Cerebellum Stroke Recovery – Mark Sanchez

Mark Sanchez experienced a cerebellum stroke which may have been a result of a dissection in one of his arteries that was most likely caused by a car collision while on a business trip in Las Vegas two years prior to the stroke event.

Instagram

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Mark 0:00
I’m so much more thankful for those things because you, as you know, or business owners as they know like we’re on a constant move or we used to put 12-16 hours a day, there was a time I didn’t have a day off for seven years. You know, people don’t see that aspect of what I do.

Mark 0:17
But you know, those times and you know, you’re still there doing these things with your kids or band or whatever it is. But now when this happens to you, I really appreciate for instance with my new relationship with Margarita I love

taking Gavin to school, the youngest to school.

Mark 0:37
Because those are things like when I see him walk, I just love that situation. Because, you know, there was a time where that wasn't gonna probably happen or it may not happen. It just makes you smell the roses because when you're always thinking of something else, you're not present.

Intro 0:58
This is the recovery after stroke podcast, with Bill Gasiamis, helping you navigate recovery after stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11
Hello, and welcome to recovery after stroke a podcast full of answers, advice and practical tools for stroke survivors to help you take back your life after a stroke and build a stronger future. I'm your host three times stroke survivor Bill Gasiamis.

Bill Gasiamis 1:26
After my life was turned upside down, and I went from being an active Father, to being stuck in hospital, I knew if I wanted to get my life back. The recovery was up to me. After years of researching and discovering and learning how to heal my brain and rebuild a healthier and happier life than I ever dreamed possible.

Bill Gasiamis 1:45
And now I've made it my mission to empower other stroke survivors like you to recover faster, achieve your goals and take back the freedom you deserve. If you enjoy this episode and want more resources, accessible training and hands on support, check out my recovery after stroke membership community created especially for stroke survivors and caregivers.

Bill Gasiamis 2:06
This is your clear pathway to transform your symptoms, reduce your anxiety, and navigate your journey to recovery with confidence, head to recoveryafterstroke.com to find out more after this podcast. But for now, let's dive right into today's show.

Introduction – Mark Sanchez

Bill Gasiamis 2:22
This is episode 170. And my guest today is Mark Sanchez, Mark experienced a major car collision that led to a dissection in one of his arteries that eventually led to a cerebellum stroke. Mark Sanchez, welcome to the podcast.

Mark 2:41
Thank you, Bill, how are you doing today?

Bill Gasiamis 2:43
Doing good man, thank you for being here. For somebody who's very private, you're about to be very vulnerable. And you're about to put it all out there for everyone on the planet to hear if they wish. Tell me a little bit about your motivation first to get on the podcast?

Mark 3:03
Well, you had a friend of mine, Christina Deville, on earlier on their podcast. And when she had her stroke, a friend of mine reached out to me and said that she had a stroke. I didn't know that happened.

Mark 3:18
So, you know, I was corresponding back and forth helping her because I had it happened to me prior to her. And so I just wanted to be there as you know, a source of backing because this is such a difficult, you know, journey that you go through when you have these things happen to you.

Mark 3:39
So when I saw her I said, you know, I'm pretty private person. And like, I don't tell people, you know, what's going on too much. So when I saw her on here, and I said, you know, I think it means will help me in my recovery to talk about it and not, you know, put it somewhere else and or just, be the tough guy of the situation, right?

Mark 4:02
Like, oh, yeah, I can handle anything. So I saw it and you know, it was really endearing to me. So in turn me helping her she helped me. That's the beautiful thing about it. You know, me trying to help her help me.

Bill Gasiamis 4:21
Fantastic. So that's the interesting thing about the podcast as well. I thought I was doing it for everybody else, which I am. But I get a lot out of it as well. And that's kind of unexpected.

Bill Gasiamis 4:36
So I really appreciate that you did take the leap to put yourself out there and go down this path you've never been before, which is you're not revealing anything that most people don't know about life or about human beings.

Bill Gasiamis 4:54
You're revealing some of your innermost feelings I'm imagining which is maybe something that you don't get to do that often. And a lot of I'll speak for men, a lot of men don't do that very well, they don't share very well. And it is a bit of a burden for some men to think that they can share.

Bill Gasiamis 5:15
And for the men who want to share, to not be able to know how to do that, and not know what happens afterwards, not much happens afterwards, after you're vulnerable and share not much happens, except you feel a little bit lighter.

Bill Gasiamis 5:30
And most people respond positively. The negative comments don't usually come. And when they do come, if they come, they're coming from people who are even more affected, or even more suffering or struggling than you are. So tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

Cerebellum stroke

Mark 5:52
So it was a very unique situation. Ultimately, I'll start from the car, I had a car accident, my business partner and I were in Las Vegas a car hit us, we had some damage. And you know, being tough guys again, oh, yeah, we're good, figured it out. And then I started developing neck pain.

Mark 6:18
And so I was getting adjusted. And, then not putting blame on anybody. But I was getting my neck adjusted. And so what happened was, is I'm just going to fast forward to when it all occurred to me, but that's the prior story, we can go in detail to that forever, but was, so what happened, I was having neck pains, and I was getting adjusted.

Mark 6:46
And I was you know, I own a business, I was working quite a bit long now always long hours. And I said, I'm going to go get adjusted. And next thing, you know, I felt like my ear was to the right side of my foot, I couldn't lift my body up-straight.

Mark 7:05
You know, I was getting ready to go see the chiropractor for my neck. And it hit me in my bedroom, where it was like such a powerful force pushing my ear down to the right side of my body. And I said, and I'm in healthcare, senior health care. So I understand about strokes and things.

Mark 7:27
And I knew what was happening to me, but I couldn't articulate because of what was happening. And at the time. I had a girlfriend named Danielle. And she said, look, you're having a stroke. And I told her I was having a stroke. And she said, you know, you need to get to the hospital right away.

Mark 7:47
Well, my brother and I worked together. We're business partners. It's a family business at the time. And I called him and I said, look, you need to come get me, I was able to put some words together. I need to go to the hospital, which is very close to where we live.

Mark 8:04

And he says no, call the ambulance. And I knew not to call the ambulance because being in the business, you know, a young man that can't articulate, my arm to the ground. Like I knew those are all critical moments in getting to the hospital.

Mark 8:20
And so I'm like, no, you need to come get me because they're going to sit there, they're going to set up an IV that, you know, I know the system like they're going to try and do their due diligence, of course. So they have some information by the time you get to the hospital.

Mark 8:34
So and then that gets generally transferred from first the fire department then the ambulance then the hospital. So my brother got me in got to the hospital right away. And since I deal with this hospital quite a bit, Dr. Volpi, who I've known for quite a long time, happened to be the neurologist there.

Mark 8:56
And, you know, we got to the hospital, my brother said he's having a stroke, I get into the room, from when I felt the effects into getting a CT scan 40 minutes. So it was very critical for me. And so by the time I got back to the room, Dr. Volpi says, you know, I'm having what's called a cerebellum stroke, because it's equilibrium it has nothing to do with the atrophy of muscles or paralysis on one side or another.

Mark 9:29
It's all left and right. So then they get me right to the ICU, and I'm in the ICU within 52 minutes. And speaking to my brother, of course, I don't really know what's happening at this point.

Mark 9:47
I'm just feeling like someone's got a knife in my brain, you know that I felt a direct pain inside not sure. But, you know, Dr. Volpi, and my brother said lucky we're able to get the clot buster. because it was a blood clot that went to my brain started in my artery went 80% of my artery then directly to my right side cerebellum.

Bill Gasiamis 10:08
So it sounds like you also had a tear in your artery.

Mark 10:14
That's correct, that's how this all…

Bill Gasiamis 10:16
Dissection.

Mark 10:18
Yeah, this is the dissection. Absolutely correct. And so, I'm in ICU, and you know, being the man I am, I said, look, I'm all right, you guys, but literally, I had a computer and a nurse there. And I guess what they were telling my family is, we're lucky to get that out, but you know, he's got 30% chance, he still could bleed to death, you know, we were able to get the clot buster in there and bust up the clot.

Mark 10:48
And, then you know, then in ICU, and then going down to the step down unit, and then go into therapy, I was in the hospital 28 days. And, you know, by day, 20th, I was trying to learn how to walk.

Mark 11:05
So basically, it just went from that to, you know, I'm worried about walking, and I just ran 12 miles the weekend before, and it's kind of my thing and worked out at the gym, and like, you know, don't do drugs, I don't know, alcohol, too often. Just socially, of course, I smoke pot once in a while with, you know, here and there.

Mark 11:30
But I don't do drugs, you know, and I don't drink alcohol and consume it on a daily basis, I consume a lot of water. So it's very shocking for me to be in that, you know, hospital bed and thinking, Oh, my god, is this my next existence, you know, where I just feel like, I just can't straighten up my body.

Mark 11:50
And I felt so weak. Because I've always been able to kind of get myself out of whatever physical situation it is. But it just brings you to your knees when you can't straighten yourself up to just take a step or two.

Bill Gasiamis 12:11
You're similar to a lady who I interviewed Clodah Dunlop way back in episode 37, you're going to be episode 170 or something. And actually, Episode 38 was

Clodah. And she's a police officer and she had a mild collision during the course of her work, it wasn't a police incident or anything like that.

Bill Gasiamis 12:36
I think it was just a regular collision. And she, as a result, had a whiplash incident or she moved ahead very quickly forward and backwards. And she had a strange headache and neck pain for I'm pretty certain it was a few months afterwards. And what it turned out being was a dissection, and therefore it threw off a blood clot that blood clot caused her stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 13:08
And then she was locked in. She had locked in syndrome. And then she's been on a really huge recovery from then. And she's doing great. It's about five or six years since that, and she's back to work. And she has some deficits, and she has some challenges with spasticity in one of her arms, but she's really getting better. Now, the collision for her was really minor was yours. Also a minor collision? What happened?

The Accident That Caused The Cerebellum stroke

Mark 13:39
It was a major car accident. A bread truck ran a red light going into the MGM and hit my business partner, Joe and I in a taxi cab and spun us all the way through Flamingo to the other side of the sidewalk. So I mean, it was major in that aspect.

Mark 14:02
But you know, looking at it, I wish I would have gone through of you know, yeah, get money for this situation because I'm always Oh no, I don't want to sue or anything like that. I do recommend if you're in a car accident, you make sure that it's not for just that moment.

Mark 14:18
It's later it could be you know, a year later because this happened it took a couple of years before this occurred, you know, so it wasn't where this was something that happened right away after the car accident. This happened years later. Because finally the last adjustment or whatever I had is what they think they still don't know sparked that to happen.

Bill Gasiamis 14:47

Okay, so had you had headaches in those years?

Mark 14:51
Oh, yeah. I've never had headaches in my life. I would have headaches and then neck pain constantly. And then now since this has happened, I've never had headaches or migraines now since this has happened, I get migraines.

Bill Gasiamis 15:08
Is it standard practice to be taken to a hospital after a collision like that for you to be checked out for the people that were involved to be looked at?

Mark 15:18
And we did and we went to the hospital. But what happened was, which is a very unique situation is they left us there for hours. Like, on these neck braces on a hard table, they never moved us. And by the time they got to us, I'm like, Hey, we're okay, let's go, you know what I mean?

Mark 15:37
And, you know, they left it there really a long time, so long that I was in more pain from the apparatus that was in than the accident. And, so yeah, it was quite quick, really. In retrospect, I handled that completely wrong. You know, I really did. I should have really stayed there, got checked out, you know, follow through through everything.

Mark 16:07
But you know, if I feel okay, I'm gonna keep going. Like, that's just been my life's motto, you know, an ignorant motto. Because men have that bravado. I don't know why. But men don't like to go to doctors to see him if they're sick or whatever. And I think women, you know, there's so much better at is because they have to go they go see the GYBM, you know what I mean? And, and so, like, there used to go into the doctor's a man's like, Ah, I'll wait till it falls off. You know? Everything before you start seeing a doctor.

Mark 16:11
Yeah. I know what you mean, look, I think it's just simply because we're just shaped differently, you know, we're not designed to be nurturing. So, you know, women are nurturing, therefore, they also do self nurturing better, they also do self care better. They're meant to be that way.

Bill Gasiamis 16:43
This is my scientific, you know, approach to this whole situation. Men, you know, we're not supposed to be really that nurturing, although, I enjoy being and I love, you know, supporting my family and my kids and all that kind of stuff. But, even then, it's a bit kind of tough love, you know, we do the tough love, come on, you'll be right, get over it, move on.

Bill Gasiamis 17:32
And it's nothing, it's just a flesh wound. And then what we do is the same thing to ourselves. So we struggle to get to therapy, to hospital to get somebody to care for us, you know, we just shrug it off. And I find that one of the hardest things with the podcast is getting men on. I can reach out to women all over the place all day, every day.

Bill Gasiamis 17:58
And they'll all say yes, and they'll be on in a heartbeat. But getting men on is very difficult. So when I get somebody contacting me and said, they want to be on especially guy, I get really excited. It's like, well, there's not enough representation of men in this space where men are standing up and saying, Hey, I'm not okay, I need help. And something hurts, I need to get checked out. It might be serious. And unfortunately, we all end up there being a little bit wiser after the incident has escalated.

Mark 18:32
When I was in the hospital, I think what's important to, going back to all this is to have such a positive attitude, because I never thought that I was just going to be in that bed. You know, and I think that's a man's attitude, too. Like, you know, my legs might be hurt, but let me drag myself forward three inches, you know, that type of thing.

Mark 18:58
And no, you're right about that is it's hard for men to say, you know, what, I need to talk to somebody, I need help, or, you know, I need this. Because, we were driven by society and actually our own DNA as hunters and gatherers, to do that, you know, it's not it's, it's more than just us in the modern time. We've got our blood roots coming back from, you know, whenever.

“It’s All Good”

Bill Gasiamis 19:27
It’s really important. You need to, almost, and I’m speaking for myself, and some of the people that I know, the men that I know is you need to almost trick them into going and get help. You know, I remember my wife, I was ignoring the symptoms of my stroke for seven days.

Bill Gasiamis 19:48
And the first time and by the end of it, I think she was over it and she said, look, let’s go to the hospital. They’ll find there’s nothing wrong with you, and then you’ll go back to your normal life tomorrow. And I thought that was a great idea. That’s why I went to the hospital.

Bill Gasiamis 20:04
The chiropractor before that had told me to go. My wife kept telling me to go, I was walking differently. I was feeling differently, I was acting differently. And I did nothing took no advice, she had to tell me that I was gonna go there, they were gonna tell me it was all good. And then I could just go back to work. Seven days later, I couldn’t feel my entire left side, Mark. And I was just telling everybody, it’s all good.

Mark 20:34
Yeah, and you know, right. I mean, that’s just how it is. I guess I was laboring the last few days before, you know, I went to San Francisco, walked around, I ran the day before that it happened. And, of course, ignoring all these indicators, right?

Like, Hey, dummy, sit down, get yourself to the hospital, sit yourself up and see what's wrong. But no, right? We just keep going.

Intro 21:06
If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. Like, how long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse?

Intro 21:23
Doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to recoveryafterstroke.com where you can download a guide that will help you.

Intro 21:45
It's called the seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke. These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your condition, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery, head to the website now, recoveryafterstroke.com and download the guide. It's free.

Bill Gasiamis 22:08
What did you do about the headache over the two years? Did you take the same approach to that? Or did you actually try and get it look that?

Mark 22:15
You know what I just thought, so I was playing in soccer leagues and different things. And I thought, you know, maybe, it was from a goal from the head or whatever it may be, you know, I played basketball. I just be like, I maybe I'm not drinking enough water, you know, so I go down all these checklists of things, am I taking the right amount of protein in you know, what's going on, because I really, physically put my body through a lot, you know, I work out I run I I'm a physical person.

Mark 22:53
So I would always think that maybe I'm this, you know, something I don't have balance correctly. You know, I really didn't put two and two together, you know,

that, Oh, it's from that or, or, you know, I played American football in high school in college. And, I'm used to head to head collisions, more than the average person.

Mark 23:17
And so, there's that too. So it was a unique venture of, I'm used to getting these things happening to me, maybe it's just something I'm taking wrong or eating wrong. That was the indicator. It really was, you know, when I think of those things, I would implore people to please go see the doctor when they start getting headaches, and it's not normal, or like, you know, their shoulders are so tight, like they can't move their neck.

Mark 23:52
Like they should get checked out. Because, you know, if I would have caught this before, which Dr. Volpi said is was going to be almost impossible, just because of where the cerebellum is behind the thicker plate of your skull, so I would have to get what's called the CTA, CAT scan where it goes through the density of the bone. So that's why it's a very unique cerebellum is very unique, very special spot.

Bill Gasiamis 24:25
And, not only that, you're not even aware of what to ask for what to do the complexity of this. It's so ridiculous. You're not most of us are not from a medical background. We there's no way of actually knowing unfortunately, what we're going to do is just go off our hunch, our gut instinct rather than our head.

Bill Gasiamis 24:46
Instead of trying to work our way through the checklist. It's like checking with your body. Your body's telling you, it's even showing you because your balance is off and your head is hurting. I mean, that's a classic sign that something's not right.

Mark 25:00
Bill, it's even worse for me because I have been studying the brain for quite a long time due to what we do in senior health care we deal with a lot of stroke victims, people that fallen hit their heads, traumatic brain injuries, like you know it, I hate to say it, even being in that field and knowing what's happening.

Mark 25:20

Sometimes you're so focused, you have no peripheral vision, you understand what I mean is like you stumble into this like you don't, that's why it's so important to have a partner to have peripheral vision for you.

Mark 25:36
Because we whenever we do even in business and life, and I've said it many times with my partner, whatever it is, sometimes when we work on something so hard, we're so narrow minded, we don't have the peripheral vision, it's so important to get someone else's ideas to bounce off. Because you know, you're so focused on something, it's the same thing with being in this field and still not knowing, you know, that's going to happen to me.

Bill Gasiamis 26:02
How old were you?

Mark 26:05
So this happened in 2017. So I was 44 years old. And like I said, everybody like my close family because I didn't want anybody really to know. So it was close family and friends that only knew what was happening, they were shocked because they know that what I do with my body and how I eat and how I take care of myself, because that's I love being outdoors running and working out. That's, what I love to do. And so they were really shocked.

Bill Gasiamis 26:36
So you're 44 you're working in a professional community home placement for senior loved ones. So you're dealing with seniors all the time. And you've never seen a stroke survivor. At your age, you only ever see stroke survivors who are seniors, right? So you're not doing the connection you're going. This doesn't make sense. It doesn't add up. But if what you know now is that stroke doesn't discriminate. Everyone can have a stroke at any age.

Mark 27:09
And you know, what's so crazy is like, I understand, you're like what people don't want their kids to play football, even though I love the game or whatever, because you can, you know, not every not all of us are designed properly. And the brain itself, it's still it's held together by fluid.

Mark 27:27
Like there's nothing like you know, any protective measure our skull is the

protective measure. And every time you get a contact, and your brain compresses against your skull, you know, now you have some kind of damage and issues. And you know, I come from a family of martial arts.

Mark 27:46
So I've always had, you know, hand to hand combat, you know, getting hit in the head and all those things are like, normal, right? But when you really start understanding the brain even more, I thought I knew something about it. I didn't know a damn thing until this happened to me.

Mark 28:03
Then you understand the severity of listen, you fall in hit your head, it's an automatic trip to the hospital, don't tough it out. Like don't think that you're okay, because you don't know how your head or your brain has gone against your skull. And what kind of bruising damage or, you know, one little blood vessel that's leaking could be your life. So it's a unique situation.

Bill Gasiamis 28:31
And it's very unique. And there's no real way to I suppose this podcast tries to do that educate people. But there's no real way to get people who are not stroke survivors to be listening to this podcast. They're not really paying attention, they don't really care.

Bill Gasiamis 28:50
So hopefully, what we're doing is by doing this is somebody who knows you will listen to this episode, who's not a stroke survivor, who wants to hear your story so that they can then maybe trigger themselves later on down the track if they happen to come across somebody who is going through something strange.

Mark Sanchez's Backpack

Mark 29:10
And you know what, it's more than, you know, I call it a blessing and a curse. Well, you know, really, it's a blessing in the aspect that like, I learned, okay, I sold off my business here. And I got bought out and, you know, was on my way to recovery. But it also gave me an attitude. Like, I don't have time for minimal stuff.

Mark 29:39
You know, it really unleashed a beauty in my life where I don't really put up with stuff. I don't I call it a backpack. I don't put my backpack full of stress. I'm going to do what I'm going to do. And I'm going to take care of my family and the people that I love, and I'm not going to be bothered by little things, little things don't bother me anymore.

Mark 30:03
They used to bother me. But when you've put in a situation where your first your life's in jeopardy, and then, you know, like I was saying, I had to learn how to walk again. And I was going to therapy, and you know, here's a, you know, 200 pounds, six foot one guy learning to walk, I couldn't turn around my, at the time, my girlfriend Danielle, and my best friend, Tony and Andrew, were there.

Mark 30:27
When I was with the walker, learning how to walk. I didn't know how to go back. I didn't know how to turn the walker around. You know, I mean, it was mind numbing things like that aspect of not being able to turn so now when someone says, oh, I don't like you or what? Have a great day.

Mark 30:47
You know what I mean? Because I think back to that moment, you know, how raw and how vulnerable and how, you know, a moment's time changes your whole life?

Bill Gasiamis 31:00
Yeah. It's a line in the sand moment, and you realize that you're not here for long, you're here for a short amount of time, it could just have easily have been over if we didn't have the kind of medical help that we have in this day and age in the Western countries. I mean, neither me or you would have been here, like and every other person I've had on the podcast, let's face it, none of them would have been on my podcast, they wouldn't exist.

Mark 31:27
And you know, it's so unique that you say that, and I was even more blessed. First of all, being in the business that I am, I live right by three major hospitals that I mean, that doesn't work. You know, like Dr. Volpi said if I would have waited any much longer, you know, first of all, it's a very unique cerebellum stroke when they went through all the stroke protocols, I pass them all.

Mark 31:50
The only thing that doctor, first I had a 20 something year relationship with Dr. Volpi and the nurses that were inside there, Mark and Jeremy, who have I've spent many years working with them, then the stag miss was the only thing that was showing that I had a stroke, or they would send people home.

Mark 32:11
So a lot of times with the cerebellum stroke, only 3% or cerebellum strokes, they're very rare. And what happens with that is they exude somebody that has a migraine, and they send them home and they usually pass from the cerebellum stroke more than they do any other stroke, because it doesn't show any paralysis, you see or weakness or whatever it may be.

Bill Gasiamis 32:37
Yeah, the lack of balance cause dizziness, and nausea, and those types of issues for you while you're recovering? And even now is it's still an issue now?

Mark 32:53
So it took me a while to start walking again. And you know, I went to the physical

therapist, and then it slowly as it healed, because, you know, obviously, now we have you to have a dark spot on your brain mind just happens to be the cerebellum.

Mark 33:11
And in the cerebellum, there's only two cerebellum only thing that you have to have of your brain, a left and a right, just so you know of cerebellums. So what happened is once I got to feeling like, Okay, I felt better than the physical therapist that was training because I've been training my whole life, I moved on to working out by myself.

Mark 33:37
But yes, I still do have an equilibrium issue once in a while, if something is dark on my right side, and I'm going down, like I have to catch myself. And then from the issue which I didn't speak about, I have what's called a fusiform aneurysm still on my brain, and that's another subject but when they found that I go get tested every six months to make sure that it doesn't grow.

Mark 34:09
It's in a very unique situation in my brain, and they can't just go out and get it out. Because if they make a mistake, it's in my memory, I'll have no memory. So it's limited me to, I can't play basketball anymore. You know, I don't play soccer anymore. These things that are going on, because I still have this fusiform aneurysm on my brain.

Mark 34:37
And so with that, what the I get it checked out if it goes any larger than it's at four millimeters, then I go definitely directly into the hospital and have it done. Or we're kind of waiting out to see as technology gets better. So that's kind of what I got going on still.

Mark 34:58
So I'm living with something that, you know, is unique to people too you know, that's why anytime head damage or anything I gotta go right to the hospital. And uniquely, I only take a baby aspirin, that's all I take now, you know, I was on a blood thinner before. I'm very fortunate I just take a baby aspirin. And, you know I eat well.

Bill Gasiamis 35:23

Yeah, that's great. So I was going to ask you about your approach to sport now. My big issue is people touching my head or anything happen in my head so I had surgery and I I used to be able to enjoy watching boxing or MMA or something like that. I can't even watch it now just seeing those guys get hit in the head makes my head hurt like I can't deal with it. If it wasn't for that aneurism, would you have been comfortable going back into physical sports like that and hitting the ball?

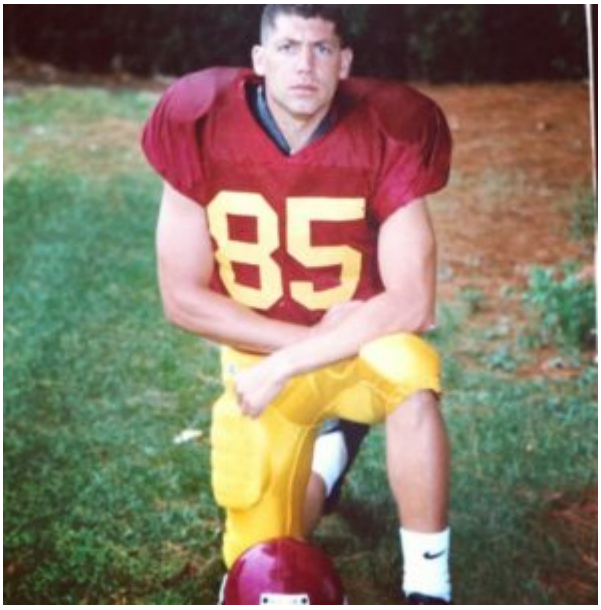
Mark 36:07
I would definitely be training my Muay Thai and different things. And, you know, I had to stop because I, I couldn't spar and you know, when you don't spar, you just lose all kind of touch, you know what I mean? And then, so I play indoor soccer on Thursdays, my basketball league on Wednesdays indoor soccer on Thursdays and outdoor on Sundays.

Mark 36:35
And so like, those were all cut out also, and you know, what, I would have went right back to them all, you know, going back to your question, yes, I would have went right back to it, I would have went back to all those different things. But you know, what, it would maybe an ignorant thing to do.

Mark 36:53
Because now knowing what could happen to my brain and I already have, I already have a situation where, you know, one we're more susceptible to strokes now, you know, now that you have one you can have too, you know, so it might be a deeper question. If I had really that option. Now that I know that I can't do it, I just play the games that you know, like golf and I run a lot and I lift weights and I, you know, sparring with heavy bags, you know, whatever.

Mark 37:33
At the gym, same thing. Those things, but not where it's, and I really miss. I'm going to tell you, me personally, I missed that combat. I missed that force of two different bodies colliding like it. I've been raised on it my whole life. So to take it away was a major thing for me. You know? Because I love those things with a passion.

Mark Sanchez Dealt With Identity Shift



Bill Gasiamis 37:59
Yeah. So how does your identity cops a hit, right? Before you go into hospital, you identify as this kind of guy, you come out of hospital, and now you have to identify as a different guy. How did you handle that transition? How did that make you feel?

Mark 38:16
I'm still dealing with it. And it's four years later, you know, I miss these things greatly. And so I still you know, what we deal with, like I said, it's a blessing and a curse. Because what we deal with is something very unique. One, it makes you work on yourself. And if we're not working on ourselves as human beings, what are we doing? Right?

Mark 38:40
Your mates, your your wife, your girlfriend, your kids, if we don't constantly work on ourselves, we're going to lose touch with one of them. Right? And so this is actually, you know, where men don't want to work on themselves. were tough guys, tough exterior is all these things.

Mark 39:02
This constantly is a focus on working on yourself. Because yeah, I have to do different things. And I don't want to be different with my family because I don't have that, you know, collision on on Thursday nights that I need or sparring with somebody you know, because it causes you to think of those things. And I get sad

sometimes I wish I could play those things.

Mark 39:25
But then I always say in but I'm really blessed that I'm having a cup of coffee with my beautiful girlfriend Margarita and the kids and whatever it may be that I'm here doing that because it could have been very well, not here doing that at all. I wouldn't even have any understanding what's going on because you're dead. When you're dead. You're dead, no matter what.

Bill Gasiamis 39:45
So it's giving you the ability to be present in the moment at the time when you're having a cup of coffee in that location with the people that are there. And that's it. That's it. It's just like, well, here I am. I'm here. I'm doing it.

Living With Gratitude

Mark 39:59
So much more thankful for those things because you, as you know, or business owners as they know, like, we're on a constant move where it's like, you know, you, we used to put 12, 16 hours a day, there was a time I didn't have a day off for seven years, you know, people don't see that aspect of what I do.

Mark 40:19
But you know, those times and you know, you're still there, doing those things with your kids, or band, or whatever it is. But now, when this happens to you, like, I really appreciate, for instance, with my new relationship with Margarita, I love taking Gavin to school, the youngest to school, because those are things like when I see him walk, I just love that situation.

Mark 40:47
Because, you know, there was a time where that wasn't gonna probably happen, or what it may not happen, it's just makes you smell the roses. Because when you're always thinking of something else, you're not present, you know, especially when you have a business, you're always thinking of this client didn't well, here, the hospital had an issue, your hospice has this.

Mark 41:07
You're constantly thinking of things, and you don't really shut it off, you know, and this allows you to want to sober yourself up completely, like, Oh, my God, life

is really beautiful, I don't care, you know, it doesn't take much money to have a cup of coffee or run through the park.

Mark 41:24
You know, a lot of people put it like I economically can't do it. But you can, you know, you can really go outside, have a sandwich at the park, run it, sit there, enjoy the moment, just feel the air, feel the rain, feel the snow, whatever it is, you know, it's it's living, because when you don't have those things, or you feel limited, or you're not able to walk to the park anymore from a stroke, or you know, you're using a walker, or you know, everything changes.

Mark 41:58
And it's so important. And when you walk around town, you know who's had a stroke, I always say, Oh, you're doing great, you look good, you know, be a positive influence, because you see them when anybody that's dragging their foot when they're young or walking in a unique situation.

Mark 42:16
Stroke victims know, stroke victims. It's a funny thing, but it's true. And, you know, I always try to be uplifting to those around me, because, you know, they may need it, sometimes we're down mentally, you know, the psychological factor of what goes on with us, is another, a completely different other issue.

Bill Gasiamis 42:39
Yeah. So you would have been through that you would have had the emotional lows and the psychological lows, did you reach out then for help? Even after the stroke? Had you transitioned from being I don't need help anymore to? I'm going to go and see somebody about this?

Mark 42:57
You know, I think what really happened is because my body responded so well. Like this is the really the first time I've really spoken to anybody besides my doctors, or my family. Even my family don't know, the intimate details of things. I mean, they know, but they don't know every aspect.

Mark 43:22
No, like, you know, I still really haven't spoke to anybody about this is really the first time speaking out loudly to you know, at extended time. People are, you know, this is what happened. I had to learn how to walk. But that's it, and then

you move on, you know what I mean? If they do get to that situation?

Mark 43:43
But going back to it, I haven't really spoken to anybody about this often. And, you know, really, I think the most important thing is that I did do it today. Because I you know, I try you know, I since I was able to start walking and running and everything again. I feel like I'm okay, you know what I mean? But then, really, it took Christina like I said, and see her on her podcast saying Jesus, She's so brave.

Mark 44:17
You know what, I'm next, okay, I'm done trying to be the guy that everybody thinks got a shining armor or whatever and shit don't stink. I like to say or whatever. No, it does. It definitely does, you know? And that's why I'm really happy that you reached out to me, Bill and I was able to do this because I don't know, I almost feel better right now.

Bill Gasiamis 44:46
That's awesome. And that's what it's all about.

Mark 44:52
Like, I don't even understand it. I like just getting these things out. Feel better. You know, I don't know how to explain it. It just I even feel a little better now.

Bill Gasiamis 45:02
That's perfect. That's perfect way to explain it. And you know what? Do you have kids?

Mark 45:09
Yes, I have going to be a 28 year old and then Margarita, you know which she's my girlfriend. I consider my kids we all live together. 19, 18 and 15.

Bill Gasiamis 45:26
So the example you need to be setting is not one of stiff upper lip is not one of we don't need to reach out for help. You don't need to do this, you're the elder in your family, you've got five kids that live with you or look up to you or hang out with you or know you.

Bill Gasiamis 45:47
And what you got to do is you got to lead by example, you got to be a leader, you

got to show kids that when shit gets difficult when it gets hard and you don't have the resources to deal with this issue. Because you've never been in a weird situation before this is the first time for example, that they might be experiencing a strange situation in life.

Bill Gasiamis 46:12
Reach out, get help go and see somebody get it sorted, you know, take control of the situation, don't let it derail your life, one way or the other. That's really what your role is now, as well as looking after yourself, you've got to really be the leader.

Mark 46:29
Yeah, and, you know,100% I think if you speak to the kids, they would think telling you that I say go get checked out, go out. And you know, it's funny, I was always been that way with the kids, even before that happened to me, but not to myself. And you know, like I said, being in the industry of health, you know, mental health is just as important, and maybe even more important than it is physical health.

Mark 47:03
In a healthy person is mentally and physically and it's difficult to have those symbiotic working at the same time. When you know, somebody is not feeling good. I like I'm the first to say, hey, go visit somebody, you know, go talk to a counselor or something. And now it's my turn.

Bill Gasiamis 47:25
Yeah, that's it. And that's the thing about giving somebody that advice, and then looking at you going, but you never go like why would I go? It's really important to practice what you preach.

Mark 47:41
Exactly. It's a way to lead anybody, humans, kids, animals lead by example.

A Three-pronged Approach

Bill Gasiamis 47:47
Yeah, yeah. So I like to say that stroke is at least a three approached recovery, you know, you got to approach the physical, which is the one that gets the most support, the emotional, which gets the least support, and then the psychological,

which gets the, you know, middle of the range support, because we're starting to talk about mental health issues, and it started to decrease the stigmas.

Bill Gasiamis 48:19
But I feel like the emotional side of it gets left behind. And for me, I think the biggest part of my recovery is, and still is emotional. Because psychological, I've had a lot of help with that. And physical, I had a lot of help with that. But the emotional part of it kind of catches me off guard from time to time.

Bill Gasiamis 48:39
And it usually happens when I'm frustrated from being tired or had a bad night's sleep or overwhelmed because too many things happen in the day. So how are you handling that? Have you seen it catch up to you and cause a little bit of havoc in your life?

Mark 48:59
You know, the emotional side catches up to me. When I think that, you know, poor me actually. Like, I think that's when it catches up with me like, Oh, poor me, I can't go spar or play soccer or whatever. And I'm living this beautiful life and I you know, I'm very blessed. I live a very good life that's not outside of this going on, like, you know, just dealing with life things which I love.

Mark 49:36
You know, that's, that's what it is like, right? Just dealing with issues. And that's when I feel the emotional like, I don't even know how it comes up. But I feel it. It's so weird. It comes from like my stomach. And then it almost comes to my brain. I don't know how to even explain the feeling but it's like it like this, like a sickness that just comes up.

Mark 50:06
You know what I mean? I that's the only thing I could say. Like, maybe if I was regurgitating something, you know what I mean, that feeling of that acid reflux and goes to my brain, then, you know, I start thinking about it, and then it clears.

Bill Gasiamis 50:19
Do you notice it in your chest as well?

Mark 50:23
No it's almost like it just through the digestion track, like up, you know, up to my

brain. And then I go, Are you kidding me? Like you're driving your car, you got everybody? What's wrong with you? And it's almost like I talk myself down from it, you know what I mean? And then it's gone.

Bill Gasiamis 50:42
So it's kind of like, it sounds like it's, again, impacting your identity. It's like, I can't do this, and I can't do that, poor me. And that's kind of impacting the way that your stomach feels, and then the bubble bubbles up and comes out of your mouth and then goes like, it goes away. But it sort of has to happen. And you have to have the experience.

Mark 51:07
I have to go through that whole chain of event for that to get out. And it's just strange how it is. But I mean, that's how it goes.

Bill Gasiamis 51:21
It start in your head is a thinking thing? Starts in your head, and then it goes down to your gut.

Mark 51:29
Wednesday night. I know those fools are throwing three pointers. It's a great game on the court, or it's Thursday night. And I know that, you know, we had a very good indoor soccer team it was always a battle, battle this big Spaniard on Thursday nights. He was a big man. It was fun. It was like, you know, I think of those things.

Mark 51:47
And so that happens, and then all of a sudden, and then, you know, I'm like, Listen, you can't be you know, that's not like just all life is, you know, there's other things, there's dinner, we've got your mom coming over, you fix your mom's watch, you know, Gavin's got wrestling, you know, Jordan, my son, the oldest works for University of Stanford, he's the manager for the medical department for human resources there.

Mark 52:19
So he's got a good job and the kids, you know, they're going through one's going to community college one's a senior one's are fresh. I mean, it's beautiful, those things, right. All that stuff is so wonderful. So that's what I get back to thinking of those things like I'm here doing that I'm present. And then those feelings go

away.

Bill Gasiamis 52:38
Yeah, sounds like you catch yourself doing this other part of you, which is the not so positive part. It's the focusing on the past or focusing on the negatives, and then you catch yourself and you go, Okay, enough of that. We've done that for long enough. Let's move on.

Mark 52:57
No, it's absolutely correct that you say that and because it's so opposite of who I am as a person. Like, I've never been one to hide or whatever, anything. Like it's like, let's move forward. Let's handle it. You know what I mean? It's here, you have the adverse, you know, it's just it's so unique.

Mark 53:21
Right? I let me just get it head on. Like, whatever it is, boom, bring it into my face. But when it's something that you can't do that with which is your mind, your brain is the most beautiful thing that we have in our body. And it to when it's sometimes you know, it'll give you a bad thought or something happens and then all sudden, you're catching yourself.

Mark Sanchez Went Through Depression

Mark 53:50
"Oh, poor me Poor me" I'm not poor me. You can't be poor me, no matter how bad are the circumstances is because it was bad sometimes. You know, for my my mental health, being on the couch couldn't work out. You know, they didn't want my blood pressure over a certain amount.

Mark 54:07
Like here's a man that lives being outside sitting on the couch. This is the honest truth. I'd eat two meals, two ice creams. I thought I was gonna die. Like I didn't think I was gonna make it. So I was eating excessively everything because I'm like, screw it. Like if I'm not going to be on this planet. I'm going to have all the things I love.

Mark 54:30
And I'm going to have it in abundance, you know? And so that's why I'm saying the brain is such a unique thing. You have to be so careful with it. You fall and hit

your head go see somebody if you don't feel right. Go see somebody because we don't know how it works. Go through all these different emotions. You know, no matter what it is.

Bill Gasiamis 54:54
When you're lying on the couch, eating double the ice cream, are you a little bit depressed?

Mark 55:01
I'm not gonna lie to you. I f****** love ice cream excuse my language.

Bill Gasiamis 55:05
It's your favorite ice cream for sure right? Are you a little bit depressed?

Mark 55:10
Severe depression, severe depression, I was very depressed. I didn't, I thought this was what I was going to live, you know, sitting not doing anything. And you know, even though I would be on time to the therapist or whatever, no matter what you're moving or doing your depression you can't hide from it.

Mark 55:37
It consumes you like a blanket, right? It's like, it could wrap you right up. But yeah, I was thinking really bad things. You know, I was thinking about, and also my brain was healing at that point. So like, you still have the nerve endings healing on your brain and the blood vessels connecting to it to get around that dead spot on your brain.

Mark 56:02
So there's a lot of creepy things I would think about, your brain is almost like, you didn't have control of your thoughts at that moment, you know, so that would be depressing. It's like, oh, is this now my existence? I'm thinking all these dirty things. I can't go exercise, they won't leave me here.

Mark 56:23
I mean, I don't like TV much, unless it's sports. In here, I'm watching television eating as much food as I can and not doing anything, and everybody looks at, oh, poor mark, you know, be careful around him. And that kind of stuff. Because, you know, not only am I sitting on the couch, I have my family worried, you know about my existence, too.

Mark 56:45
And I don't like to be coddled too much, you know, and that's hard for me too. And another form of my recovery for this as I need to be coddled a little bit, right. And that's why I'm doing this. And so all that depression really came in, though, you know, seeing my mom's face, seeing me looking how fat I was in the mirror, and I was huge, you know, and, all those things set in.

Mark 57:10
And depression, it's funny now that I never suffered from those things. But now that I understand depression, I have a lot more sympathy for myself and other people. Because you know, what, you can't stop them thoughts. And you have to do something to get out of it. I would do like, took art class or, you know, do whatever I had to change the way I was thinking.

Bill Gasiamis 57:38
Physical activity often helps people relieve some of the depression symptoms or feelings, you know, going out running. So you are really good at doing that, you know, first, the exercise is creating endorphins and all the good neuro chemicals and all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 57:58
And that goes away. When you stop exercising, there's less of a creation of that plus you're dealing from a stroke. So the combined attack on all of Mark is huge. It's like, I'm not getting these dopamine hits anymore, I'm not getting this endorphin rushes in the body.

Bill Gasiamis 58:16
And I'm doing the opposite to what creates well being for Mark, and now I'm lying down, and I'm also healing from the stroke thing. Now it had to happen, like, you couldn't recover any other way. You know, you couldn't go back to being the kind of physical person in that moment that you were before that, because that wasn't going to help you survive.

Bill Gasiamis 58:41
But while you're in it, it's strange. You've got to have the rock bottom, don't you? If you don't get to rock bottom, you can't climb out of it. I got to rock bottom and I had to get there to climb out of it, to look back and go okay, before rock bottom. Life was really good at rock bottom life was really shit.

Bill Gasiamis 59:03
I know what I was doing at rock bottom for life to be shit. Part of it was healing, you know give myself a break for that. But the other parts I was really responsible for I was able to shift rock bottom and climb out of it so that I'm somewhere near where I was, before I had the stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 59:23
And now I've got this real understanding of how much I can influence my body in a positive way. How much I can influence my mental health in a positive way. It doesn't mean that it doesn't catch up with me every once in a while as well. And I don't have shitty thoughts and I'm not terrible to be around. And my wife doesn't think that I'm a bit of an idiot, but I'm always catching myself. So is that relatable? Is that kind of similar to how you felt?

Mark 59:53
Absolutely. I mean, absolutely. Number one. I'm a better mate, lover, friend, businessman, everything if I can exercise, any kind of exercise. So you're right when you say, the exercise is what I would be able to get rid of the depression or other things that I'm dealing with. Because I work hard working out it just makes me a better person.

Mark 1:00:23
So you're right when rock bottom, you have to get there. Like you have to say, you know, I like to say, you're scraping your lip on the concrete. It's like, you know what I'm saying you have to be that low, to be able to start recovering out of it. You know, you have to feel I don't even know what the words to describe how low that feels.

Mark 1:00:56
The emptiness, no imagination, which is crazy, no creativity, no understanding of what's going on or what matters and nothing matters at all. I mean, you have to get to that point. Or else it's, you're never going to go up, you'll never, it's almost like, you think you're there too like when I was going through, I'm like, Oh, they can't get any worse.

Mark 1:01:31
You know what I mean? Because that's why I say scrape your lip on the cement. You think you're there, though, you know, you think you're there and you're not it

goes down. And they say oh, no, you can't even you can only do therapy three times a week, because we're worried about the fusiform aneurysm on your brain. Because remember, I still have an aneurysm on my brain.

Mark 1:01:52
So it was like, Oh, so now what you're saying is I can't get therapy to start walking. Because my heart rates got to be a certain thing. So I had to keep this monitor on me. Thank goodness, I always have a low blood pressure and low heart rate. But then, when I was doing my therapy, I had to have that off.

Mark 1:02:13
Because now you know, they're worried. So I'm like, oh, at least I'm going to therapy? No, we're going to suspend that for a second boom, and you go even lower. So there's actually levels do you think you're at it? You may be at it. And then when you're scraping your lip on the concrete, you know, you're at it. You know, you know you're at it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:35
Yeah. Jim Carrey, the famous actor said, you know, in one of these things that I saw online, and he says that depression is deep, is a time for the body to do deep rest. And what it's saying is like, you're in a situation where, and maybe for him, it's coming from experience, I don't know, I don't know his story.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:58
And this is you're coming from a place where your body's telling you like, I don't want to be doing this shit anymore. Like I've had enough with this version of what's going on. And the only thing you can do is you have to shift it and change it to get something different.

Physical Activity

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:15
And what I like about physical exercise, it doesn't matter what kind you do, it doesn't matter if you're in a wheelchair, it doesn't matter if you're hemiplegic, like just any kind of form of physical exercise. I've interviewed people who are hemiplegic who are power lifters, who are only lifting with one side of their body.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:31
And one side of their bodies really jacked and the other side of their bodies completely not existent, atrophy, you know, no muscle, nothing. So, what seems to be the case for me and now for me to understand about some other people who are physically active.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:55
Is that the physical activity kind of does the opposite of keeping you in depression from the point of view of it does the fight or flight response and it gets you going away from the issue the scary thing, the problem so running is one of our natural instincts, right? something scary happens you go out and you run and you run away from the thing that's behind you trying to get your or impacting negatively.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:26
And this exercise or sports seems to mimic this for humans who normally sit dentary We don't do much we sit in the car, we drive to work we sit at our desk, we sit at our office we sit at our table to eat you know we sit on the couch and watch TV and sports seems to mimic this running away from problems from time to time while increasing the heart rate, while spiking cortisol a little bit, while spiking dopamine and releasing endorphins and doing all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:02
So it seems to be and then circulating the blood and circulating the fluid around the head and then circulating all the stuff around the body. So it seems like that's what sport is really good at doing. And it's a real great way to shift those feelings of depression and deep rest, as Jim Carrey likes to talk about it. Do you feel like your golfing is a good replacement for the stuff that you're doing? Because it's probably also competitive, and it's helping you still remain competitive.

Mark 1:05:38
It is, I think running because I can still run pretty good. You know, it's funny, because I would never really post these things on Facebook or Instagram. But, you know, I ran to the coolest cities in the world, like I would be in Greece and run into towns and like, I did this after the stroke.

Mark 1:05:58
But I've ran all over the world, from Korea to Central America. And I started posting these things on Instagram and Facebook, or that I ran like in Italy, in Greece, and it'd be every once a while, or I'm running here, but I don't think people understood the reason why I was posting those things is like one that I recovered from a stroke, because it was a way for me to like, you know, do it.

Mark 1:06:23
And no one knows that actually, to be honest with you. But, you know, those are the things I was posting it and the other day, my friend at the gym. Fernando says you know what Mark, he should keep posting those things. Those are really cool things that you're posting, you know, get you motivated to go do something.

Mark 1:06:44
And I didn't even realize it, but that I was trying to in a way tell people like I've, I'm having an issue. I'm posting these not family pictures or vacations, I'm posting the running, you know, saying a few things and running. And that helps me the mark more than golf, I still love it because I need the competition of golf.

Mark 1:07:10
When I run, I try to pass people up on the road, like they don't even know I'm playing a game. And they don't even know they're in my game. You know, I ride a bike, like because I'll ride bikes for long ways and stuff. They don't even know that they're part of my game, you know what I'm saying?

Mark 1:07:25
But my mind is playing the game. Because I have to exactly what you're saying, like, you know, I have to play these mental games. For me to feel like I'm competing in something. Because I'm you know, always been the competitive person in your eye no matter what golf running in you, there's a lot of other things I still do.

Mark 1:07:50
But it doesn't compete with getting punched in the face, or playing basketball, you know, playing with the boys or playing soccer, you know, getting kicked in the stomach and the shin. I know that sounds barbaric, but it's necessary for people that are in a physical competition type nature.

Mark 1:08:10
And then that's why people have such a hard time retiring athletes and whatever they understand that that level that they're at will never be the same. They'll never be at that level again.

Mark 1:08:22
And recovery is the same thing. Except for now my level is people don't even know that they're running against me and I'm running or riding a bike against people. And definitely thank God I belong to a men's club in golf. And that competition is big for me. I don't like to lose, you know. But yeah, it's not physical.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:41
How good are those strangers helping you beat them? And they didn't even know that you just beat them and you just ran past them and you're faster than them and you're quicker than them.

Mark 1:08:53
And you know, what's funny is they kind of after a while you kind of know when you're working somebody you know you're on the trail and you're working them and you're catching up to them, you catching up to him. And then you got them and you know, and then you go by them.

Mark 1:09:07
There's so necessary. They're beautiful people, they're beautiful. You know, they're to me, it's just part of life like Suad Divi live life. You know what I mean?

That, that and they don't even know they're in the game, you know, they don't even know that. You just beat them, you know? And you keep on going and hopefully they see you on the way back that type of thing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:30
I love it. I interviewed Juan Gonzalez on episode 163. And he on Instagram calls himself the Central Park Runner. And he had a stroke 11 years ago when he was 21 or something. And that's what he does. He found running and he just runs he runs around Central Park and he posts all of his runs and he does half marathons and marathons and he does way to running as far as I'm concerned but he loves it you know.

Mark 1:10:00
I got to meet him in Central Park some time because I run there quite a bit. I go to New York quite a bit, that would be a cool thing to do.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:08
Yeah. And he's involved in a running group or something like that, where they have destinations where they run to, or they start from or something like that. So I'll send you his link for his episode, so you can have a listen to it. But he is a really cool guy. And he gets a lot out of physical exercise and sport, and what you said, like, it is barbaric, the stuff that you did, and you do, it's barbaric.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:35
That doesn't mean you're not a nice guy, and you don't have a heart and you're not, you know, sensitive from time to time. But damn man, it is barbaric. I mean, for somebody to be able to put themselves through so much pain and suffering and enjoy it. I mean, that's real bizarre, to I often think about what, and you don't have to explain it, and it's okay.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:57
And I'm not saying you need to explain it. But I often picture myself getting into a ring, knowing that I'm actually going to get hit and be okay with getting hit. Man that just, I can't grasp that concept. My son does a little bit of jujitsu.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:14
And I know a lot of people that do jujitsu and all that kind of stuff. And I'm like, how do you walk into the ring, knowing that you're going to get hit, and you're okay with that? like, I appreciate it a lot.

Mark 1:11:30
It’s a beautiful thing, because really, it’s just like anything else in life is like, once you do it, and you’re done it. So I always besides the ring, or whatever your brain never forgets, right? That’s the most important thing. It’s like, you know, he you do it one time you get used to it, you get in the ring.

Mark 1:11:50
And then it’s like a normal passage, you know, you spar with somebody one time, it’s like normal. You know, when you know that you could run three miles finally your brain, oh, you ran it, it’s like easy to run three miles. It’s like we condition ourselves just like anybody else. It has nothing to do that somebody is tougher than the other person.

Mark 1:12:11
Because it’s not, there’s a lot of fear going inside there. Right? It’s just managing your fears. But it’s the conditioning. It’s like repetition. Like, you know, when you touch this, I’m touching this 1000 times, I’m going to be fluid, you know, doing it, but once I’ve done it once, I know I could do it again.

Mark 1:12:30
And I think that’s kind of what what happens, you know, in it. And you know, I did it more as training more than into the fight game. Like those people are very special people to get in there and have the whole arena see you. And you know, I’m nowhere near anything like that. Mine has always been a lifelong just keeping myself in shape.

Mark 1:12:51
Something that happens to me or my family. You know what I mean? I’m going to do the best in that moment type of situation. My dad was technical advisor of the San Francisco Wing Chun kung fu team for many years. I’ve had many hold pads hit, you know, all those things, but not a true fighter. You know, just somebody that I did it just like running or playing basketball or whatever.

Mark 1:13:17
It’s just something that I do to keep myself healthy. So your son like mine, Gavin, the youngest. He’s in jujitsu and wrestling. And it’s just like any kind of other sport that you play that’s, you know, a pitcher against the batter. You know what I mean? A shooter against the defender, or even in basketball, once you’ve done it a

few times, you're going to get used to doing it, and you're going to be able to do it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:44
Yeah. Does all of the training that you did up until your stroke has it actually been somebody that you drawn on to help you in your recovery?

Recovery Team

Mark 1:14:00
Yeah, everything that I've ever done in my life helped me in the recovery. You know, really, I couldn't be very pinpointed of one thing, one I had Christina when Christina of John Muir hospital, the therapist that took care of me, she saved my life. And she won't say that, but she did.

Mark 1:14:20
She you know, we I couldn't even tap my foot on a color. Like they would have like five colors in front of you. And they say, okay, take your right foot and tap it on yellow, I couldn't do it. I just couldn't do it. Or they say tap your foot. And I would slide it, you know, is those type of things.

Mark 1:14:39
And I think she was the main focus of my recovery in the aspect that she had confidence in me at that moment, even when I was at my weakest point. You know what I mean? And I think that was majorly more than any of the other things because those just became physical things and I've always been able to be physical. You know, it was more that somebody was at that moment when I couldn't touch my toe, and then my business partner, Joe, he was there at my therapy sessions too.

Mark 1:15:12
You know, I love those two people. And I couldn't tap the color with my foot, knowing that says, No, don't worry, we'll get it at least you're lifting, you're walking, you're moving, you're not tapping, but you're walking, you're not tapping, but you're moving, you're not tapping, but you lift yourself up, you know, that there, I think, was more critical, because I knew somebody that understood what I was going through, had my back.

Mark 1:15:40

And so I think I focus more of that aspect of for when I like, when I'm down or whatever, for recovery, then all the physical nature's I've just been, you know, I've really been working out my whole life. So my body's in physically good shape. And so I'm used to like training and running and all those things.

Mark 1:16:01
So I think it was more that aspect, that one on one touch that knowing somebody was there for you was more to my recovery than any of my physical nature, you know, the in I in, and that's hard for me to say, as a man, that it was the kindness of a physical trainer who's tough, I'm not saying that.

Mark 1:16:23
But she had the right words, was the right person at the right moment, almost, you know, I mean, it's who I needed at that moment. And I think I attribute more to my recovery to that moment, and her knowing that at my most vulnerable point, someone believed in me, you know, I mean, I'm going to be alright, it's gonna work out one way or another. I may not tap it, it may be a year before I tap that orange, but I will do it. You know, I think that aspect of it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:52
Yeah, we need other people in recovery. You can't do it alone. You need people for sure. How did you meet Christina Deville, what's the connection there?

Mark 1:17:02
We were friends, my wife and her are friends. All of us were friends way back. We didn't spend very much time together. But I've known her I've always known her. And she, by the way, a wonderful person. And so Lisa, a friend of hers, that's very close, you know, I was on my couch, getting ready to go to the gym.

Mark 1:17:28
And she said, you know, Christina had a major stroke, and she's in the hospital, do you think you could reach out and I said, Of course I could. You know, and so I just started texting her, you know, one, we known each other, but we haven't seen each other, which is interesting.

Mark 1:17:45
When I go to Vegas, next time, I got to meet up with her because, you know, I've been texting with her since she's been in the hospital until the other day and let her know that I was doing your show and that I was thankful and that she helped

me to do this, because I saw how brave she was to get on here, and do you know, this pod cast that you have, and I think it's the most amazing, you know, that you have going on here because helping people is major in this.

Mark 1:18:14
And so we just would text back and forth and we have there's a lot of things that you need somebody else that's kind of been through it help, because no one understands no one's the psychological. The physical nature, you know, is your family just wants the best for you. So they say certain things, but they don't really understand what's happening.

Mark 1:18:42
There's times where, you know, I'm like, I don't know if I could do this and, I have to admit at the time my girlfriend Danielle, she was very pivotal as a different person that I am with now, in my recovery. She helped out quite a bit and how I decided to reach out to one of her friends had a stroke and reached out to me at the time, I didn't really take advantage as much as that I should have at that time.

Mark 1:19:14
His name was Wyatt. He's actually does the I forget what foundation he's with with stroke. But anyways, he reached out to me and so I reached out to Christina. And when I reached out to Christina, you know, we would go back and forth and we are friendly enough to talk about intimate things and not intimate things because it's it's difficult, like you know, and I'm so proud of her of what she's doing because, you know, one, she's always been in is a beautiful person.

Mark 1:19:48
And you know, seeing her fight the fight with, the difficulties and setbacks that you get from what you're doing is amazing. And so, you know, we just would be, you know, the last, I guess a little bit over a year now we've been texting back and forth and you know what, it's shame on me because the next time I'm in Vegas, I got to see her.

Mark 1:20:14
But, you know, it's really nice to see that she's flourishing in the way that she is, you know, with life and physical and, and don't want to get too much into her life story, because she could speak it better than I but it's really amazing to see what she's gone through where she's come from.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:37
Yeah, she's had a big change in her life as well, you know, obviously, the stroke was a big part of that. But then, in her mindset, and what, you know, she said, what you've said, and what most stroke survivors who I interview says, you know, don't take life for granted now, she is grateful and she's looking for solutions.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:59
And she's fighting the fight and doing all these things. And, you know, she's just going for it. And it's a very common theme, this line in the moment line in the sand moment that happens to us all, and then we're looking for a way to make meaning of our life, and we're looking for a way to you know, write the wrongs, at least for me, I'm speaking for myself, that's a lot of what I did was try to find a way to right the wrongs.

Bill Gasiamis 1:21:30
So that if I did have another one, or whatever, and it wasn't around, that, at least the people who really needed to know that I love them, or really needed to know, you know, that, you know, they're okay. I'm also okay, and maybe they needed an apology from me for stuff that I'd done. Whatever, all that stuff was done and ticked off before I got into brain surgery, you know, three years, almost three years after the first brain bleed.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:01
So that if I didn't wake up, you know, most of the important things were done, and then at least that part of it didn't have to be on their mind, you know, that things weren't good, or we never sorted things out, or he was angry at me or I was angry at him, you know?

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:24
So I think Christina has really pushed herself to evolve. And she came on to the podcast, she made it happen, she pushed herself to do it. Because she felt like it was a really important thing for her to do for her recovery. And it's strange how my podcast is the first place you came to, to talk about it to this extent, and now your family's gonna hear it. Like, what are they gonna think when they hear about it?

Mark 1:22:56
Yeah, I don't know what they're gonna think. I think my mom will be a little sad.

Like mom's will be, you know, she always unfortunately, she's always so worried. You know, because, the fusiform aneurism. It's a mother's thing, but I think it'll be interesting for them to see, I like to see I'm gonna see the reaction for sure. I don't know.

Mark 1:23:23
But, you know, coming on to here is really important. I know that I've been holding back on a few things like, in my life, in the aspect of recovery, cuz I don't talk about it, because I don't want to worry the people around me about what happened, you know, it's like, I don't want them to think, oh, it's gonna happen again.

Mark 1:23:46
And, you know, with the aneurysm he could go, which is true, but, you know, I think it's so important now that I've done this, like, I feel it's weird. I feel better. Yeah. And, I know, it sounds strange, but I think only people that understand that as stroke victims, we sometimes get locked in our own brain.

Mark 1:24:09
And being able to just be as free about what's happened to me or what's going on. Just makes you feel better. You know, it's the thing about, you know, having a counselor or somebody that's, you know, a therapist or whatever, you're able to say these things that most times that you're locked up on your brain, you can't say it to anybody else. It's just your own thought.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:37
Yeah. I think the thing about parents worrying and people around us worrying, they're gonna worry anyway, even if you're not telling them the truth, even if you're hiding it, because they know that something's going on regardless. I feel like it's better to educate people on what's going on and risk worrying them.

Educating People About Stroke

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:57
And what that does is that empowers them if they want to find They have more information about what's going on with your aneurism, and they can Google it, they can understand that majority of the time it's benign, it's just sitting there, and it's not going to do anything.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25:10
And that you're on top of it, because you're getting checked out. And you're noticing that it's not shifting, changing, moving. So if it's a problem, it's a problem in the future, it's not a problem now. What you can do right now is, right now as you can live life, and pay attention to your symptoms, your science, do the follow up checks, and be proactive about your health and well being.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25:32
And then that is an empowering place to be, it's not this thing that's just in there, that you're doing nothing about, you didn't start smoking, you didn't start drinking excessively, you know, you didn't do any of that stuff, what you're doing is, you're just aware of an issue. It's like, you know, it's like, lots of issues that people have, it's life.

Mark 1:25:52
It is, I figure I just had a ankle reconstruction surgery it's just like that, you know, it's just an issue. It's just, it's there. Now, it's fixed, it's good, you know, or it's better than it was. So, I do agree with you on that. And, you know, I've always been pretty upfront with my family of like, what's going on, because they always asked me what you know, what's going on, I say, Oh, I went to the doctor six months, everything's good, looks good.

Mark 1:26:21
You know, they all know that aspect of it. And I think, you know, with time a little bit it's a lot easier for them too, you know, because once you start forgetting about and they start seeing you as just a normal, you know, Uncle Mark, or mark, you know, they see yours and they see geez, the guys doing good. And they start forgetting about it.

Mark 1:26:43
Which is even better. But you know, it's important. One thing for sure that nothing is guaranteed. And this, like I said, a blessing and a curse. Going through this whole aspect has made me a better person. In some in some regards, and better to myself, not just better to others, because I've always thought I was a very good person to others, but better to myself.

Mark 1:27:15
And slowing yourself down, just like you said, you know, talking to your family,

being proactive, you know, and living a beautiful life that I get to live. You know, I know the world right now is, you know, seems like it's chaotic. And there's a lot going on, and economic and COVID and things like that.

Mark 1:27:36
But you know, it's funny with people like us, I feel like we don't worry about those things as much. Because we're just so happy that we had the possibility of being taken away. We've been on the couch, we said we're not going to recover. We've said all these things. So when we do see these things that are happening, I promise you it hasn't affected me.

Mark 1:27:59
And I know it's bad, hasn't affected me as much as it affects everybody else. Because one not life isn't guaranteed. And two if you're here and you're breathing, you better enjoy as much time as possible, or work or do whatever that you plan to do. Because you may pass anyways, besides the COVID.

Bill Gasiamis 1:28:20
That's it, I feel like you're done. What you're doing is you're narrowing the focus, you know, we could all have a global view, but who needs a global view? 150 years ago, you didn't know what happened beyond your suburb, or, or your town or whatever it was called, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:28:39
And if you did find out what happened in the other town, it was two weeks later, or it was 10 days later, and it didn't really matter because it was already past and gone. Whereas now we have news feeds my news feed if I sit and watch it, it's a little bit about what happened in my town.

Bill Gasiamis 1:28:56
And then it's a lot about what happened in the town 1000 kilometres away, or 2000 kilometres away on the other side of the Atlantic. And I didn't need to know really what happened in New York, I don't care what happened in New York. Now I'm empathetic, you know, I don't want people to suffer anywhere but people are going to be suffering somewhere and shits going to be going down somewhere.

Bill Gasiamis 1:29:18
But if I narrow my view, then I didn't have to take on all of that stress and anxiety from everything else that's going on in the planet because the news system is

designed to keep us stressed and anxious so that we can keep watching and they've got endless supply of stressful and anxious things that they can make us watch.

Bill Gasiamis 1:29:38
All they got to do is get onto somebody's you know, iPhone camera and ask them for the video of that thing that they captured on the video. So I feel like what's happening for you is you're narrowing your focus. You've come back the four walls that you live in, the ones that are outside of your direct home which is your family and friends, and your children.

Bill Gasiamis 1:30:01
And your experience that you're having at the cafe right now, or on the podcast right now. And it's not about what's going to happen in the future. And it's not about what happened in the past. And that is a really great way to experience a really rich life and also not be affected by what's what's being blasted, then our phones, our TV cameras, our monitors, and the rest of it.

Mark 1:30:26
And going back to that, you said, really a major point, you know, when you have depression, like we've gone through depression, and then you add this news media and things to depression, it really locks you into a world that you shouldn't be in.

Mark 1:30:46
Because you have all those multiple, I don't watch the news anymore. Really, I just watched the Japanese news station, they have great sumo wrestling on there. But anyways, they just say the news, you know, there's no story behind it. But you know, when you're getting fed all these things, and you know, and like I said, I've scraped my lip on the cement, I understand that feeling.

Mark 1:31:13
When they're trying to feed me these things, I don't recognize them. You know, I know that it's happening. And I'm understanding and I'll be, you know, respectful for whatever way you want me to go. Mask unmask or whatever it is, I'll take care of it. But no, that's not my main focus in not being physical limit, my main focus is just to enjoy, you know, the last minute that just went by or 20 minutes.

Mark 1:31:42

And not to have foresight, you have to have foresight, and you have to see your history too, you know, but living in the moment is the most important part, when you live too far into the future. You're not anything but a dreamer. If you live too far in the past, you're not just anything but history, you know, it doesn't work that way.

Mark 1:32:01
You have have hindsight for the future, but yet live in that moment. It's the only moment that counts. Because all that's already in the past, and this hasn't even happened yet. So if you're not in that stage in that area of yourself, then you know, you have problems. And let me tell you I was with depression, it puts you magically in the back of your history, and you're not that same person in history, you know, you're a different person, hopefully, you've evolved a little bit.

Mark 1:32:34
And then you know, the depression also puts you so far forward, and you're worried about what's going to happen. I don't know if that's going to happen. If it does, what are we going to do it. So now I hear you're worried about so many things that make no sense to where you are at right now, which is present.

Mark 1:32:52
And I really think that's why I say this, what happened to me is a gift and a curse. Because now I understand that, you know, I understand you have to know what the history is. So you don't make the same mistakes. And you have to have foresight, you know, the the future. But living here is the most important thing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:33:16
Great. On that note, thank you for reaching out, thank you for doing what you did to put yourself out there and talk about this thing for the first time in depth. And I think what it's going to do is encourage other people who have had a stroke to do the same thing who might be listening now.

Bill Gasiamis 1:33:35
And you know, it felt a little bit maybe like, I'd love to be on the podcast, but maybe it's not my time yet. Maybe they're thinking now is their time. So if you are one of those people reach out, and let me know, the only thing you have to do to get on the podcast is have had a stroke. That's it.

Mark 1:33:56

Pretty simple, right?

Bill Gasiamis 1:33:58
That's the only thing that you have to have done. So if you're listening to this, you'd probably have done that. And even if you're a caregiver of somebody who's had a stroke, and you want to share your story, and you want to get that off your chest, then you're so qualified to be on the podcast, so please feel free to reach out. Mark, thanks so much for being on the podcast. I really appreciate it.

Mark 1:34:18
Thank you for having me. Thank you very much.

Bill Gasiamis 1:34:23
Well, thanks for joining me on today's episode. I hope you've enjoyed it. Just after the interview ended with Mark, I had some additional time to chat with him. And he shared something that was really important to him and I feel like it was worth sharing with you because it may make a difference in your recovery. So I was glad to still be recording to capture the comments that Mark made. So listen on for a little longer as Mark shares one of his very deep desires.

Emotional Difficulties of Mark Sanchez

Mark 1:34:59
I forgot I mentioned this but you know, I haven't cried in a long time. I don't know what it is that I can't cry. I was in the military. And so, you know, there's a lot of things that you don't just compartmentalize stuff.

Mark 1:35:14
But I felt like this would be I forgot to say this, but this would be helpful for me to walk, like, I want to cry sometimes, like when my son got his job at Stanford just recently, I wanted to cry and be so happy.

Mark 1:35:31
But I couldn't get it out, you know, and I felt like, you know what, this is something that might help me to get forward. And I really appreciate you I thank you very much.

Bill Gasiamis 1:35:43
You can come on, let me know when you've cried man, you can let me know what

that was like. Because I imagine it is going to happen at some point.

Mark 1:35:50
I hope so. I'm not kidding you. I hope so. And I would love to come on and tell you about it. You know, I tell my poor Margarita all the time. I say I can't cry, I want to cry. Really cry not just tear. Like just, you know. Let it out. You know what I mean?

Bill Gasiamis 1:36:10
Sounds like it's gonna be a big relief to you feels like you're talking about it going to help you cleanse and be relieved in some way?

Mark 1:36:18
Yeah, definitely.

Bill Gasiamis 1:36:22
Do you ever wish there was just one place to go for resources, advice and support in your stroke recovery? Whether you've been navigating your journey for weeks, months or years, I know firsthand how difficult it can be to get the answers you need. This road is both physically and mentally challenging from reclaiming your independence to getting back to work, to rebuilding your confidence and more.

Bill Gasiamis 1:36:44
The symptoms don't follow rulebook, and as soon as you leave hospital, you no longer have medical professionals on top. And for me, it felt as if I was teaching myself a new language from scratch with no native speaker inside. This sounds like you I'm here to tell you you're not alone.

Bill Gasiamis 1:37:01
And there is a better way to navigate your recovery and build a fulfilling life that you love. I've created an inclusive, supportive and accessible membership community called recovery after stroke. It's all in one support and resource program is designed to help you take your health into your own hands.

Bill Gasiamis 1:37:22
This is your guide book through every step in your journey from reducing fatigue to strengthening your brain health, to overcoming anxiety and more. To find out more and to join the community just head to recoveryafterstroke.com Thanks for listening and see you on the next episode.

Intro 1:37:39
Importantly, we present many podcasts designed to give you an insight and understanding into the experiences of other individuals. The opinions and treatment protocols discussed during any podcast are the individual's own experience and we did not necessarily share the same opinion nor do we recommend any treatment protocol discussed.

Intro 1:37:56
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Intro 1:38:13
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Intro 1:38:34
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Intro 1:38:58
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