitable to change

the way I see it, you're going to change whether you know it or not. You change to your new job, your life, your new girlfriend, your wife, your new kids, whatever, something new changes with each of those new steps. And after having a very traumatic experience, like going through a stroke, or having a bunch of surgeries, or whatever, you're going to change whether that change is positive or not, please, it depends on you.

Tristan Gibson 1:02:44

And I believe after going through something as dramatic and profound and life-changing as what we have. I think that if you take control of what changes, you can completely change, not just your life, but the lives of people around you, and the lives of your future family for the better. Because if you just let change happen, it could be bad. Or you could perceive it as bad. But if you go out and chase change and challenge yourself, you can make whatever change you want. You know.

Bill 1:03:24

What's good about this is a good question to ask around change. Change is thrust upon you something happens. And it seems like it might not be pleasant or it's difficult or whatever. And then if you ask the question, like, what could be good about this? Or what? What might come from this that I didn't expect that's going to be beneficial? Yeah, that does help to make change a little bit gentler. It makes it possible for you to say, possibilities of change. Yeah.

Tristan Gibson 1:03:56

So, when I was reacting to this change, I was always asking, Why me? Why did I have to go through this? Why couldn't everything be like everybody else? Once I changed my mindset, it was like, What can I learn from this? How can I adjust? How can I improve? You know? Because the time that I wanted to go back to my old life, and all that was the time that I suffered.

Tristan Gibson 1:04:26

I suffered so bad the time ever since I accepted the change and have capitalized on finding things that I enjoy doing now. And taking control of the direction that I go with whatever changes. I have been learning to thrive, you know. And it's a process and it's not easy. Yeah.

Bill 1:04:55

So what's the hardest thing about the stroke journey? For you what was the hardest thing?

Tristan Gibson 1:05:05

So I recovered extremely fast. According to all the doctors and all that, um, I attribute that to the fact that my consciousness was in a different place than my body, you know, my body was just going through the motions. So my mind wasn't holding me back. The most, thing that I'm still struggling with that I frustrating myself, the most is my left side, either not getting muscle at all, muscle at all, or is getting muscle at a significantly slower rate than my right side. Right.

Tristan Gibson 1:05:47

So I lived a very self-destructive lifestyle for two and a half years. And I had tanked my testosterone levels. And I developed a little bit of breast tissue on my side. And when I changed my diet, stopped eating all the processed stuff that they sell here in America and went to a whole food diet, all organic and stuff like that. I lost 30 pounds in three months. When I lost that weight, I noticed the breast tissue.

Tristan Gibson 1:06:23

And ever since I've been, I used to beat myself up over it. Now I see it as a challenge, along with, you know, gaining muscle on the left side to overcome, you know, and I am slowly optimizing my life. The biggest thing that I'm still working to optimize is my sleep.

Bill 1:06:49

It's such a superpower to sleep.

Tristan Gibson 1:06:53

Yeah, they keep it extremely hot in here. Yeah, I have three fans in here, man.

Bill 1:07:03

Fair enough. What? What has struck taught you?

Tristan Gibson 1:07:08

Stroke has taught me that. With the right mindset, you can overcome anything that happens to you.

Tristan Gibson 1:07:17

I've met plenty of people who have gone through something traumatic and they're in a wheelchair, you can't use your legs. And they're still the most positive people in the world. And I've had very deep conversations about very hard topics with them. And the thing that I've learned from a lot of those people that are still positive, at least, is that their mindset around it was, yeah, I went through this.

Tristan Gibson 1:07:48

And I made it out instead of Yeah, I went through this, but I made it out, right? So they're grateful to be alive to be still with their family and friends and stuff like that. And they're grateful to make an impact on people, just like you and I are, you know, and I forgot the question.

Bill 1:08:12

Yeah, that's what has it taught you what a stroking toy sounds like it's gonna

Tristan Gibson 1:08:16

It's taught me that there's so much more to life than what we tell ourselves, you know, what we identify with. It could change tomorrow. So being able to embrace change is probably the biggest thing that has taught me. Yeah, embrace change, don't always adhere to the idea of who you are, you know, something could change it.

Coping with stroke and brain hemorrhages

Bill 1:08:41

Yeah. Some young person that is coming along with this post, have not quite moved beyond the early stages of stroke. Yet, and maybe some older person as well, someone who's 49 or older, who cares? I don't know why I made it a just what do you want to what do you want to tell them? What, how do you want to kind of advise them to go forward? If I were looking for a little bit of gym?

Tristan Gibson 1:09:16

I'll just, I'll speak like I'm talking to my old so right. You might be thinking that this is some bogus saying that everything happens for a reason. I know I did for years. However, once you fully embrace and accept what has happened, you will soon realize that you can make such a profound impact on people's lives. And the

longer I'm alive after the stroke after all those surgeries become grateful for what I went through.

Tristan Gibson 1:09:58

You know, and I know, Tristan from three years ago is looking at me and like, why are you saying that? You know what, why the hell are you saying that Don't be stupid. Just I don't even want you to trust me, I want you to try. At least try accepting that everything happens for a reason. And start thinking of ways that you could both help yourself and help others.

Bill 1:10:32

Yeah, and it's important to the fact that people go down the path of sort of living that everything happens for a reason, lifestyle is then applying a reason that makes it worthwhile. Usually helping other people creates. Well, it creates the possibility that what you went through was worth going through, because now you're impacting positively somebody else's life. So the reason that you apply to it is important, and you are the person who gets to apply the reason, that your setback occurred or your health issue occurred, or whatever it was.

Tristan Gibson 1:11:17

And that reason could be anything in the world. Yeah, it's whatever feels whatever you most aligned with my opinion.

Bill 1:11:25

Yeah. It happened to me so that I could be a better father. It happened to me so that I could be a better husband. It happened to me, so I could be a better bill. I could stop living the life that I was living previously because it was unsustainable. It wasn't fun. It wasn't this. And you could just come up with 1000 million reasons. Why? What happened to you? Oh, yeah. And one of the reasons it didn't happen to you is because you're being punished by God. That's yeah. And that's yes. It did not happen for that reason. Yeah.

Tristan Gibson 1:12:02

That's what I that's the mindset I had for like, six months after this surgery and stroke. I thought I was being punished for something. And I was like, Okay, I hate myself. Why don't I just take myself off this world off this planet? Hmm. When that voice in my head was okay, maybe I'm not being punished, you know? Yeah. But um, yeah, just start searching. What helped me start this journey was

analyzing my old life the life before, and finding the places where I didn't like the person I was, you know, for me, it was, I was very emotionally reactive.

Tristan Gibson 1:12:44

I lied a lot. I played a lot of video games, I distracted myself. I was not present with anyone or anything. I was just going through the motions. And I didn't like that part of my old self. So I decided to change it. Yep. That's the best thing. In my opinion. That's the best thing you can do in this situation. That's fair advice.

Bill 1:13:15

Tristan, thanks for reaching out. And I appreciate chatting with you. Thanks for being the first person to come to me live via your red light therapy room.

Tristan Gibson 1:13:28

Thank you, sir. Thank you for holding this podcast and community for people like yourself and myself. Who can give and receive advice that has helped us along the way? Thank you.

Bill 1:13:44

Absolutely. My pleasure. Just before we go, why don't you share with people where they could find you online then I'll also make sure I link all of those things to the show notes.

Tristan Gibson 1:13:57

So y'all are probably gonna like this one. It's very unique. It's Captain_Orangutan on TikTok and Instagram. My website is Theorangutanway.com it's still under work. We posted it just to see what it looked like and get advice from others. It will be going through some more changes, got some more things to add to it. And I'm working on that program.

Tristan Gibson 1:14:27

Full disclosure, I don't have a degree or a certification and whatever. I'm helping people with experience, you know, so I was told that I can't tell people how this is this is how they fix it. But this is how I fix it. You know?

Bill 1:14:43

Yeah, you share a story that's odd and have inaccurate qualifications either me other than three brain hemorrhages and brain surgery and learning how to walk again.

Tristan Gibson 1:14:52

So yeah, basically saying.

Bill 1:14:56

I think I'm pretty qualified. Oh, absolutely. I am not uncomfortable sharing, there is a disclaimer at the end of every one of my podcast episodes. Don't take anything I say seriously. seek out advice from your medical professionals do all of that kind of stuff.

Bill 1:15:13

We are different just sharing experiences, stories, and things that have worked for us. And if you're curious, what we're kind of trying to do is we're just trying to inspire people to get curious about what might work for them. And it's up to them.

Bill 1:15:28

And it's as simple as that. What works for me might work for you and what doesn't work for you might not work for me. So it's all good. My thanks for being on the podcast. I appreciate it.

Tristan Gibson 1:15:39

Thank you for having me, Bill.

Bill 1:15:41

Well, thanks for joining us on today's episode. Remember, grab a copy of chapter one of the book *The Unexpected Way that a Stroke Became the Best Thing That Happened*. Just visit recoveryafterstroke.com/book.

Bill 1:15:54

Take a look around and discover what the book is all about. Click the Download Free Chapter button. As always, to learn more about my guests, including links to this social media and other pages, and to download a full transcript of the entire interview, please go to recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes Thank you to all those people who have already left the review.

Bill 1:16:16

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a few comments about what the show means to you. It might just be the most amazing thing that you do for somebody else and me, but that might just make it possible for that particular interview to go to the right person who needs it.

Bill 1:16:50

If they're feeling down about their stroke, about their recovery, about all the things that they have to navigate after a stroke. If you are watching on YouTube, comment below the video I love seeing people's comments I respond to all of them who liked the episode and to get notifications of future episodes, subscribe to the show on the platform of your choice. Thank you again for being here and listening. I appreciate you see you on the next episode.

Tristan Gibson 1:17:18

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Tristan Gibson 1:18:39

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