

Heart Memory And Stroke - Michael A Petersen

Michael Andrew Petersen experienced a hemorrhagic stroke due to a vertebral artery dissection and struggled with Memories after the stroke. His doctors are amazed that he is doing so well and not experiencing physical deficits that some other people with conditions similar to his experience.

Instagram

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Transcription:

Michael Andrew Petersen 0:00

It's been, you know, almost 11 months, but it's been the recovery, for me at least has been, and I know my wife's gonna cringe and my daughters are gonna cringe when they hear me say this, but it's been really lonely, It's been the loneliest time of my life.

Michael Andrew Petersen 0:17

And I don't know if that's common even in rehab, hospital and day rehab. I've been surrounded with other people that have been going through the same damn thing, but it's a lonely process.

Intro 0:34

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

Introduction - Michael Andrew Petersen



Bill Gasiamis 0:47

Hello, and welcome once again to the recovery after stroke podcast. This is Bill Gasiamis. And this is episode 240. And my guest today is Michael A. Peterson who experienced a stroke due to a vertebral artery dissection, amongst other things that incident impacted Michael's ability to access his memories, and also made him a little more emotional. Michael A. Peterson, welcome to the podcast.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:16

Thank you very much. Thanks for having me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18

Absolute pleasure. Tell me a little bit about what happened to you, Michael.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:23

Well, I did something tonight Bill that I probably wouldn't recommend. But in preparation for this, I went back through now that all medical records in the United States are largely digital. I went back and I read through the first couple days of being at the ICU, which scared the living hell out of me.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:52

So why was I in the ICU? On September 12, it was a Sunday night. You know, kind of not unusual. We had neighbors over and bunch of little kids running around our house, both of my girls are now in college. So they were off at university and my wife and I had a nice dinner with family and friends. And, you know, I distinctly remember sitting over right over there by my fireplace with one

of my young neighbors and playing with a set of Lincoln logs that I played with as a little kid.

Michael Andrew Petersen - Memory Loss After The Stroke

Michael Andrew Petersen 2:28

And I remember having like a dull headache all day. But I didn't think anything of it. You know, it didn't impede the night too much. And then my wife and I were just camped out on the couch watching Netflix. And she went upstairs to change. And she said all of a sudden, she heard a noise and she yelled at me. Like I had stumbled into something and stumbled into a shelf and knock something down.

Michael Andrew Petersen 3:01

And I didn't answer her which she thought was odd. And she knew something was off. And she came right down. And I was standing in my kitchen kind of leaned over my sink, like I was going to be sick. And she said are you alright? I looked at her and she said, all you told me was to call an ambulance that I needed to go to the hospital.

Michael Andrew Petersen 3:30

And I've listened to enough of the podcasts that you've done and others have done to know that it's not so strange, but I have very little memory of that first month, like almost none, which is another reason I found it so intriguing to read through the medical notes. So my wife called the ambulance I'm standing in the kitchen. The people on the 911 tell her to get me down to the ground.

Michael Andrew Petersen 4:03

They said the worst thing that can happen to your husband is having a fall. They suspected a stroke right off the bat. And they said get him to the ground and wait for the ambulance. So the drivers got here and you know, they got me into a pulled up right into my driveway got me into the ambulance. And no sooner did I get into the ambulance and you know, all that blood that was on my brain told my heart to stop.

Michael Andrew Petersen 4:39

So I went into cardiac arrest. I just read the reports. Like it's really detailed Bill,

it's crazy, like how many compressions and you know for how long and it's it's scary. So I went into cardiac arrest about three different times. Once in my driveway, once at the hospital, and then once when they were taking me to the stroke center.

Bill Gasiamis 5:05

It looks like you're getting a little bit emotional reliving this.

Michael Andrew Petersen 5:15

Yeah, it was pretty emotional. I mean, I couldn't help but I literally I had just listened to I think your episode 100 that you did with your wife. And I mean it brought a lot of it back to me and I just I mean that episode for me it was very special and I made my wife listen to it as well, because I haven't been able to thank her. Because she did everything right. She did everything right.

Michael Andrew Petersen 5:51

And I just I can't imagine her having to try to resuscitate me on the on the kitchen floor for God's sake. You know, like I just, I'm so glad that she took it seriously enough. She called the ambulance she got the professionals here. Because I mean. Not a lot of people can say this about their spouse, but I can honestly say that I owe my life to my wife. She literally saved my life.

Bill Gasiamis 6:20

Yeah, yeah, you know, you are still there to argue with her though, right? So she did save your life. And arguments that happened in the future are still legit, they're still okay to do. And she's from time to time. She's allowed to be, you're allowed to call her out when she's wrong. Because doesn't matter that she saved your life. Sometimes she can still be wrong as all spouses can. And I struggled for a little bit of time after I took her down.

Bill Gasiamis 6:54

I had to take my wife down from the pedestal a little bit as well. Yeah. And we had to get back into the routine of being married and normal and all that kind of stuff. And part of that was to argue about the stupid things. And part of it was to argue about all those things that we say it's insignificant. I know, I don't know why I should have I why we argued about that. But they're important because they get you to they get you too.

Bill Gasiamis 7:25

It's part of communication. It's a part that we don't prefer if we stay there, it's not nice. But we do we do have to have arguments without our significant others in our spouses. Right. So she did do the right thing.

Bill Gasiamis 7:40

She's nailed it as far as all of the all of the things that you would hope that somebody gets to experience during an illness is that they get to experience the clear mindedness, the rationality, the action taking of the person that's opposite them or near them or wherever.

Bill Gasiamis 8:02

And some people don't know how to respond, because I, I know that for a long time, I was downplaying all my issues. And because I appeared well, and I did a lot of downplaying of it. It did make my wife second guessed some of the things that she was feeling instinctively, but it doesn't sound like you had any opportunity to downplay anything.

Bill Gasiamis 8:24

Was there any lead up to that event? Did you notice anything coming up to that event? That you now on reflection, go wow, that was probably it.

Michael Andrew Petersen 8:38

Not necessarily, you know, like, it's, it's really strange, like, outside of the fact that I did have, you know, I don't suffer from headaches, I never have, maybe as a little kid or whatever, I'm sure. You know, I think I remembered something or other but but not as an adult. So it was unusual to have this trailing headache for three, four days. And I kind of blamed it on you know, I very rarely, very rarely go out in the middle of the week for a beer or whatever.

Michael Andrew Petersen 9:10

And I I'd gone out on a Wednesday night with some buddies and did this microbrewery and had a beer too. And I just remember thinking, gosh, you know, like, I'm not doing that again, because that I just can't shake this headache from that. And meanwhile, you know, like, I didn't realize, you know, like, I had a dissected artery, you know, that was, you know, you know, pushing blood into my brain, you know, for round about three, four or five days.

Michael Andrew Petersen 9:46

So, you know, it's, I don't really recall. And I think that I think at least from what

I've heard, and a lot of other people recounting stories is that that a lot of my memory memory issues stem from even the time like once that, that blood starts getting into your brain, it's it's, it's doing things that you don't realize, and it's clouding that. But I spent a little over two weeks at the local hospital, the ICU. And I mean, I'm a, I'm a visual person.

Michael Andrew Petersen 10:27

That's what I do for a profession. My at the rehab hospital, I could I could sketch you, Bill, I could sketch you in intricate detail my room, and I could point out details that you wouldn't believe. I don't remember one thing about the room at the ICU.

Bill Gasiamis 10:46

Just a quick break and we'll be right back to the interview. As a stroke survivor, I understand the difficulties of finding the right information about post stroke nutrition. That's why I developed a course by foods to avoid after stroke. While most people are talking about what to eat after a stroke to support brain health, and recovery, very few are talking about what you should avoid eating after a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 11:09

If you want to support your brain to heal, curious about the five foods that may make matters worse when you consume them, then you may benefit from this course. In the fun five series of interviews, you'll hear about what foods not to eat after a stroke. But most importantly, why not.

Bill Gasiamis 11:27

From a qualified nutritionist Stacy Turner and performance coach Mathias Turner. In the more than five hours of interviews, we discuss the five common foods that cause inflammation in the body and brain and how they could interfere with healing and how they may make fatigue worse, for just \$49.

Bill Gasiamis 11:46

This five-part series have more than five hours of interviews with full PDF transcripts for download. mp3 is for download, and videos will give you everything that you need to know about the five foods to avoid and why the modules include eight reasons to quit sugar after a stroke. seven reasons to quit caffeine after a stroke, eight reasons to quit gluten after a stroke, six reasons to

quit dairy after a stroke, and six reasons to quit alcohol after a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 12:18

And probably that is one of the most important things that you have to and should quit after a stroke. It's interfering with your recovery, visit [recovery after stroke.com/courses](https://recoveryafterstroke.com/courses). For this and other specifically designed short and easy-to-understand courses that are made by a stroke survivor for stroke survivors.

Bill Gasiamis 12:39

Once again, you'll get more than five hours of content, all audio is available to download in mp3 format for listening on the go full transcript of all the content to take notes on or read instead of listen to presented by a stroke survivor four stroke survivors. also presented by a trained nutritionist and performance coach, you will also get 24 hours of access, lifetime access to courses purchased. And you'll be able to interact with yours truly, in the comments section.

Bill Gasiamis 13:11

Go to [recovery after stroke.com/courses](https://recoveryafterstroke.com/courses) to check them out now.

Michael Andrew Petersen 13:16

Not I couldn't tell you one day I couldn't tell you if the walls were white. Like I have no idea. I wouldn't I wouldn't be able to tell you give you one detail about any of it. Yeah. Which is amazing to me. Like it's it's kind of strange to me. But

Bill Gasiamis 13:34

I relate to a lot of the people who I speak to about stroke. It's kind of like a out of world experience. It's you're in the world, but you're not in the world. It's kind of like zoned out should be kind of experienced. That's how I I felt. And there wasn't a lot of things that made sense until people explained them to me later.

Bill Gasiamis 13:55

And now I think I have a memory of their explanation rather than the actual memory of being there. And it's not uncommon because there's the brains in just a completely different phase or space or it's operating under duress. There's a whole bunch of different things going on. So how long did you end up spending in hospital?

Michael Andrew Petersen 14:21

So I was you know, it's interesting I've been, I've been I've been telling the story

wrong for and it's it's probably it's a I'm sure my wife will will pinpoint all of the inaccuracies for me when she listens to this. But I found out tonight that I thought I was in the ICU for about three weeks and it was it only turned out to be a little over two weeks. Because I was able to look at the dates in which I was there and then I was immediately transferred.

Michael Andrew Petersen 14:53

I don't really start to make memories until I was in a like a little meta taxi and I live outside of Chicago in Evanston, so just north, and I was fortunate enough to do my rehab at at surely Ryan ability Lab, which is kind of becoming a renowned Rehabilitation Hospital in the in the Chicagoland area. So I was fortunate enough to be able to, to, to get a place there. And my wife worked really hard to get me in.

Michael Andrew Petersen 15:24

But I don't really start to form memories until I was in this little meta taxi that they took me into get me from, you know, north of Chicago down into the city of Chicago. And the guy was such a terrible driver that I was just like, and I'm in the middle of this little, you know, van on a gurney and getting thrown around.

Michael Andrew Petersen 15:45

And I'm like, I don't know, I don't know where the hell I'm at. I don't know, what am I doing in this thing? I don't know where I'm going. I don't have anybody to ask because I'm by myself. And but I can see, you know, like I've run these lakefront paths my entire life, and I know exactly where I'm at.

Michael Andrew Petersen 15:45

And I know I'm going downtown. I just don't know why. And then the strangest thing was, is I, I don't know where the hell I'm at. And I don't know why I'm in there. But I know that I don't have much sensation in my legs. And that scared the hell out of me.

Bill Gasiamis 16:25

You need to be there, you're going somewhere where it's necessary for you to go. But you don't know why or how or what, you know, details around the budget kind of going with the flow of this drive, ya know much about?

Michael Andrew Petersen 16:40

Well, and then, you know, because of the pandemic or the COVID protocols, my

wife had to be able to test into the hospital. So she had to go through testing before they would let her go in. So that first day, I showed up at the rehabilitation hospital.

Michael Andrew Petersen 16:57

And there was nobody there to tell me what the hell had happened. I didn't realize like, until the, it took a two or three days of me, you know, because I had to take it in slowly. But I just I like over the course of the next three, four days, my wife had to tell me everything that happened.

Michael Andrew Petersen 17:24

And she had to tell me all that it had gone on. You know, I mean from, you know, the stroke, to go into the hospital, the cardiac arrests to the, you know, all of it.

What Is A Vertebral Artery Dissection?

Bill Gasiamis 17:40

You know, what I just what's rare is the people that I've interviewed that have had vertebral artery dissections or any other artery dissection, it's very rare that it's a hemorrhagic causes a hemorrhagic stroke. So normally, it causes an ischemic stroke, because the tear happens on the inside of the blood vessel, and it creates a flap that changes the blood flow, and causes a little low and high pressure system inside and forms clots and the clot travels up.

Bill Gasiamis 18:13

So the the artery is still intact on the outside. Whereas what's happened for you is the artery has dissected from the outside causing a hole in your artery and therefore a hemorrhagic stroke. And as a result of that, you're because it's such a large artery, then it's leaking so much blood that the heart is having trouble regulating the blood flow, and it stops.

Bill Gasiamis 18:40

So a friend of mine who lives in Melbourne where I live, a guy that I met a couple of weeks before my brain surgery, he was driving his dad's truck, which was their furniture there. They have a kitchen manufacturing, cabinet making business. And he was driving his dad's truck full of cabinets to take to a particular job site crashed, had a vertebral artery dissection caused a hemorrhagic stroke, crushed the truck into a pole.

Bill Gasiamis 19:13

And when they got there, they thought that because he was a young kid, they thought that he was on drugs. The police called the phone number on the side of the truck, spoke to the dad and said to him, your son has been involved in a collision, what drugs is he on? And if that's going, it's not on any drugs man could get him some help or what have you.

Bill Gasiamis 19:32

And he was Andrew was telling me that he was going in and out of cardiac arrest because that would restart his heart that would cause further leakage. And then as a result of that he would bleed out then things would go out of whack then his heart would suffer big and then he explained to me what you explained and in the 200 or more episodes that I've done, you and Andrew Andrew has not been interviewed.

Bill Gasiamis 19:55

You and Andrew are the only two people that I've come across that have had that type of I'm dissection. So it's very rare. And, and it sounds like it could be more catastrophic. But I am going to make a real general statement here, but you're looking quite well, for somebody who's had such a serious surgery situation. I know you're not your former self. So where are you at compared to where you were? What are you dealing with that you have to overcome?

Michael Andrew Petersen 20:31

You know, it's, it's interesting, and, you know, in getting back to, you know, my, like I was, you know, I was I'm a runner I attended, I turned to running a number of years ago, because I'm in advertising. And I got out of college, myself, and I got into the business, and I put on a lot of weight that I didn't need, that I had got married and had kids, and I decided at that point, I'm like, you know, my kids are too important.

Michael Andrew Petersen 21:05

My family's too important. So I took the weight off, and I really did it by, you know, a good, one of my best friends, you know, got me into running. And that, that was not only was it did allow me to help and watching what I ate. But it got me to the point where I, you know, could do that. And I've since run a number of half marathons and full marathons.

Michael Andrew Petersen 21:31

And, you know, so luckily, I mean, I was at the point bill, where I was running 2535 miles a week, going into my stroke. So I think going into that, I was in probably the, you know, like, like, I've heard a lot from people doing these interviews, I was in the best health of my life go into into my stroke, which I think, inevitably helped me get through the recovery.

Michael Andrew Petersen 22:01

A lot better. You know, but when I, when I got to the rehab hospital, and I was, you know, didn't have much sensation in my, you know, I was left side, so it affected my left side bleed right side was affected. And I, I just, I couldn't feel my legs for the life of me. And then, you know, when you're at a rehab hospital, it's like, Hey, I didn't, I didn't, I didn't know where I was, my wife wasn't there, I didn't have anything to wear.

Michael Andrew Petersen 22:36

And they're like, you got you got a PT session. And I was like, I don't think I have shoes. Like I, I didn't even know where I was this morning. And, you know, like, to their defense, like, they, they found stuff for me, and they got me up and they got me moving. But that's really, that was probably the best thing for me is to just get me up and get me moving.

Michael Andrew Petersen 23:02

And the stroke, just tore up my vestibular system. I, I've never had an issue with balance in my entire life. And I could not, I couldn't walk straight line without tipping over. So, you know, I spent, you know, the first couple of weeks, learning how to walk again, without falling over, learn how to get up and down stairs. And then, you know, and then the real hard work started, it was like all of the, you know, all the cognitive work, and all the OT.

Michael Andrew Petersen 23:43

And that, that was probably even more frightening, you know, then, you know, than the physical stuff, the physical, like, I don't know why. But I was convinced that was like, I was convinced that I was not going to let anything like physical stand in my way. You know, like I was, I just, I had in my head that I was going to whatever the obstacles were, I was going to work like hell to overcome them.

Michael Andrew Petersen 24:12

And then as you know, because you've been through a lot of this therapy yourself, you're walking on a treadmill, and they've got you manipulating something in your hand. And all of a sudden, the OT starts asking you questions. So you're now you're doing, you're walking, you're manipulating something with your a ball in your hand or whatever. And they start asking you to name vegetables, start with a and go through Z.

Michael Andrew Petersen 24:37

And I got to I couldn't, I couldn't come up with one for D. And it scared the living hell out of me. And then it was like, Well, let's not do vegetables, let's do animals. And then the same thing would happen. And I couldn't, I would just get stuck. And I couldn't. I couldn't recall any like, I knew what it was But I couldn't believe it was like, it was like having your hard drive full of all these files.

Michael Andrew Petersen 25:06

And you know, you've created this file and you put a lot of time and effort into making this file. And you know, right where it is, but you can't get to it. And if you can't get to it, you can't look at it. And then if you can't look at it, you can't read it back to the person that's asking you the question. And the recall was the trickiest thing for me. But I, I write when I thought, like, I was like, in real deep trouble with, with my cognitive stuff.

Michael Andrew Petersen 25:35

And my memory, and I couldn't remember anything. And like, I was really fearful that I just remember it was a weekend and rehab hospital on a weekend is not any place you want to be. It's so lonely. It's just so desolate. And they got me strapped up in this harness, because they didn't trust that I wouldn't fall over.

Michael Andrew Petersen 25:57

So I'm in the harness and walking. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. They don't want this guy to tip over. And I hate I hated that belt that they that gait belt. Oh, I hated it, when they put that out there just made me feel like, so terrible. But I knew I knew why they were doing it.

Michael Andrew Petersen 26:19

But this group of this group of PTS that I got to know and they were, it was a week, it was a Sunday, and they're like, Hey, do you do care if we put on a music like what do you like, and I was like, whatever you guys are listening to, I'm sure.

I'll like it. And I just remember, it was a it was a song by the cure that I used to play in my college radio days.

Michael Andrew Petersen 26:50

And, and I just remember it was is a song that's very personal to me. And I just remember, all of a sudden, I caught myself and I, I was singing it in my head and under my breath. And I knew every word of that song. And I was like, it made me feel so good.

Michael Andrew Petersen 27:10

And I just it took me right back to a beach vacation that I was just on with my kids and my wife and my dear friends and, and I was just flooded with all this emotion of, of all these images of these friends of mine that are so close to these amazing people in my life. And I was just so comforted to know that I knew the song. I knew the lyrics to the song and I just felt like shit, I'm gonna be okay. Like x, I get it. There's something up there and it's coming out.

Intro 27:41

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, and doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 28:06

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.

Intro 28:25

These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your condition, and they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery. Head to the website. Now, recoveryafterstroke.com and download the guide. It's free.

Heart Memory And Stroke

Bill Gasiamis 28:41

I'm gonna actually throw a bit of a spanner in the works here. So I reckon I've got a hypothesis as to it's not my hypothesis or something I came up with, but it's something I've come to understand and learn about where you store memories. And you know how you hear about dementia patients who they don't know.

Bill Gasiamis 29:05

They don't know their head from their bum. But as soon as you put a song on, they get up and they start dancing and singing the words and remembering right? So and the reason you explained that as it was emotional. So what I think, well, my hypothesis is and there's a bit of research to suggest that I'm kind of on the right track by other people, not by me. I haven't done any research like that or studies, is that the heart has memory.

Bill Gasiamis 29:37

The heart also has neurons, it has between 30 and 120,000. People who are "heartless" have 30,000 or less people who are young at heart have 120,000 or more. And memories like that about I remember my first song that when it comes on, I remember my girlfriend, you know, the one that I was with when I was 12. You know.

Bill Gasiamis 30:08

And those memories are not stored. In the head, I reckon they're stored in the heart, and they are accessed by the head and, brought to life or back to sort of our memory via the head. But I think they're stored elsewhere. And that's why a lot of people will go through these terrible neurological issues, and then still be able to remember a song they did, they danced in 30s, or whenever, as, as well as that.

Bill Gasiamis 30:39

Many years ago, I met a guy who had had a heartbreak, from a relationship that had failed, he was a musician. And one of the things that he couldn't do was sing the songs that he used to sing. It's not that he couldn't actually sing because put another, put another track on the radio, he can sing with it. And that was all fine. And he didn't have any neurological issues. He actually couldn't access the songs.

Bill Gasiamis 31:08

To sing them similar. He described it in the same way that we can't access words after a stroke. Sometimes. He described it in a similar way he goes, he knows the song title, he knows where it's at. He knows where to go, but he can't open it, get there, express it, and sing it in tune in in key along along with the music that he used to play on his own guitar. Yeah, right.

Bill Gasiamis 31:35

So for me, I said to him, well, it makes sense to me when you told me before that, that you've had a heartbreak, and it's really emotionally painful. And and every time you go to your heart, you get your break down. And it's hard for you because you've never gone there because you're a man and you know, you, men don't cry and all this rubbish.

Bill Gasiamis 32:02

But now, you can't sing a song because you don't want to go with a song is because it's going to be emotional, it's going to be hard. And I think it's in your heart. And I left him with that information to do whatever he wanted to. And I feel like there's a bit of, for me, at least I relate to that.

Bill Gasiamis 32:18

When I say it, like that's that's kind of how I experienced the same thing. And I wonder if people listening will relate in a similar way. And if they are, please do let me know in the comments or reach out on Instagram. And let me know. If that does resonate. How do you feel about what I just said?

Michael Andrew Petersen 32:35

Yeah, it it's, I, I feel like, and I think I, I heard your, I think you just were talking about the neurons in the heart recently with another guest. And I remember, I remember thinking of that, and thinking, you're right on, it was spot on like it, that it, there's got to be something to that.

Michael Andrew Petersen 33:06

Because I do feel like, you know, I was so cloudy. And I was so unsure of anything that was happening up here that it must have happened in here, you know, like, and that's all I could think of when I was listening to you just a couple days ago, I was listening to that, that that podcast, so

Bill Gasiamis 33:27

I hit my head completely switched off, and it and I couldn't use it for anything. And my heart came on to the point where I was recognizing a new sensation in my chest. And I didn't know what the hell it was. And it was my heart. It was making this fear. It was creating these weird experiences and feelings.

Bill Gasiamis 33:50

And I had no idea what it was. And I discovered later that it was my heart. And that's part of the emotional journey that I went on. You know, people describe it as the pseudo Baba effect where stroke survivors get very emotional over nothing, or what seems like it's over nothing.

Bill Gasiamis 34:09

But for me, what I think it was is like the heart coming online. And you know, it's kind of dysregulated at that point in time. And it's kind of doesn't know how to be online. And it just kind of comes out out of nowhere, because things that are technically not emotional shouldn't be triggering tears.

Bill Gasiamis 34:31

But they, for some reason do indeed and still do from time to time. So I think it's like an over-expression of the heart at some stages, you get an over-expression because it's never had the opportunity to express itself to that level. At least in my body. It didn't because I wouldn't allow him

Expressing Emotion In A Different Way

Michael Andrew Petersen 34:57

Yeah, it's, you know it I've Uh, you know, I, there's, there's a lot of truth to that. And you know, like, there's, I wish I could say I'm one of those tough guys, that's, that's never shed a tear or whatever, but my wife and my two girls would tell you that's not true.

Michael Andrew Petersen 35:15

I mean, I, I do tend to get kind of emotional. And I don't know if I'm any more emotional now than I am that I always happen. I don't think so. Hell, I don't know, I don't live with myself. Yeah, I guess I, I will have to ask them. But

Bill Gasiamis 35:34

I express it differently though. Before I was expressing emotion in anger. To

perhaps I don't know, well, maybe it's the only one I knew how to express I express that in, in, in external displays of anger, you know, yelling, screaming, you know, doing all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 35:58

Whereas now I express it in tears in sobbing in quiet, more quiet time in withdrawing rather than engaging in an angry or, you know, seriously emotional state. And I think that's what's changed for me. It's, I express it differently. I was highly emotional, but you wouldn't know it. I was going about it the wrong way.

Michael Andrew Petersen 36:26

Yeah. Yeah, I think, you know, like, I laugh, and it's, you know, you, you, you spent so much time early on, in, in recovery with, with some of these PTs and OTs or whatever. And I was like, gosh, now I, I feel like to a certain degree, like, I gotta go back and talk to these people, and let them know that I'm not absolutely crazy, because I was, I was super emotional at the time by I had one.

Michael Andrew Petersen 37:01

One physical therapist in particular, who, you know, I really identified with and I kept seeing, my, my eldest daughter is studying kinesiology here in the United States. And she is going on to, she would like to be a physical therapist, and I kept seeing my daughter in this person.

Michael Andrew Petersen 37:24

And I get better, and I would get emotional, because I was like, This is so perfect for my daughter, she's going to be so great at this. This is like, the most perfect profession for her to enter. And it would get me really emotional. And they must have thought I was crazy. And then I would, you know, do your kids.

Michael Andrew Petersen 37:50

So I thought I would talk about my girls all the time, to these poor people, and they're like, good enough, but the kids stories guy, we get it, let's get let's get these through these exercises and get you back to your room.

Bill Gasiamis 38:04

Look, I know that you think that they'll think you're you're not but they didn't. Because they've seen it all before. And they know what's happening. And they know that it's a, you know, a life, a threat to your life will make you do strange things and say strange things, especially when your head still not completely

online.

Bill Gasiamis 38:24

All of the things that you did have been done by somebody before you already, you know, and they do it for a living. So they see it every day. And we're the ones that feel uncomfortable with it. Until you get to that point and you go, okay, I can be comfortable with every way that I behave, because I'm no different to any other human.

Bill Gasiamis 38:44

And what I wasn't, and what I was uncomfortable with was the behavior that was not useful, or the behavior that was making somebody else feel worse. That was the part that I really became uncomfortable with later. At the beginning. It was you know, feeling self conscious.

Bill Gasiamis 39:03

And then later on, it was like, Okay, I need to stop being an idiot when it's not necessary to act a certain way, you know, and it gave me the ability to reflect, do a lot of reflecting, and going, you know, if, if today was my last day, would I want to write be happy with that last interaction with that person, you know?

Bill Gasiamis 39:25

And then it's like, yeah, let's undo some of that harm that I had done in the past. Not that I was a total asshole. I was just an an. I was just a an wise person who had very few resources because I never studied the things that I didn't know I needed to study. You know, how do you know what you don't know?

Michael Andrew Petersen 39:48

Yeah. Yeah. It's not to not to take this on a downward spiral. or anything, but it's it's, you know, one of the things that that I was thinking about today was that it's it's been, you know, almost 11 months, but it's been, you know, the recovery, for me at least has been, you know, and I know my wife's gonna cringe and my daughters are gonna cringe when they hear me say this, but it's been, it's been really lonely.

Michael Andrew Petersen 40:26

It's been the loneliest time of my life. And I don't know if that's common, or it's, it's like, I'm surrounded like, and since I've even in rehab, rehab, hospital and day rehab, I've been surrounded with other people that have been going through the

same damn thing. But it's not. It's still, it's a lonely process.

Bill Gasiamis 40:49

Yes, it's, it is. And that's the strange part about is trying to explain it to family, because they're around you, they're supporting you, they love you. They're always with you. And you feel lonely. And it's not because of them. It's because of what it does to you, but also how how you relate to the rest of the world, because you now don't relate to the rest of your family the way that you did before the hemorrhagic stroke, right.

Bill Gasiamis 41:18

And you're, you're related to them. All of those things are still there. But then there's this new version of you inside this new expression. And it's like, What the hell do I do with it, let alone how do I recover from it or with it? And how do I explain the unexplainable to other people so they can get me. And for me, I'm still on that journey. 200, and nearly 10 episodes of the podcast is, this is an attempt to explain it to my family.

Bill Gasiamis 41:52

This is why one of the reasons why the podcast exists, as well as to feel less alone. So that I can find people that are like me. And it just so happens that there are around the world, and they're all over the place, but they get me in this one hour that we have, I get them, they get me and I feel better about myself for a week, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 42:17

And it's for my family, this is for my family, if anyone wanted to get an insight into what it was like to go through what I go through, all they had to do is tune into the podcast, but they don't. And the reason they don't is because I haven't made a point of it. But if they choose to they will.

Bill Gasiamis 42:36

But the reason they don't is because I don't want them to be forever living my their life via my filter of stroke. And the only way they're going to know what strokes like is to have one. And I don't want them to have a stroke.

How One Word Can Change Your Life - Michael Andrew Petersen

Michael Andrew Petersen 42:50

Yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah, I don't, I don't wish it on anyone. You know, like it's, but at the same time, you know, it and this has taken, you know, it's taken me a long, long time to get to this. And it's, I I'm, I'm getting to the point where coming to the realizations, this isn't something that happened to me. But it's something that happened for me.

Michael Andrew Petersen 43:28

And, and just the nuance of that one little word, you know, really does change everything. And I think it's made me recognize that I didn't really like the person that I that I was a lot of the time, I didn't like, you know, you know, but this has given me an opportunity to rethink and reimagine who I am and what I can be, which is, is pretty, pretty amazing.

Bill Gasiamis 44:04

Let's unpack that for a little bit. You're married, you've got a family, you got kids. You got you're in advertising, you probably deal with people all day, every day. They most of them, like you to some extent. And you didn't like the person that you had become or were becoming, like, which aspects of yourself Didn't you like?

Michael Andrew Petersen 44:38

I think that when you're, you know, when you when you have your own business and you and you, you're so driven. Then you become so fixated on the one thing that you do, and it becomes almost too important. And then I realized really quickly like hell I did that. I remember getting the the rehab hospital.

Michael Andrew Petersen 45:02

I was thinking, you know, one of my questions, my wife was like, hey, I need to contact these these clients. She's like, No, you don't. She's like, No, you don't. And I said, I mean, I've got, I've got meetings. And she's like, Michael, it's, it's been weeks. And I said, like, I'm like, What month is it? She's like, it's, it's October.

Michael Andrew Petersen 45:32

And it's just, like, all of a sudden, I just, I listened to her, you know, I just listened

to her. And I said, You know what it doesn't. It's inconsequential. Like, it's not as important. It probably wasn't even as important at the time. But I made it important. Which, you know, you have to do as a professional. But I've gone through an event in my life, that, that that really, truly did change me, I think, I hope, I hope

Bill Gasiamis 46:08

that sounds like it, you're reflecting on it things differently. I had a business as well as still have a business other than this, that I do. And it was. And it was my first thing was, I've got a, it was Saturday. And we were supposed to be a work Saturday, and it was 15 people relying on me to be there, I was running a project.

Bill Gasiamis 46:29

And my first thing was, Oh, I've got a call work and let them know I won't be there that will complete a capable of getting that John job done on their own without me. But I thought that it was revolving around me and I had to be the person. So that led me to say that approach was what made my business successful.

Bill Gasiamis 46:54

And it made me able to earn money and do all the things that I thought I needed. But it did keep me away from my, the rest of my life for the majority of the week, and the weekends, a lot of the times, which meant that I had very little downtime. I had very little me time, I had very little stuff that I enjoyed doing that was part of my passion projects, for example.

Bill Gasiamis 47:20

And as a result of that I was getting I was kind of resenting a lot of the things that I had to do for other people, because I had a priority, my priority was my clients, and I never wanted to say no to them. Whereas now, my clients will call me and I won't speak to them for the day, I won't respond to their phone call right now, or at five o'clock in the evening, or at seven o'clock in the morning.

Bill Gasiamis 47:46

I'll respond to them when I'm good and ready. And if they have to wait 24 hours, then that's fine. I'm not going to kill myself to do that. And I didn't like that aspect of myself then. And that's not how I am now. So I can relate to what you're saying is that business goes on life goes on.

Bill Gasiamis 48:03

But the way that I set the expectation for my clients, which is the part that's over and above delivering the right outcome to get paid, right. Everything else can be adjusted, and you can tweak and you can retrain them that when you when they call they're not going to get the phone answer any time of the day.

Why Michael Hasn't Been Able To Get Back To Work

Michael Andrew Petersen 48:30

Yeah. So, you've been, you know, I kind of feel like I'm relatively new to this. So, you know, what don't I know, Bill? Like, what going on, you know, like, coming up on a year, you know? And I haven't been able to get back to, to the office yet. There's a lot of things that I haven't been able to get back to, but, you know, what's what's year two like?

Bill Gasiamis 49:06

Tell me why you haven't been able to get back to the office yet. And I'll give you a bit of an insight.

Michael Andrew Petersen 49:15

You know, like, so I haven't been cleared, I'm still going through a lot of my, you know, kind of speech and occupational therapy, a lot of the cognitive therapies. So, but I think, you know, towards the end of September, you know, I'll be I'll get cleared to go back to work.

Michael Andrew Petersen 49:38

You know, and, and I do remember vividly, you know, like one of the, one of the first meetings that I had that I really kind of took everything in, you know, the doctor, I was at the rehab hospital and I was, you know, I was starting to figure out what the hell was going on.

Michael Andrew Petersen 49:56

And she said, Hey, she's like, I'm going to I want you to understand that this isn't, this isn't weeks, it's not months, she's like, you're not, you're not even gonna feel like yourself until a year. And she's like, in a very well could be two years, she's like, so the worst thing that you can do right now is to push too hard. And to get

back into things too quickly.

Michael Andrew Petersen 50:23

She said, because you've, you've, you've always lived your life at a very high level, and your business is very demanding. And she's like, and you will let yourself down. And that's the one thing you won't be able to live with is the disappointment that you'll create and yourself by going back to early, and getting put in a situation that you cannot deal with, she's like, and you will, you'll never forgive yourself, and it'll slow you down.

Michael Andrew Petersen 50:55

And she's like, I just don't want to see that. Because I mean, I wanted, I wanted to leave the rehab hospital after a month and, and my office was four miles from us, but I wonder, like, I'll just go in right now, you know, pick up where I left off, and I was convinced otherwise.

Michael Andrew Petersen 51:13

And then I think, I think through the recovery process, you realize, like, hey, this, all that. All that damage up there, all those things that kind of used to work and fire together, that got unstuck, that takes a while to come back together. You know, and I, I feel

Bill Gasiamis 51:37

Good, I was gonna say one of the ways that it comes back better is when you do it. So I know why they told you not to go back after a month, and I was told similar things. And I agree, I agree. At the same time depends on the mindset and the kind of guy that you are, if how you take losses and hits, if you if they really make you down and depressed, and all that kind of stuff, or if they inspire you to go further.

Bill Gasiamis 52:03

So think about the first time you ran a marathon or the first time, you know, you're terrible at it, or you weren't anywhere near as good as you were the second set third, fourth or fifth time, but what you did is you created a, a baseline for where to begin from.

Bill Gasiamis 52:21

And you remember how hard it was to recover from that first marathon, how much pain you were in how long the pain lasted, and the rest of it was stroke

similar, you'll go, you'll go, you'll go, you will hit a brick wall, and then there's a price to pay after that. Just like our marathon and recovery, it's gonna take X amount of time for you to get back to feeling energized again or in or Well, again, or, or better than you did after that big exertion.

Bill Gasiamis 52:49

So part of the thing that you need to do is you need to now start to exert yourself, see where your limit is. And see if you can go beyond that. Just a little. And then and then see how long it takes to recover. Do it as a as a project of learning where you're at, rather than I'm going to set a deadline. And Dammit, I'm going to get to that deadline.

Bill Gasiamis 53:12

And then if you don't get to the deadline, feel shit about yourself. There's no need for that. And deadlines are terrible in stroke recovery, forget about deadlines, just set goals, and try and get to the goal rather than to the goal by a time. Yeah, if you don't put a time on it, then that's far better. I think you'll feel better about it.

Bill Gasiamis 53:35

And then also, you'll be able to show to people that you're learning about yourself and that I'm going to exert myself, you guys have to have my back, trust me. And then when I crumble in a heap because I'm too exhausted, I will recover. And I'm going to show you that I'll do the right thing after that to recover.

Bill Gasiamis 53:56

And then you'll understand that I'm actually taking this seriously. And I'm not trying to go back to my old self and the guy who overdid everything. As far as work was concerned, I'm going to go back and test my my boundaries. So I can rediscover how to be a new version of myself like how can I evolve and solve these problems rather than be be afraid of them and be overwhelmed by them?

Bill Gasiamis 54:30

It took me six years because my strokes happened over and brain surgery happened over three years almost. So I had a long time of off again on again off again on again, and not know and uncertainty. And then when the surgery happened, that created more certainty that there wasn't going to be another stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 54:55

But it created a lot of recovery that I never thought I never knew. was coming. And a lot of that was cognitive recovery, recovering, being able to look at a screen for a long period of time and do all of that side of my work physically, I could do tons. But cognitively, I couldn't do a lot.

Bill Gasiamis 55:13

And there was, the only way I could do it was to pay the price of going too far. And then that was retraining the muscle. And it was also teaching me where my limit was, so that if I did want to do some work, and be fully active at work, I knew that I could go until 1pm.

Bill Gasiamis 55:34

And then, no matter what, I'm going home, and there's no one more email after 1pm No, that was it. I'm out of here, guys, you know, next email, I'll handle tomorrow. So I think maybe you can consider whether you're whether you're at that stage of your recovery now the years approaching. And, and kind, you know, you know, kindly push yourself a little beyond what your comfort zone is now.

Michael Andrew Petersen 56:12

Yeah, yeah, I feel like I'm doing it in a couple of different ways, you know, I haven't, I've been fortunate enough, I've got, you know, I think you do your recovery process, you also really, your true friends who really stand out.

Michael Andrew Petersen 56:32

And the people that really care about you, you know, and it's, it's cements you, and there's a couple people in my life that that, you know, that knew that I needed, you know, I needed to get back into, you know, you know, I just by my recovery, you know, you can only you can only tell your OTs and PTs so much, you know, and then they need, they need to know that you're, you're doing something that you used to do.

Michael Andrew Petersen 57:06

And this is what you're running into, that you can't get past. So, I've been able to work with a couple friends on some little, little pieces here and there, that have really, really helped me and challenged me, you know, and then I was cleared, they put this fancy pump in the back of my head, so I have a shunt or whatever.

Michael Andrew Petersen 57:36

So I couldn't, I couldn't do a lot of impact exercise for awhile, and I've been

cleared to get back running. And so as of the last two weeks, that's been the most humbling experience I've come across yet. I mean, it's, it's like, you know, it's, it's, it's tough. It's tough. I mean, I'm knowing I'm used to running.

Bill Gasiamis 58:03

Know, you're running mine, and you're doing it from a place of not being able to run once upon a time at all. Yeah, no.

Michael Andrew Petersen 58:13

Big deal. It is. So, like, it's, you know, I'm, I'm super fortunate, you know, like, I feel like, you know, I feel like, although I'm still got a lot of, like, lack of sensation, on my right side, especially on my lower it doesn't, I've never really, nothing's ever happened with my hand, which is like that goodness for me, like, you know, like, I, I use, I have a, I work with my hands a lot.

Michael Andrew Petersen 58:51

So I've been super fortunate, but my lower extremities, like it's just been, you know, that's not come back the way I thought it would, and then that can be tricky with running. Because then, you know, you're kind of crossing over and cross over in the wrong kind of way and you're gonna go down.

Michael Andrew Petersen 59:14

So, it's, you know, it's humbling, but, you know, all these things are great to work at and work on and focus. It's, it's given me incredible challenge, you know, at something, you know, that I didn't expect, but, you know, like, the process is something that I've been, I have to say, I have enjoyed, you know, I'm a process oriented person, I believe in processes, you know, and this is kind of the ultimate in that, you know, to kind of see yourself go through, you know, all these different therapies and knowing Interesting in it, that you're going to come out on the other end of better person,

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:04

you've got a lot of problem solving skills with your business, right, you're, you can apply that to your recovery from this thing that you've gone through that you've experienced, you've also got a lot of understanding about how you tackle the business, for example, you know, sometimes a client says to you, we need this from you, and you've never done that before. And you agree, and you don't know how you're going to deliver.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:30

And you don't know what the problems are, you can never possibly imagine them all. And then you start down the process and a new trouble comes up or a new problem comes up. And it's like, we've never dealt with this before, let's scramble and find a solution and apply it and see if we get a result.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:46

And this is exactly what you're experiencing. Now. You're going through this phase of, I know, it's a new project that I've got. And I know I'm going to have some troubles, but I don't know what they're going to be. But when they come to them, If I focus more on the solution than the problem, I'll get more solutions.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:06

And that's exactly what stroke recovery is. And part of that means that you've got to expand your, your you've got to become more intelligent, you've got to come more emotionally intelligent, you've got to become more problem solving, kind of brain intelligent not. I'm not saying your IQ has to go up like but you've got to apply your brain in a different way. Because it works differently now.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:35

And you got to you got to grow, like intelligence from the other part of your body, which is your gut, listen to your gut for advice on inst on your what your instincts telling you about when to take action, how to overcome your fears, because that's where they live, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:54

And you got to become more aware of how you're getting in your own way. And you got to be super critical on those things. And then as a result, if you treat it like a if you treat your recovery, like a business deal, that this is the this is what you get out of it. If you do. If you overcome all these problems, this is the reward that you get for that deal.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:22

Well, then, you can overcome your deficits, even though you're going to be living with numbness in your leg. You can live with numbness in your leg and still experience a full life and you can live with deficits that are more debilitating than that and still have a full life.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:40

You just have to get good at solving problems that you've never solved before. And I know some people do a lot tougher than you are. And that they might not see it that way. But there's no other way to see it. Seeing it that way might be hard, but not seeing it that way you still had.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:58

So choose your heart, which hard do you prefer? That's kind of you know that. So I think you're in a good position to really have a great next 12 months, even though there's going to be ups and downs. There's going to be frustration, celebration, there'll be fears, there'll be all sorts of things.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:19

I think it's still could be a great 12 months, and I don't think you'd quite know, yet. You haven't had enough time in this space to know yet. How good this can be in 10 years from now. It is for me, it's 10 years for me since this all started. And this has never been this good. And I have never had this many issues in my life like physical issues, cognitive issues. I've never had this much drama, and it's never been better. So I didn't get it. Yeah. But that's the truth.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:03:59

Hey, that's, that's that sounds good to me. I hope I'm I hope I'm in that position. You know, 10 years on. So, yeah, but

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:12

no reason why. Why can't be I think you have to have bravery as well to face your demons, bravery to overcome your emotional trauma from this situation, or the past that you've never dealt with, you know, bravery to tackle your fears about what the future might hold or what it might bring. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:35

And if you do that, you'll get rewarded for that because you'll grow as a human being you'll over you'll, and you'll feel yourself becoming a giant, you know, amongst men and for the best reason possible, you know, which is that you just tackled your fears and you did not give a shit about the the you know what it was going to leave Behind the trail of disaster that it was going to leave behind, from a, from a personal growth perspective, and what you have to shed and let go of, you know, because identity is a massive thing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:15

And if your identity, Michael has always been, I'm an advertising guy, and that's what I do. And that's who I hang out with. And they're the people that I know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:25

And that's all we ever do is talk shop, and all that kind of stuff. And now that's taken away from you, you got to rebuild your identity, and you've got to start broadening your, what identity, what your identity is, it has to include, I am a father who's present, I am a husband, who's grateful.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:44

I am a person who jumps on a podcast and helps other people. By sharing my story, you know, you've got to grow what your identity is. And then that way, you feel better about how you had to write how you got to that point, like, why what was the event that led to that? It's about post-traumatic growth, you know?

The Thing That Most People Don't Tackle In Recovery

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:06:13

Yeah, ya know, there's a lot of truth in that. And that's one of the, you know, I'm, I can, I can almost hear my wife nodding. And she hasn't even heard your words yet. But she's, she's gonna identify. You know, she's, she's been the one that's been really pushing me to, you know, to deal with the trauma.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:06:36

And she said, it's the one thing she said, it's the one thing that, that they don't really tackle in your recovery process. And she's like, it's, it's, it's unfortunate, she said, but I know, like, you've taken on everything else, she's like, you know, and you've, you've done good with all the physical and you're getting better with the cognitive, she said, but you're not dealing with the emotional trauma, you know, she's you, you went through a lot, and you, you're not touching that.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:07:09

And she's right. But that's, you know, that's, you know, another hill to climb.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:17

It is. And it's inevitable for most people that does, the heel becomes visible at some point. And it's the reason it's inevitable is because initial recovery is

physical, and the doctors throw that at you, and they want to make sure that you're up. And there's a lot of reasons why, why the physical recovery is important, of course, because if they get you on your feet, you know, you start to become independent, again, and all those things matter.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:44

But the physical recovery, and I'm writing a chapter about this, right now, Chapter seven of my book, is because being physical, you know, releases endorphins, it helps with neurotrophins, you know, things that support brain health and neuronal function. It supports serotonin, it supports dopamine, you know, and there are all those chemicals that are necessary for you to get high levels of in your brain.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:26

And exercise is one of those things that does it more than anything, and it doesn't have to be physical, it can just be very mild, relaxing, calm exercise, you know. So I get it. And then from there, what exercise does it supports, decreasing anxiety, it supports decreasing depressive symptoms, it increases your mood, it helps to improve your sleep. And they can see that they can see that. So they, they can see your physical deficit.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:05

So they push that, but they can't see your emotional deficits. Yeah. And they can't impact that, that you've got to lead the charge to the emotional recovery. Whether you go through coaching, whether you go through counseling, or a combination of both, whether you connect with a stroke survivor who guides you through that. Your journey.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:30

That's the path that you have to lead, and that's what your wife wants for you. She wants you to go, I'm gonna lead this recovery because she knows she can't do it. She can prod but at some point, you're gonna say Stop nagging me.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:09:46

Yeah, no, I did. She's and she's always right, Bill, like she's, you know, the, and she was right about this. And it's, you know, and it's it's important And, you know, but that's, you know, like, you know, I want to be I want to be better for her, I want to be better for my girls. You know, like, there's, there's a lot left. And you

know, it's a must the most Luckily, I was given another chance.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:23

Yeah, man, a lot of people don't get it and what's what's good is that

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:30

you you know what dedication to a task for many, many, many, many years creates a create success. If you as well as your other tasks that you're dedicated to

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:48

decide to dedicate some time to the task of you evolve, evolving and emerging from this in a positive way, you'll succeed. And you'll look back and you'll go, man, I've done some amazing things in my life. And one of those includes my evolution from this experience that was seriously nearly took my life. Yeah. Yeah, that's my hope.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:21

You will, you'll succeed, man 100%, I believe in you. I believe in you. And I believe in everybody who, who's listening, who is going through what we're going through, because if I'm able to do it, if I'm able to look back on my 10, on my last 10 years, and they were my hardest 10 years, and respond with I think that stroke was the best thing that ever happened to me. If I can do that bill from Preston, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Michael's Experience And How It Changed Him

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:11:56

Anyone can? Yeah. Well, it's, you know, it's, it's not anything that I would have, I would have thought that I would go through. And, but I have a lot of respect. And I don't know, if I would, you know, at this at this point, I don't know if I would change it.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:12:21

You know, it's, it's brought me to a place where I'm very thoughtful, and I'm thoughtful in a much different way. And I reconcile my feelings so much differently because of the experience that I've had. And, you know, I, I wouldn't

want to change it at this point. That's perfect. It's been tough.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:47

Yeah, that's profound. And, and I think a lot of people relate to that, and would agree with you that they wouldn't want to change it. And I wouldn't either. I would, I would love to say that I would rather have learned the lesson. Easier than what I did. But it's just it wasn't meant to be easier, because I didn't learn it until I had to learn it.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:13:13

Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, a lot of, I don't know, I don't know why I, I listened to a lot of podcasts bill. So like, there's a number of people that I, that I listened to, and, you know, the one thing that told me never to do was read your own medical records. And I did that tonight. So I will, I'll take that off the list.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:13:37

And then, you know, the one thing that that I, I just, I don't like to, you know, I just don't like to think about I should, you should never look at the statistics for what you went through. And I did that as well. And that's, that's pretty humbling as well. So, you know, it's, I should I shouldn't have done that.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:14:07

That's but it, it makes you more grateful, for sure. To know that you've gone through something you know, and I used to when I was with all the follow ups and you're no stranger, this but you, you go through this experience, and then you finally get home and then you spend the first month doing follow up visits all these doctors.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:14:36

And the stroke had really done something to buy, you know, like, through the life saving techniques or whatever, all that fluid in my head and it screwed up my retinal nerve and that blew out my hearing. So I had to I had to get these fancy hearing aids now, so that I can hear but I went to seek this hearing specialist.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:15:02

Because I was convinced, though I was convinced, like, I think it's just like, I just need a real deep cleaning. And it just once they release all that gunk into my ear, then I'll be able to hear again. And I was I was my wife was like, I think it's a little bit more than that. But like, so I go to this hearings, this audiologist follow up.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:15:23

And I catch the guy and he's just, like, engrossed in something. And I was like, Alright, whatever, you know, he's, he's a professional, I'm gonna let him do his thing. And he looked up a couple times and looked at me. And he's like, are you Mike Peterson? And I was like, yeah. He's like, how did you get here?

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:15:48

And I said, I, I drove, he's like, You drove a car to my office? And then he's like, he's like, are you in it? And you're not in a wheelchair. Your wife's not with? I said, No, I just came up in the escalator, whatever. He's like, he's like, I don't want to embarrass you. He's like, but I just read your chart. He's like, You, your body went through four different things.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:16:17

So he's like, and three of them, people just simply don't walk away from that a second. And the fourth is like, he's like, I don't, he's like, I don't even he's like, I expected you to be wheeled in here. He's like, I never expected that you would have driven yourself. And those, those are the things that I would get.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:16:39

Like, after that, like, I left that appointment, and I got my car. And I was like, I was shot. I was like, I called my wife and I was like, a mess. And I just, I said, those things. Those are the hardest. Those are the hardest visits for me. Because it doesn't, it doesn't really hit home until you hear someone tell you from a medical standpoint, that that, that they don't, they don't know why I'm there. And so there's got to be a reason, right? So I gotta find that reason now.

Bill Gasiamis 1:17:14

Beautiful. And on that note, that's a beautiful way to end this podcast. And just before we end, let me just say, not only will you find that, you're gonna make a massive difference on the planet to other people on your journey to discovering that, and then hopefully sharing that and letting people know what you discovered. I think that's kind of what's meant to come next. how that looks. I don't know. And it doesn't matter. But yeah, enjoy the enjoy the ride, man.

Michael Andrew Petersen 1:17:44

All right, thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:17:48

Thanks for joining us on today's episode to learn more about my guests including links to their social media and other pages. And to download a full transcript of the entire interview. Please go to recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes. If you would like to purchase the course five foods to avoid after stroke, go to [recovery after stroke.com/courses](https://recoveryafterstroke.com/courses) and get on board now.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:12

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Bill Gasiamis 1:18:39

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Bill Gasiamis 1:19:01

I will respond with more details on how you can choose a time that works for you and me to meet over zoom. Thank you again for being here. I really appreciate it and see you on the next episode.

Intro 1:19:13

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Intro 1:19:35

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Intro 1:19:53

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Intro 1:20:07

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Intro 1:20:34

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Intro 1:20:45

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