

# Hemochromatosis And Stroke - Shelley Christie

**Shelley Christie didn't realize how serious the condition Hemochromatosis was until the condition created clots that caused a stroke in 2019 when she was 44 years old.**

Instagram

Facebook

Highlights:

01:33 Introduction

02:53 Hemochromatosis And Stroke

13:55 Neurological Fatigue

20:54 Family Struggles

28:22 Facing The Mortality

35:58 Connecting More

40:46 Stroke Is The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me

49:28 It's About Deep Thinking

54:11 My Mum's A Stroke Survivor

59:42 The Importance of Mental Health

1:07:11 Memory Triggers

1:14:51 Compassion Goes A Long Way

Transcription:

Shelley Christie 0:00

I got given a pack when we left the hospital. Margaret, who was an amazing stroke coordinator, she was fantastic. She gave us a pack which had lots of information on it. And I still have that pack sitting in the same spot. And every now and then I go and read a couple of things. Just to remind myself, you know, if I feel a little bit anxious or memories are coming back for me that I'm not liking. So I'll go back and I'll read something and then I'll go, if something happens, I just need to do that.

Intro 0:51

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

Bill Gasiamis 0:59

Hello, and welcome to episode 214 of the recovery after stroke podcast. If you're a stroke survivor with a story to share about your experience with stroke, and you have been thinking about reaching out to be a guest on the show but we're waiting for the right time to reach out.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19

This is it! If you go to [recoveryafterstroke.com/contact](https://recoveryafterstroke.com/contact) you'll find a form that you can fill out to apply to be a guest on the show. As soon as I receive it. I will respond with more details on how you can choose the time that works for you for both of us to meet over zoom.

## **Introduction - Brain Stem Stroke**



Bill Gasiamis 1:33

Now my guest today is Shelley Christie who at age 44 experienced an ischemic stroke with two underlying causes, including a PFO also known as a patent foramen ovale or a hole in the heart as well as the blood disorder Hemochromatosis. Shelley Christie, welcome to the podcast.

Shelley Christie 1:51

Thanks, Bill. Thanks for having me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:53

My pleasure. Thank you for being here. Another fellow Aussie. We're rare.

Shelley Christie 1:58

Yes, it's good. It's good to be an Aussie.

Bill Gasiamis 2:02

It's good to be an Aussie. It's not good that we're rare on the podcast, but that's alright. We love everybody.

Shelley Christie 2:08

Pros and cons.

Bill Gasiamis 2:10

Tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

Shelley Christie 2:13

So May 11, 2019, I had a stroke. And then May 28, had a PFO closure. So that all happened quite quickly. So prior to that, I wanted to see if I could go back because I think we need to look at what the events had to happen. So 2017, I actually had a DVT Deep Vein Thrombosis in my leg after an injury.

## **Hemochromatosis And Stroke**

Shelley Christie 2:53

And then I had PAs on my lungs a week later, clots on my lungs. So this all started two years prior to the stroke. And I have an iron condition called hemochromatosis. I have iron overload. And I didn't realize at the time in 2017, that was a lot of the cause of my organs were struggling to work because my iron was really, really high.

Shelley Christie 3:29

And part of that is when your iron is so high, your blood sort of slows down a bit gets a little bit congealed. And I didn't realize that I was having that issue so bad, and then my blood pressure went up. So leading up to that so 2000 and then 2019, I had the stroke.

Shelley Christie 3:57

And I had been feeling okay. And after the PAs and the DVTs and all that I just continued my life as normal, not realizing that it could potentially lead to a stroke.

So that particular day, I was feeling quite tired. I am not the type of person to go and lie down so I said to him I'm not feeling that great. I'm just gonna lie down. I got a bit of a headache. I don't normally get headaches.

Shelley Christie 4:28

And because we were going out to my girlfriend's daughter's birthday, so I got myself up, we went. We were coming home, we drive. We're like we're driving home and we were only two minutes around the corner. And I said to my husband, I'm not feeling well. And he said "what you mean?" And I said I'm just not feeling great. And then he said he couldn't understand what I was saying. I do remember getting out of the car and walking into the house.

Shelley Christie 5:02

That's about everything. After that's a bit of a blur. And I lost all my left side. The next bit I remember was being in recess. And Ed, and they started the thrombolysis. So if it wasn't for my husband and my kids noticing my face, and calling the ambulance so quickly, they got here within five minutes. And then they got me into Frankston Hospital, I think it was in they said it was in like, 45 minutes. So I was thermalized, within just under two hours,

Bill Gasiamis 5:40

Really good.

Shelley Christie 5:41

Which is awesome. Then I was in hospital for about four or five days, I couldn't eat or drink for just under 72 hours. I think the worst part about that was when I was wheeled up to the stroke ward, because I was so young. And here I am. In with 80-year-olds, because I think most people, you know, link stroke to being old. And it's just not the case at all. The more I talk to people that it's actually really quite common. And that was really confronting, really confronting and I'm like, "What am I doing here? Why is this happening to me "

Shelley Christie 6:35

And at first, one of the neurologists didn't actually see the clot. And it was a young neurologist that came in and said, when I was in emergency, it was him that said, No, what's that? Apparently, I thought I got told. And it was him, the young neurologist that actually said, "we want to find out why, because you're so young, why this has happened to you." He said, "I just want to do one more test."

And that's when he checked my heart.

Shelley Christie 7:09

He said, "You know, I don't want you to be concerned, we'll probably find nothing. But we're going to do what we call the bubble test. We're just going to check your heart." He said, "You know, sometimes, there might be a hole there but, no need to worry." And I remember getting wheeled down, I'm thinking "Oh, my goodness, what is going on?" And then they did the bubble test. And you can see it because of the way they position you.

Shelley Christie 7:40

And so what they did is they draw some blood out. And then they mix your blood with a bit of saline, and then they shoot it back in. So it produces bubbles. And then it goes up to your heart. And it's not meant to bounce around but mine just bounced and I'm like "What's that?"

Shelley Christie 8:06

And she said, "I'm not meant to say" I said, I can see it. And I just remember looking at her thinking. And I actually did say to her, "that'll be right. Of course, I've got a hole in my heart." Happy days. I couldn't believe, and I thought, "oh my goodness, what's going on here"

Bill Gasiamis 8:29

Hole in the heart's really common. And it's not that serious if they know about it and get it early. And then I've interviewed a whole heap of stroke survivors who have got PFOs. And it's been revealed because they've had a stroke, and then they've been treated for the stroke. And then they've also very rapidly been treated for the PFO.

Bill Gasiamis 8:50

And they're kind of sorting out the cause of the stroke. And that gives a bit of relief. And I suppose certainty going forward that that issue is sorted and then they're not going to have another stroke because of a peer foe. But, at this stage, you don't know about the hemochromatosis?

Shelley Christie 9:10

No, no, I knew. I was diagnosed with hemochromatosis at very young age. But back then the doctors, you know, they just said "Oh, you'll be fine. You're female. You have your periods, and, just every now and then go and give blood." So that

was in my very early 20s. So I didn't have a hematologist. I didn't have any of that. And I think hemochromatosis is becoming a little bit more common.

Shelley Christie 9:45

It's a genetic to both my parents. I'm a compound so both my parents are carriers for me to have it. My mom's brother has it. He hasn't quite you know, he's older. So it's actually really quite serious. because it causes. So when I in stores in your organs, it can cause heart disease, kidney issues, liver disease, and clots.

Bill Gasiamis 10:13

So how did they manage it?

Shelley Christie 10:15

So I'm now under I go, and I have any calvini sections. So they just take out, they're gonna take out your blood. And then you're behind. It's amazing,

Bill Gasiamis 10:32

It's amazing. Do you remember ever hearing somebody talk about the old days at the turn of the last century where they used to do a thing called bloodletting or they used to, like open up a blood vessel?

Shelley Christie 10:43

That's basically what it is.

Bill Gasiamis 10:45

Oh my gosh. Blood donatable. Any part of that blood donatable?

Shelley Christie 10:51

They don't donate mine. But I'm not too sure. Actually, that's a really good question. I know they don't mind. Because I go through private but I do know, I do think now. If you've got hemochromatosis, the Australian blood bank, you can go through as a patient there.

Bill Gasiamis 11:15

And they'll regularly see you. Yeah,

Shelley Christie 11:19

I believe so. Yeah. But I just go into my hematologist. So I guess my cardiologist is there as well.

Bill Gasiamis 11:27

Yeah, So how often do you need to give blood?

Shelley Christie 11:31

Um, well, thankfully lately. Normally, about August, I start to feel a bit off. And then I start probably from August, once a month through to December. But I've just had my iron levels checked, and they're actually really good.

Bill Gasiamis 11:53

What do you mean? This always happens in August?

## **Neurological Fatigue After A Brain Stem Stroke**

Shelley Christie 11:56

So I tend to have some VT sections. So like for four or five months, and then I'm okay. For the rest of the year. But everybody's different. Some people have to have it every month, especially men. Men have to because they don't have periods.

Bill Gasiamis 12:19

Yeah. Okay. I see. Right, so your nature is supporting it for the majority of the year, but then it gets sort of, to the end of the year. And then there's a whole bunch of build-up that needs to be resolved by bloodletting, a little more than usual

Shelley Christie 12:40

I can generally tell because my joints get sore, my legs are really sore. And I get really tired, I get more tired on top of the stroke fatigue.

Bill Gasiamis 12:51

Okay, yeah. Bloody hell. That additional fatigue, that's the thing that I suffer from, I've got a thyroid condition, and the thyroid condition causes the same neurological fatigue as the stroke does. So I never know whether it's my thyroid or the stroke. Mostly, I think the thyroid is what's affecting me. And if I'm not on to taking my kelp supplement, which has iodine, if I don't take that, especially over winter, I do notice that I experience dramatic fatigue, and I've just gone through about of it last two weeks.

Bill Gasiamis 13:30

And it's at that point where when I'm fatigued, honestly, I just cannot do anything. It doesn't matter how much I want to, nothing's getting done. And I don't even call people or respond to them or anything. I just can't do it. And people take it the wrong way. But I apologize later, you know, when I say "look, I've been stuffed or I can't deal with what was happening"

Shelley Christie 13:52

You shouldn't have to apologize. But we do.

Bill Gasiamis 13:55

We do. I think I agree with we shouldn't have to, but they're never going to understand what we're going through. So there's only one way to for them to understand that and we don't want them to understand by being in our situation. So tell me about neurological fatigue. From your perspective. What's your experience of it like?

Shelley Christie 14:15

So if I'm not good, and I should know better at slowing down. I have two children who play lots of sport and I work, so when I get very tired, I have left side weakness. Especially my hand and I can see it in my face. My left eye drops a bit, which has done for a long time actually. So I spoke to a neurologist about that, but I just get so vague and you know, I can be standing there.

Shelley Christie 15:05

And I have had actually people say to me, "Oh, we kinda think you don't like us because you just kind of you don't really.." And I'm like, "Oh, was that that day?" And they'll go "Yeah." I'm so sorry. I'm just really particularly tired. And I'm very vague. Like some days I can't even get words out, or my short-term memory is really bad. But then my long-term memory come back. It's really bizarre. And I've struggled with that. Some days, I think I can't speak properly. But I asked people and they're like, "no, no, you're okay." But I feel like I can't.

Bill Gasiamis 15:53

Oh my gosh, so, and you look alright for somebody who's had a stroke.

Shelley Christie 15:59

Oh, how many times have I heard that? If I had \$1 for every time someone said that to me, I'd be rich right now.



Bill Gasiamis 16:04

Yeah, yeah. #youlookgreat. I get it. I get it. So in the end, you get vague, so I get cranky. I don't get vague. I get short tempered.

Shelley Christie 16:22

Actually, you know what, I do, too.

Bill Gasiamis 16:27

And then the next couple of days are all the apologies, who do I have to bring in apologize for being an idiot to and not speaking nicely. But I explained myself these days, and I know more, I know exactly what happened more, more so. So I'm a little bit a lot better at making good, because when I'm cranky, and short tempered, oh my gosh, I hate being that way. But I just am because I don't mean it. And I'm not trying to be it.

Bill Gasiamis 16:58

And I'm trying to not be it. But I just cannot avoid it. And I'm gonna have to stop it. I don't know if it's even possible. Or if I have the cognitive ability to stop myself before then. Because you know how normally you can learn to stop misbehaving in a certain situation, because somebody says to you, "Hey, that's not appropriate." And then you go, Ah, okay, you don't do that in this particular situation. Okay, I won't do that anymore. I can't do that with this crankiness and fatigue. I've actually got to go through the cycle of being an idiot, regret it later. Apologize, a day or two down.

Shelley Christie 17:37

Yeah. And it's really difficult to explain that to people, I think my crankiness is because I'm just exceptionally tired. All the time. All the time. I don't think I've had a day in the last three years where I haven't been tired. And, you know, you just plod along. You just keep going, like, oh, anyway, I just keep going. And I do that for my kids too. But sometimes I'm my own worst enemy. Because I don't take time to rest. And I have to admit COVID was actually quite good for me. Because it forced me to rest.

Bill Gasiamis 18:28

Nice, nice.

Shelley Christie 18:28

Because here in Victoria, Melbourne, we were one of the most lockdown cities in

the world. And even though I'm on the peninsula, where clusters regional they put us in Metro. So we were in all the lock downs.

Bill Gasiamis 18:42

Yeah. So we had in the two years, leading up to November of 2021, November, December 2021. We were locked down for the best part.

Shelley Christie 18:55

Yeah. I mean, mentally, I think, looking at statistics and stuff for people who are young stroke patients, who depression is huge. And I know I spiraled quite rapidly. But I've had a history. So, you know, had postnatal after my children, but after that, when I was going through rehab, they also gave me a psychologist because I couldn't understand why this was happening

Bill Gasiamis 19:44

To you. You took it personally.

Shelley Christie 19:50

And I didn't have, I didn't feel and I don't know If anybody listens to this, you know that I don't want to offend anyone because I had a small, a really good small network, who were really supportive to how they could support. Because, like I said, if you haven't been through it, it's really hard to understand.

Shelley Christie 20:20

So I pretty much after, just kept going, so people would just see me and then like, "she's fine." But I wasn't. I wasn't, it was hard. And, you know, even for the carers, and your family. So my two girls and my husband, just as hard for them. I haven't heard it, but I don't think people talk about that a lot.

## **Family Struggles**



Bill Gasiamis 20:54

Not at all. My wife did it really hard. My family members did really hard, but my wife took the brunt of it. Because when it happened to me, my kids were teenagers, my two boys were teenagers. And they were pricks, they didn't care about anybody, about them themselves, you know, just the standard teenage thing. And I couldn't explain the condition. And I couldn't explain how much I was struggling and how much help I needed. Also couldn't do that with my wife. But she's kind of like, head down, bum up kind of person.

Bill Gasiamis 21:28

She's just brutally advancing the course, you know, whatever the course is. And at the same time, she's studying. She's gone back to university studying her psychology course. And then in the same time, her mum passed away. I've had a stroke. It was just mental time, right. And she was in a tough and I was at counseling. So I was doing way better than her from a psychological perspective, because I immediately booked myself into a counselor.

Bill Gasiamis 22:06

It had been a habit of mine. Anyway, I'd been doing that since I was 25. So by 37, I had a 12 year relationship with this counselor. But I wanted to get her into counseling, I knew that I was causing harm by being a stroke survivor, inadvertently. And I knew that she was lacking the resources because she went from a mom, to being a mom and a human and herself. And you know, all the things I showed them to fight as to a caregiver of a stroke survivor of her neurological patient. There's no support, there was no book that she was given.

Bill Gasiamis 22:46

There was no "call these numbers if you need them." There was nothing, there

was just go home. And you know, he'll be right. And man, I wasn't right. I was hallucinating. I was having episodes where I thought maybe this is happening again. So we were always worried and panicked. We were anxious. The amount of times I went back to hospital and I'm not sure if I'm having another stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 23:11

You know that routine? Oh, my God, there was so many of those times, she would have to drive me on all hours and drop everything. And she had no support. So I hear what you're saying, your girls, how young were they?

Shelley Christie 23:27

So I've got two daughters. Kayla was seven and a half. And Kendall was six. So little, very little. And you know, they still suffer. Especially my youngest. You can see it, she has that worry that I have. "Is this going to happen again? And in next time, am I going to die?" I can see that in her. Like if I say "oh my god, I've got a headache."

Shelley Christie 24:11

And you see the look on her face. But how do you explain that to children, even your partner or your husband or your wife? I mean, it's always in the back of your mind. I mean, even on the day of the heart surgery. I'll try and say this tearing up, because I tear up and that's another thing, I get very teary. I hear that a lot from stroke survivors

Bill Gasiamis 24:39

Pseudobulbar Affect

Shelley Christie 24:42

Oh really, well that's something I don't know

Bill Gasiamis 24:43

You need to Google that, the pseudobulbar affect it's a condition that impacts your emotions. The emotion sense of your brain and they make you cry over the kitty cat tripping over

Shelley Christie 24:57

I'm shocking. If somebody says to me, because I've done a lot of work on myself since then. So the stroke isn't. I don't see it as time goes on, I don't see it as such a negative thing. I actually, I've done a lot of growth for myself. Which is good.

Bill Gasiamis 25:20

Personal Growth is amazing. That's when I started, I started at 37.

Shelley Christie 25:24

Yeah, I've chosen to have boundaries. And certain people aren't in my life anymore. And that's, you know, can be sad, but at the same time, it's good for me. Because they used to make me feel like I was the issue. I actually had somebody say to me, and she was being very honest, and I really respect honesty.

Shelley Christie 25:57

And she actually said, it was after stroke. She said, "you know, a few people think your mental health issues are an issue." And I, from that day on, I was like, "oh, okay, I can understand that. Yeah, I can see I can, you know, I appreciate that. But, you know, maybe time to move on."

Bill Gasiamis 26:22

Yeah, it sounds like she was saying that on her own behalf. Not representing other people.

Shelley Christie 26:31

Anyway, moving on, but my kids, yeah, I talked to a girlfriend a lot. And it's amazing how you find your tribe, through trauma. So I have actually found a really good friend, who has been through a different journey of cancer at the same time, in 2019. But we call it the same, but it's different. It was a different experience. But it's the same, we get it. We understand when we speak. The pressure you have of feeling like "oh, what if this is gonna happen again?"

Bill Gasiamis 27:21

Yep, absolutely.

Shelley Christie 27:24

what I'm saying like when my kids on their morning of the PFOA. And on the anniversary every year, you know, I think about on the way to the hospital, I text three people, three friends, who I loved dearly, and I send the same message. And I said, "Hey, just on my way to get this heart fixed. Do you think if something happens, can you help Craig raise the girls?" And honestly, I didn't know if I was going to come home that day. And I know that people think "oh, dramatic, dramatic". But it's not, it's really tough.

Bill Gasiamis 28:11

Absolutely. It's not dramatic. I did that, I had to go into brain surgery. So a week before that, we had buried my mother-in-law.

## **Facing The Mortality After A Brain Stem Stroke**

Bill Gasiamis 28:22

And I was getting into brain surgery. So death was possible. And all sorts of other dramas were possible. We didn't know what they were, I pretended like it wasn't gonna be a thing. Like everything was going to be fine, catch you on the other side. But I didn't really truly feel 100% confident in that outcome. I made good with as many people as I could before I went into surgery, because I knew that I may not have an opportunity to do it again.

Bill Gasiamis 28:52

And my kids, explaining that to them and then pretending being you know, the Aussie blokes that they are pretending that everything was okay. And yes, she'll be right that soon or so, you know, I read through that I saw right through that. But they did what they could do, the best they could do to feel like that was supporting me. And the people that I've spoken to, you know, I call the podcast, the recovery after stroke podcast.

Bill Gasiamis 29:20

But if you just remove stroke, and replace it with any condition, heart, cancer, whatever, child loss, we're all recovering from something, the only reason why I call it recovery after stroke is because that's the people who relate to me, specifically had a stroke and vice versa and I write to them, so it works. It's niched, but trauma is trauma, regardless of how it comes when we learn that we are mortal. Then she gets real, and that's what happened to me.

Bill Gasiamis 29:54

I had three blades, so it was fair enough that I had the whole "will happen again" routine come up, and I had to get really good at paying attention to my body and taking action. And instead of being feeling like I had no control in the matter, I started my personal development, you know, I say course.

Bill Gasiamis 30:19

My personal development started and then I became responsible for everything

that I could control in that journey. And if it ended badly, well, I did the best I could. And hopefully, I'm a good example for how you need to tackle these things. And maybe people will learn from my example. And I would have left like a great legacy, so to speak. But there was no way to sugarcoat it. It was the first time in 37 years where I actually realized that "hang on a sec, we're not here forever." And it could happen anytime, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 31:04

So. Yeah, it's tough. So you're early on, and I'm 10 years out all up, right. So I've done a lot of these conversations. And I think I've kind of settled the trauma a lot, because by speaking about it so much, it's become a bit of a memory. Rather than, I'm not reliving all those experiences, they're kind of like in the past, do you feel that your anniversary is making you relive certain things,

Intro 31:37

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. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery.

Intro 32:07

If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) where you can download a guide that will help you it's called 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, [recovery after stroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) and download the guide. It's free.

Shelley Christie 32:41

Absolutely, because I don't think that I've really looked at it and dealt with it in a way that I can look at it as each anniversary comes on as a full celebration. Because I am very grateful for my husband and my daughters for getting and helping me get to the hospital very quickly. Because if they didn't, it could have been a different story. So I think about all that, but when it comes to the

anniversaries because it's always Mother's Day. Right? So the on a Saturday and the Sunday was Mother's Day.

Shelley Christie 33:28

So it's always you know, and it's in the in the kids don't know what to do, husband doesn't know want to do, you know, do we celebrate? Do we not celebrate? But as time goes on, it changes. And I just need to learn to accept the changes that have happened with me physically and mentally.

Shelley Christie 33:53

I think as time goes on. I don't want to forget it because I think you need to have it there to appreciate the growth because I have done a lot of growth. And, you know, in some of it was well needed. And I think that as time goes on, I just get more proud of what I have achieved. Because three months after that. Much to my husband's dismay, I called him one day and I said, Oh, by the way, I've just registered for soccer.

Shelley Christie 34:43

He goes pardon? I go Yeah, I did the soccer moms program. And he's like, really? I'm like yeah and I went and I learned that I couldn't run backwards. I learned all this stuff that I could and couldn't do anymore. And that's confronting. So as the anniversaries come along, I kind of go, Ah, yeah, look how far I've come.

Bill Gasiamis 35:16

I can't play soccer anymore. I can't run the way I used to. And soccer was not something that I did all the time. But it was lovely to kick a ball on the ground and just push it along and whatever. But that's not possible. So I've taken up riding an electric bike and like an e-bike.

Bill Gasiamis 35:37

And that's really, really amazing. Because that gives me that sense of adventure and freedom that I used to experience. And it doesn't make my left leg go tired, because it has mechanical, motorized support with pedaling at the beginning. And it supports you until 25 kilometers an hour. So you're hardly breaking up a sweat, you know, when you're pedaling.



## Connecting More



Shelley Christie 35:58

But you're still out there. And I think that's the key for survivors is that, you know, if you've had the mental health support, I think that's a big key to getting over that barrier of the change that's happened. And, you know, the losses that you've had, it can be friendships, family, it can be, your cognitive, it can be, you're still grieving for the change in yourself.

Shelley Christie 36:38

But then when you have the support that when you notice all that kind of stuff, there's so much more out there that you can do. And I think if us survivors, that we talk about it more it's really important, because I haven't really talked about it until now.

Shelley Christie 36:59

I think it's you know, the journey for me, I think I'm starting to connect because I disconnected from the stroke community. Because I often got told, you've recovered so well look at you, you know, know, so I just started telling myself, even though I've had a stroke. I'll just leave that there. And I don't want to talk about it. Who wants to talk about it?

Bill Gasiamis 37:35

Yeah, I don't think a lot of people want to talk about it. To be honest. So you know what I do, I choose the people that I can talk about it. So last Friday, I had to catch up with a guy called Antonio. And Antonio was a guest on my podcast. He's

a Melburnian. And he was a guest on my podcast really early on. And he was overseas when he had his stroke in, I think, Thailand or something like that.

Bill Gasiamis 38:03

I'm just checking to see what episode he was on. So people who want to listen to it can Oh, he was on episode 29. And he had a brainstem stroke as well. And we catch up once a year or over COVID. We didn't, but we catch up once a year. So we went and had a catch up. And we talked about stuff and some stroke stuff related to other passions that that we have.

Bill Gasiamis 38:26

So he was a musician, he used to play guitar, he can't play anymore. So now he's swapped to one handed piano. And then yeah, he's become a music producer. He produces his own stuff and some other people's stuff. So you know, he's keeping active, he's about 10 years out as well, if not a bit more.

Bill Gasiamis 38:46

So things do kind of change and settle down. But he still experiences fatigue, and it still has a left side, I think rightside deficits. So he walks with a limp and his arm doesn't work 100%. But we we go about, we go about sort of becoming normal, whatever that means.

Bill Gasiamis 39:09

And then applying that to what we live with, which is all of the aftermath of our strokes. So he's done that. So we got together for an hour, which we spoke about fatigue, stroke, all that kind of stuff. And then we spoke about what we love. So it kind of works.

Bill Gasiamis 39:30

But when I meet with other people who are not like Antonio or yourself, we speak about other stuff that are not stroke related, because they don't know how to interact with that part of the conversation. And they haven't got an experience yet. So thankfully, we don't. They can't relate. And so that's really good. But it is those really cool people who I discovered after my strokes as well, who were the ones that came out of nowhere who surprised me.

Shelley Christie 39:30

I had it couple of those. Whoah didn't expect that. Didn't expect you to come back into my life or come into my life. Love it. But yeah, it's a fascinating journey on

what happens with who, what, when, wow people handle it, some don't handle it very well at all. And that's okay because it is confronting. But it is a really interesting journey to go on.

## **Stroke Is The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me**

Bill Gasiamis 40:47

Yeah, I've got to the point where I'm writing a book that's called Stroke Is The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me. And I know that is not for everybody, I get it. And this is not about, I had a fantastic time having a stroke, it's not about that. It's all about the personal growth that happened. And if you think about, again, I look, all good, you know, look fine. But if you think about the people who have had amazing personal growth from their conditions, just look at the Paralympics.

Bill Gasiamis 41:29

Those guys would never say, Oh yeah I love not being able to walk again, or move my arms or my leg or whatever. But they're playing basketball wheelchair, and they're winning gold medals. So there's no doubt about it, that they would not have been playing basketball wheelchair, if they didn't have the trauma that caused them to be in that situation. So the trauma is not the part that they would love.

Bill Gasiamis 41:56

But they definitely love the opportunity to receive a gold medal at an Olympics as a result of the fact that they've chosen to turn a shit situation into the most positive situation they can and it paid off in massive dividends paid off, because they got to travel the globe, represent the country, meet people that are like minded and going through similar things.

Bill Gasiamis 42:21

Perform at the highest level in their sport, in their field. So it's like, okay, I don't think I would give it back I'd love to have these learnings without the trauma. But I don't think it's possible for me personally, to have this kind of learning. Without that kind of trauma. I wasn't, I wasn't that wise.

Shelley Christie 42:47

And I'm the same. If it didn't happen to me. I wouldn't have learned a lot about

myself, or others around me as well as going through the growth. You know, I'm not perfect, nobody is. I certainly have, you know, pissed people off in the past. And because I'm very honest. A bit too honest, sometimes.

Bill Gasiamis 43:17

Brutally honest?

Shelley Christie 43:18

Sometimes, through the growth I've changed. And I even have to the way I think because how my brain works now, because I could be in mid-sentence and I could be like, what was that? You know, so they're the kind of things that I am very grateful for, even though I had the stroke, because you're right, you can't have something like that happen and not learn from it and change and you got to accept the change that comes.

Shelley Christie 43:58

Because I don't if you don't, I think that's when you really struggle mentally. I mean, I know in the last couple of months that I have been so busy that I can feel the fatigue it's coming, it's gonna hit me like a truck. I can feel it, husband's going away a lot, kids got sport, I'm doing soccer.

Shelley Christie 44:35

I'm now working for Football Victoria which I'm really happy about. Yeah, go into schools and coach we're trying to do the participation for schools. But that hasn't come with you know, some days are hard, but that kind of growth and I don't I think I'd be here, doing all this stuff. If I didn't choose to, like, go with the change that came from the trauma and you learn from it?

Bill Gasiamis 45:15

Yeah, I agree with you. I mean, I wouldn't have been doing the podcasts or any of the stuff that I've done that's related to stroke, I wouldn't be writing a book. I had no idea what a book be about, or how to string one together? Or who helps for that.

Bill Gasiamis 45:31

Like, it's just completely different. It's just a different version of me that I really love. And I kind of get a little bit well, you know, I'll use the word jealous, for lack of a better word, I get a little bit jealous that there's other people that have written books already.

Bill Gasiamis 45:47

And for them, maybe it's been easier, or they got paid to write a book or all this stuff. It's like, okay, well, I'm just gonna bloody write one. And I don't know whether anyone's ever gonna pay me to write one or not, but maybe they'll pay me to read one. And that's all right. But that's been so hard. That's, been one of the hardest things I've ever had to do is write a book. Because I've started in lockdown, one of our mini lock-downs, I don't know which one. And it's been more than a year now. And I'm up to Chapter 7 of 10.

Bill Gasiamis 46:25

And it's so hard to focus and concentrate and get the words out of my mind and put them onto a page. And it's on my book coach, she's been coaxing me along and managing me and all that kind of stuff. And she reached out two weeks ago. So we can have a catch up on Zoom, because we have a monthly catch up. And I didn't even email her back for two weeks.

Bill Gasiamis 46:50

Because I had so much trauma and fatigue and trouble getting back to people about stuff. This is that phase that I was going through. And I just said, I just said to her an email yesterday, because she sent me another one going, hello, hello, where are you? And I said, Look, been really fatigued, whatever, struggling at the moment.

Bill Gasiamis 47:11

But I made an appointment for two weeks time to catch up with her. So it's really rewarding. And it's going to be great when I've done it. And I've had this idea in my mind that I'm going to write another one. But I don't think I've got it in me to write another one.

Shelley Christie 47:30

I hear a lot of you only live once, like, yeah, you gotta live your life. And it's true, it is true. But sometimes, you know, if you want to do it, you just got to do it. If you want to do your second book, you'll do it. I wish I could read a book, that's one thing I can't do anymore I really struggle. I you know, because I'm so tired. And generally you hop in bed at night. You're reading a book, right? I can probably only do one to two pages. And that's about it.

Bill Gasiamis 48:12

I'm still that way. I was the same. If I don't read in the morning. There's no way I'm reading at night. No chance.

Shelley Christie 48:19

Yeah. And I do really miss that.

Bill Gasiamis 48:23

Audiobooks. Have you jumped on to the audiobooks?

Shelley Christie 48:27

I have done a couple but I fall asleep so quickly.

Bill Gasiamis 48:36

I listen to them when I'm doing long drives. And yeah, I get a topic like, you know, at the moment, I'm listening to The Socratic Dialogues. Yeah, exactly. It's a conversation that was had 2000, or two and a half thousand years ago, by the Greek philosopher Socrates.

Bill Gasiamis 49:05

He's talking to another person about the way that thing that they interpret things and what do things really mean. And they go into these really deep levels of Yeah, but if this, and it's ethics, it's about ethics, right? So if this is that, well, then what about that, and they keep going, and it's a really awesome conversation to listen to, that I could never concentrate enough to read.

## **It's About Deep Thinking**

Bill Gasiamis 49:28

And that's the reason why I'm listening to such crazy titles, because I could never read them. Whereas now I can listen to it. And I get the gist of what the books about and how I can apply that to my life it's because it's deep thinking. Not just making a judgement about something at the base level and then leaving it at that and then sticking with that no, but investigate deeper and deeper.

Bill Gasiamis 49:59

And that's What I think a personal development has been for me I've learned that I identify as this guy who has a need to say things. All right, I have, I've always had a need to express myself, but I haven't allowed myself to I have put it back because I was afraid of criticism, I was afraid of being told I'm wrong, or you

can't say that, or this or that, or whatever.

Bill Gasiamis 50:25

Whereas now, I'm on a podcast. So I've gone from having a voice and not expressing it to having a voice and expressing it. And now how I'm expressing is what I'm interested in is how deeply am I going to go into some of those conversations, and we're going to have him just at a face level, don't want to hear from my, my guests like you and say, What happened to you, I had a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 50:47

Alright, what else this happened that happened, that's a pretty boring, well, let's go deeper into the emotional into the psychological, you know, into the physical, and see how that conversation has way more layers to it than just what happened at the surface.

Bill Gasiamis 51:05

And that's how I run my life with other people, I very rarely talk to people about the football. World, great weekend football, you know, and that player, this and that player that I'm not interested in that kind of talk for too long. I love deep, meaningful conversations with the people that I hanging out with.

Shelley Christie 51:25

Open person. And you know, I'm very much like that. And I think that can be sometimes perceived at all actually quite confronting for some, because, you know, sometimes when you're an open person, and you're honest, you can actually trigger the other person without you even realizing that you're triggering them.

Bill Gasiamis 51:52

Especially when they say how are you? And you tell them I'm shit today.

Shelley Christie 51:57

Oh, God. I'm really tired. And then you sort of sometimes, I think, I God why did I say that, you know, they're just gonna think I'm so whinging all the time. I'm just so dramatic, or I'm lying, but it's not the case at all. It's just, you know, the truth. And, you know, I think more people who talk about stroke survivors and because everyone's different, and experience things differently, have different support levels.

Shelley Christie 52:00

You know, I think the more we talk about the mental health side of it, and you know, things like enable me from Stroke Foundation and all that kind of stuff, like, I think, see, I haven't engaged in that very much. I still don't know why I can't answer that question to myself. Like, I reach and then I pull back. Then I reach out and then I pull back. Like I'm really surprised that I'm on this today. But I think I'm ready to have a voice help others.

Bill Gasiamis 53:13

What's surprising about it? What makes you think you might not have made it here?

Shelley Christie 53:20

I'm because since the stroke and the heart surgery, I've kind of got the feeling that nobody really wanted to talk about it. A couple of people have, but that's my interpretation. Oh, here we go again or we don't you know, don't want to hear that.

Bill Gasiamis 53:43

You do have to choose your audience. I don't speak about it to everybody. And some people I avoid speaking about it the downers, I try and avoid them. And the people who have heard about it the most, my wife and my family and my kids, so I don't do them the stroke thing forever, and I don't do that to them.

## My Mum's A Hemochromatosis And Stroke Survivor





Shelley Christie 54:14

In fact, oh, you know, I was talking about my youngest. You know, she does, I can see it in her she does stuff up, I'm gonna try not cry with this one. They just recently had to do a presentation on somebody they admire and it could have been a sports person, a movie star, could have been anybody they wanted and she did me I'm like looking at it. I'm like, what? And her first line was my mum's a stroke survivor, and she plays soccer.

Bill Gasiamis 54:56

Deep thinker that one.

Shelley Christie 54:58

Oh, she's very much like me. And I was like, really? You don't want to do anybody else? She's like, no. I go but why? She goes because she just kept going mum. Because of what you're doing. So that was a couple of weeks ago. I think that was a trigger for me. Okay. If my 11 year old can see that I'm doing really well, I shouldn't speak more about it and help others.

Bill Gasiamis 55:38

Yeah, you should speak about it in the context that you're overcoming, you're moving on regardless, you're learning, you're having a growth, you know, in that context here, if, if we're, if the conversation is all, which it needs to be still, you still need to be honest and say, I am struggling today, or I can't deal with this or whatever.

Bill Gasiamis 56:02

And then, but I'm learning I'm trying I am I'm listening to my body, etc, then it's a better thing, because you're giving an example of how to deal with the highs and lows, and how to overcome it. If I was just going to my wife and saying I can't feel my leg all day, every day. Why can't I feel my leg?

Bill Gasiamis 56:23

She's gonna eventually gonna get sick of it, but I can't feel my leg all the time. And it's like, Well, okay, whatever. I can't feel it anymore. I just keep going. I feel it in a weird way that's different from my other side. But I still feel it. So I'm like, I still feel it. Okay. It's all good. No worries. I reckon what I did is I took my kids to therapy with me. And my wife, everybody went to counseling with me. And we addressed the elephant in the room.

Shelley Christie 56:54

We haven't done that all together. The kids go, I went. Husband no.

Bill Gasiamis 57:06

It doesn't surprise me.

Shelley Christie 57:08

He was bought up on a farm.

Bill Gasiamis 57:11

He might cry in front of everybody doesn't want anyone to watch him cry?

Shelley Christie 57:18

Not well received sometimes, he's been my biggest supporter. He should be really proud of himself, because he didn't get a lot of support from his mates. In fact, he got stuff all to be honest. There was one maybe or two that didn't really so he kind of just went to it himself for a bit there. My auntie and uncle were great. You know, but they don't live near us. But yeah, I think that's a really good idea that, people should as a family talk about it.

Bill Gasiamis 58:00

Yeah. I sucked them in at the beginning. I said, come for a drive with me, you know, I'm gonna go see my friend, my friend, Patricia. And, and then it should be like, hey everyone, I gave them a bit more information than that, you know. But, yeah, I made it as low key as possible so that I wouldn't make a big deal out of it. And then we just turned up, and they were asked to stay outside initially.

Bill Gasiamis 58:30

Can you guys just hang out for a little bit in the waiting room, whatever. And then it was like, can you come in here for a second I wanna ask you something? And it was kind of done like that. So we had a really cool way of making a part of conversation and addressing it informally, even though we were in a formal place.

Bill Gasiamis 58:55

And what I did with my wife was like, I'd like you to be there. So I can say a few things to you under supervision. And it was more about me, not her saying things to me. But then my counselor was definitely going after her for a little bit, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 59:15

So we got a lot out of that, that really made a big difference. And as a result, when my kids became teenagers, they would say, can I go and see the counselor on my own. And I was like, I was thrilled because that meant that now they had a tool that I never had growing up, which was when things are feeling tough, or you don't know a way out or something, go go get counseling and go get a support.

## **The Importance of Mental Health**

Shelley Christie 59:42

Absolutely and, you know, I and I'll keep going back to it time and time again, you know, the mental health is a key part of recovery. A huge part, you know, If you don't look after that, you're just not gonna recover.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:05

It's 1/3 of the recovery. I mean, emotional is a third, physical is a third and psychological is a third. And without one of those, you're really doing yourself a disservice. Mental, mental health, and count and counseling for your mental health is supporting the emotional health.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:26

So that's a real good loop that occurs, then you can do other emotional intelligence courses and discover things about your heart, etc, that help you to advance your mental health, you know, there's a loop there. And of course, physical health feeds into both of those, and they all feed into physical health.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:43

So it's really important, because they all become they're all interconnected, you know, it's the holistic approach when you're handling all of them. And I think at any at the emotional stage, you're also dealing with spiritual, so if you if people are listening and not relating, but then they understand spiritual recovery, whether that's religion, or whether that's something else.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:08

That's done at the emotional stage, that's kind of where that sits, sits in your heart, you know, it's not something that you do in your head. But getting your thoughts rearranged and sorted out into a direction that's supporting your life going forward, is much better than having muddled up and being continuing

going down a path that you're not happy with, that you've never been happy with, that has got you negativity and difficulties in life. So you can adjust that you just have to relearn a new way to go about things that are supportive.

Shelley Christie 1:01:49

And that's, like I just said, before, you know, last couple of months, I'm really starting to, because I've been so busy. So the focus on keeping well, and, you know, fuel your body, right, and all that kind of stuff. And getting some good sleep. However, we do have a 13 week old puppy. So I'm not getting website. But, you know, doing all that kind of stuff is, you know, really, really important.

Shelley Christie 1:02:22

And that's what my girls are learning through going through counseling. Yeah, and yeah, so they, their tools are there, mindfulness tools are really good. You know, I wish I had that kid. But, you know, however, I haven't now, so that's okay. But that's, if I can say to anybody, if anyone's who wants to listen to this, you know, as a survivor, if you get on top of the mental, you can, you know, the physical stuff with rehab and everything. You can just keep going.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:01

Yeah, the mindfulness is a really good one. I think mindfulness has become this thing. You know, that's just really marketed really well, and people do. But what just in case people don't understand what mindfulness does, what it does, for me how I use it is it keeps me in the today in the now in this moment so with you, rather than thinking about the past, that the past.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:24

And therefore the past being dredging up the traumas and all that stuff. Right now I'm enjoying the moment. When I need to deal with the past, I'll be in counseling. And while I am not going to counseling, I'm making note of the things I need to be aware of from my past, so I can speak in counseling about it so I can heal the trauma.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:47

Now going forward, where I'm worried about the future, that's anxiety that's worried about something that hasn't happened yet. And it's robbing my life from being enjoined from having enjoyment in this moment right now with you and having a lovely conversation. So, again, when I come up with something that I

might worry about in the future, that is that I don't have proof for even though I have a previous example of it, I'm not necessarily, there's no real proof that it will happen again.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:18

I make a note of that again, and I stop worrying about it for this moment. And I'm going to take that into counseling, and I'm going to talk about it in counseling. So mindfulness is going on right here right now. I'm safe. I've got a roof over my head, everything's okay. And there's no need to think about the past or worry about the future right now. I'll do this right now. So the writing it down and the using it as kind of discussion points automatically takes it out of your head.

Shelley Christie 1:04:53

Yes. That's so true. I had to do that yesterday. I had a journal for a while and I'm was actually coming back from working down at Phillip Island and I was coming back and I listened to one of your podcasts. I couldn't remember the lady's name. It was just a recent one.

Shelley Christie 1:05:09

And she was speaking about her stroke and the PFO closure. And she was talking about how she felt. Having the surgery and after, because you asked her, you know, is there any side effects from the PFO. And while I was driving listening to this, I got triggered.

Shelley Christie 1:05:33

Because it brought back the heart surgery. So because I had the heart surgery, 17 days after the stroke. So I you know, and here's the thing, this is, you know, all the mindfulness that you can do. And yesterday I had to, I'm driving along and I'm like, I'm feeling really hot.

Shelley Christie 1:05:57

I could feel because she was describing how it happens. And I'm like, yep. So you know, after heart surgery, you have to lie down six to eight hours, straight, you can't move, basically. And when I stood up, they got me up. All the blood come out. Because I've had so many blood thinners. And I was just, it was all just everywhere. And I thought about that.

Shelley Christie 1:06:29

And then I thought about the feeling in my heart days after that. Like I could feel

it. In fact, I had a heart monitor on two weeks ago, because I'm still having fast heartbeats. In fact, some nights it wakes me up, like up somebody's gonna paddle. You know, they're the things, you know that you've mindfulness if you learn the tools, it can help you take deep breaths and go. Yes, that happened. I'll think about it. But yeah, that happened yesterday? Like, oh, I actually didn't think that would happen again. But it did.

## Memory Triggers

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:10

Yeah, I don't realize how triggering some of these episodes could be for people. Because I don't often get triggered by anything anymore. That's related to this, because I've done a lot of work. And I do from time to time have a cry on a pot on the podcast and all that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:27

So yeah, it is amazing how much other people's stories you can relate to, because you listen to it, and it's your exact symptoms or situation or whatever. And then that just shows that that's where the work is that you need to do. That's absolutely exactly that trigger is where the work is. Because if you're not being triggered, then that's kind of been an experience you've had, and it's, you've resolved that with yourself somehow. But when it is a trigger, that means that it's unresolved and it needs to be dealt with somehow.

Shelley Christie 1:08:05

And I think, you know, some people think that triggers are negative, but I think as time goes on, I think they're positives because you have to learn to deal with that trigger. Otherwise, you can't, you can't move on sometimes.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:25

Yeah, there are positive from the perspective that they're information and you need to absolutely take that information and do something with it in a positive direction. But if you're being triggered by everything, and you're expecting other people to change around you, because, you know, you're, you're too sensitive. Well, you're getting it wrong, that trigger one, I've put a couple of trigger warnings on a few of my episodes, but I don't like trigger warnings, because how many can I possibly have? And how do I know?

Shelley Christie 1:08:54

You'd probably have a trigger warning for every episode to be honest, like because there's always going to be somebody listening to it, and they're gonna get triggered. And they might not even realize, at the time, they might go I don't know what that meant. But you're right, you can't put it on everything.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:14

And if you get triggered, that's where the work is. That's all it's time for you to step up, grow up become an adult and discover how to get through it and overcome it. I mean, I get triggered by lots of things as well but they're not as effective in debilitating me and making me a smaller version of myself anymore. They're not they don't do that anymore.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:35

They just remind that okay, more work needs to be done here you know, and I address that some way shape or form whether I read about it or whether I go to counseling about it or whether I YouTube about it, you know, something like that. It they will help because I like to get curious about why I'm being triggered.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:54

So what is it? Is it this is a days or whatever, once I understand it and then I can address it in the context of well, the trigger is related to this, this and that. And I no longer need to be triggered by being teased because I'm not a child anymore.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:14

And teasing doesn't really mean anything. And that was relevant when I was seven or eight. And it's not relevant now. So I don't really mind what people call me. It's their problem, not mine. So that's a really kind of basic example. But that no longer triggers me that was relevant. In 1985, it's not relevant anymore.

Shelley Christie 1:10:38

Yeah, absolutely. I got given a pack after, when we left the hospital. Margaret, who was an amazing story coordinator, she was fantastic. She gave us a pack, which had lots of information on it. And I still have that pack, sitting in the same spot.

Shelley Christie 1:11:07

And every now and then, I go and read a couple of things. Just to remind myself, you know, if I feel a little bit anxious or memories are coming back for me that I'm

not liking. So I'll go back, and I'll read something, and then I'll go on, if something happens, I just need to do that. And that's how I deal with that. Sometimes, nobody knows that. Everyone knows it now. Not even my husband knows that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:47

I get it. You've got a process in place, you've got something that empowers you, instead of feeling like you're always at the whim of this thing whatever it is. Now, you've actually got a bit of control that you've taken back. And it allows you to calm the nervous system and breathe. And go, Okay, no, I have got a plan for that. Yeah, that's alright.

Shelley Christie 1:12:15

I wish there were lots of Margaret's around who I had at Frankston hospital, she was amazing. And I really wish that everybody who gets discharged, gets given the information that I got given. And even just her her presence. Because she explained things really well. And she said, And I'll never forget it, she actually sat me down. And she said, this is going to be really tough for you, once you walk out this door.

Shelley Christie 1:13:05

And I said, okay, and she goes, No, this is going to be really tough for you, but it will be okay if you use the tools. If she hadn't said that to me. I don't think I think I would have walked out there going, oh, I'm looking good. Got my left side back. Happy days. Because I always had it in the back of my mind. This is gonna be tough. Because she said it. But if she's had if she hadn't said that, I would have been worse.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:49

Yeah, your expectations don't get met. And then it's all going through it again. I thought by now this and I thought by now that and none of this has come and what does that mean?

Shelley Christie 1:14:02

She actually also said your relationships are going to struggle. You're gonna struggle. Your kids are going to struggle. She was just so raw and honest. And every year I send a box of chocolates to the ward. I don't even know if she's still there and she gets them. But I still send them because it makes me feel good. And hopefully if she's still there, she feels good, and the nurses. I think if we had all a



lot of Margaret's I think it would be better for the survivors.

## **Compassion Goes A Long Way**

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:51

They're rare breed the Margarets. They definitely are. I know what you mean the compassion that some people show is just so good. It's next level, and it catches you by surprise. And then it really impacts you and makes you remember it, allows you to remember that I know that I had a nurse who was just being a nurse.

Bill Gasiamis 1:15:16

But in the middle of the night when my temperature was through the roof, you know, he was stripping me off, and he was covering my body with ice, you know, like, completely frantic, to make sure that my body temperature was coming down, this is after the surgery.

Bill Gasiamis 1:15:33

And that day, before that evening, they had taken out the catheter for urine. And in my days, like he said to me, I'm so sorry to have to tell you like his whispering in my ear. We got to put the catheter back in. So I said, whatever, just go for it. They put the catheter back in, and then he called doctors and he had people there.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:10

And he had requested all these blood and all this stuff. And he never got what he wanted back from the doctors. So the next morning, when I had stabilized, and my neurosurgeon was doing the rounds. He was still on shift, and she was debriefing getting a debrief what happened overnight.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:32

He was giving you the debrief. And the attending doctor was there as well. And my neurosurgeon said, where are all the blood tests and the results? Can I see it? And the nurse looks at her and goes no I haven't got them back yet. Like, did you order them? And he goes, yeah, I ordered them from the doctor next to us, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:56

And my neurosurgeon looks at him and says, where are the blood results that

your nurse requested from you? And he came up with some excuse and my neurosurgeon just ripped him another ass hole, she just destroyed him in front of the nurse in front of me and everybody.

Bill Gasiamis 1:17:18

Next time, a highly proficient nurse says to you to order something, because of this reason or that reason, do not delay, make sure you get those results for that person immediately, etc. So that nurse, I just remember how he treated me and I don't remember his name.

Bill Gasiamis 1:17:39

And I wished that I was able to contact him and say thank you, and let them know, I don't even know which ward I was in. Like, I have no memory of anything after brain surgery for quite a while. So it's all a haze. But I just remember feeling really safe, and really cared for by this nurse. So I know what you mean, they're very rare, and they really make a massive impact on on you.

Shelley Christie 1:18:08

They do. And I think at the time you don't realize, because you're in shock. You're trying to absorb everything that's just happened. But as time goes on, you start to have those memories and of the people. And it's really important to have that, that support. And even if it's just one or two people, like even if you've got that, you know, hold on to that.

Shelley Christie 1:18:45

Because there are a lot of people out there that don't have a lot of support. And like I said at the start, I'm very grateful. But I thought I probably would have had more. But that's not the case. But the ones I did have and I still do. You know, forever thankful because I'm still not very honest with them about how I actually I just don't get going. But they probably know they're probably just like, Oh, she's just faking it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:25

Yeah, they know more than you think.

Shelley Christie 1:19:27

I don't think I give them good enough credit.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:33

That's good. Gratitude really does help with recovery. It's been proven gratitude helps tremendously with healing and recovery and getting back on track.

Shelley Christie 1:19:45

And I've never had that prior to the stroke, when I think about it, I was always like, why does this always happen? But now it's is different.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:01

Yeah, I love it. I love the amount that you've grown. And the conversation that we've had. It's been really deep. You know, that's really Socratic conversation that we're having here. How d'you like that? How good am I? You know what I love? I love that picture of Madonna in your background.

Shelley Christie 1:20:19

Oh, it's not Madonna.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:20

Oh my god. Yes, it is.

Shelley Christie 1:20:23

I don't know who it is.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:25

That's Madonna.

Shelley Christie 1:20:29

Actually, when I'm looking in it doesn't look like her.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:34

20-year-old Madonna. Okay, well, there it goes. You just learned a little bit more about me and my childhood.

Shelley Christie 1:20:44

Madonna, she was one of my faves.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:45

Oh my gosh, she's still one of my faves. I don't like the way that she's evolved her face. But other than that.

Shelley Christie 1:20:55

She must like it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:56

Yeah, without a doubt, I really appreciate you reaching out and actually then coming to and committing to the next stage, which is being on the podcast and having a chat about it. Thank you so much.

Shelley Christie 1:21:10

No, thanks for having me. I was very nervous. But no it was good chat. And if people listen and listen to them all, like I've just started listening to a lot of them I'm gonna actually go and listen to Antonio's. Because you have a lot. What are you up to? 200? And what am I?

Bill Gasiamis 1:21:34

You're gonna be 213 or 214. Antonio's 27.

Shelley Christie 1:21:39

Yeah, right.

Bill Gasiamis 1:21:41

Yeah, If anyone's listening or watching and you're on YouTube, tell me whether or not you think that's Madonna in the background. If you see what I see. Yeah, just let me know. But thank you so much for being on the podcast. I really appreciate it. All the best with your recovery.

Shelley Christie 1:22:05

Yeah, thank you very much, and to you and to everyone else out there.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:09

Thanks for joining us on today's episode. To learn more about my guests including links to their socials and to download a full transcript of the entire interview. Please go to [recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes](https://recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes). If you'd like to support this podcast, the best way to do it is to leave a five-star review and a few words about what the show means to you on iTunes, and Spotify.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:31

And if you're watching on YouTube, comment below the video. Like this episode, click the notifications bell to get future episodes and subscribe to the show on the platform of your choice. Sharing the show with family and friends on social media

will make it possible for people who may need this type of content to find it easier. And that may make a massive difference to someone that is on the road to recovery after their own experience with stroke. Thanks again for being here and listening. I really appreciate you see you on the next episode.

Intro 1:22:59

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

Intro 1:23:17

All content on this website at any length blog or podcast or video material controlled this website or content is created and produced for informational purposes only and is largely based on the personal experience of Bill Gasiamis, the content is intended to complement your medical treatment and support healing.

Intro 1:23:33

It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice and should not be relied on as health advice the information is general and may not be suitable for your personal injuries, circumstances or health objectives. Do not use our content as a standalone resource to diagnose treat, cure or prevent any disease for therapeutic purposes or as a substitute for the advice of a health professional.

Intro 1:23:54

Never delay seeking advice or disregard the advice of a medical professional, your doctor or your rehabilitation program based on our content. If you have any questions or concerns about your health or medical condition, please seek guidance from a doctor or other medical professional if you are experiencing a health emergency or think you might be, call 000 if in Australia or your local emergency number immediately for emergency assistance or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Intro 1:24:18

Medical information changes constantly. While we aim to provide current quality information in our content. We did not provide any guarantees and assume no

legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, currency or completeness of the content. If you choose to rely on any information within our content, you do so solely at your own risk. We are careful with links we provide however third-party links from our website are followed at your own risk and we are not responsible for any information you find there.