

# 53. How Drugs Led to Stroke - Stephen Heaney

## Drug Abuse And Stroke

This is an interview with Stephen Heaney a long time drug addict, we discuss how drugs led to stroke after an evening of heavy drug abuse.

3:53 What happened to Stephen

7:14 The day of the stroke

11:55 Didn't recognize his dad.

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36:43 Feeling blessed

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Transcript

Stephen 0:00

It was great. I could wear business shirts long sleeve shirts, so you couldn't see nothing. And I was always a good hire so I can hide everything. I could smoke a joint, right? Smoke the ball. Couple balls before I spoke to you, honestly, I'm sorry. And you won't even know except my eyes be red or something. Yeah, now, I was in able to hide drugs because I was proficient, using or not using, still did my job because I knew that was my mind. You have to do your job.

Intro 0:33

This is recovery after stroke with Bill Gasiamis. Helping you go from where you are to where you'd rather be

Bill 0:40

Stephen. Welcome to the program.

Stephen 0:43

Hey, awesome. Thank you for having me, Bill. Thank you.

Bill 0:46

Yeah, you're welcome. I really appreciate it. When somebody contacts me and asks to be on the program. It makes it a lot easier so that I don't have to do the following up and chasing people and trying to find people. So thanks for doing that I really do appreciate it. Mate tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

Stephen 1:05

Well, when it happened to me, I have his way those kids I'm from the United States, I'm from New Jersey. A little that happened to me is I have a past drug problem. And it took me a while to overcome my demons. And because my demons it actually bought me into having five strokes. Because I was bad with cocaine, so I had five of them

It happened on the left side of my my brain. It happened in August 2018. And the story was, is that um, I was hanging out with Well, we'll just say a girl that took a little bit extra money off me at the time. But um, we had fun. We were doing our little thing and there were illegal drugs at the time.

Due to the fact that I was doing so much recently, I put my mother away. So I'm sorry if I'm going to jump like crazy and go all over the place. But we actually had to pull the plug on my mother in July of last year. And me and my mom were real close. She's a big reason for me at this moment being alive. And what happened was, I was doing so many massive amounts of drugs and other things that they couldn't find in my system. They were shocked. I was still alive.

When they did screen on my system, they found chemicals that were needed coming up to them. Yeah. So So I believe somebody or the person I was getting from just at that point, I didn't care what it was whatever it was, I was trying to grab it. Basically, I'll tell you I was at the verge of trying to kill myself. I had nothing left.

Bill 2:58

Yeah.

Stephen 2:58

You know.

Bill 2:59

So how old are you Steven?

Stephen 3:01

I am 32 years old. I am single no kids. Yes. So ladies if you hear that in America, I'm single. I'm not the best looking guy. Okay, I walk with a cane. All right. I am a cutie Adam Sandler look a-likes. All right, right there. You ladies got big brown eyes like Sandler or someone see this? I know. Yeah.

Bill 3:22

So tell me about, so just tell me. Let's go back a little bit. Let me see if we can understand. So you're 32 years old, but last year in July so in 2018 your mom was unwell and passed away. And that led you to being feeling in certain ways and led you to abusing drugs. Prior to that, were you the type of person who went down that path and and did those types of illegal drugs?

## What happened to Stephen



Stephen 3:53

Yes, you are correct Bill. I started using drugs from an early age with marijuana peer pressured into it you know, wanting to be cool hanging out with everybody from marijuana led to lots of things like cocaine, and then eventually led to heroin. And it got to a point where throughout my late teens and my 20s I cared more about drugs than my mother and others around me. I cared only about drugs by next Hi, where am I gonna get it? How am I going to get money how am I going to do this.

And throughout this throughout this whole time I worked. I graduated high school. I went to college and failed out to many parties ya know, so it wasn't like it came from broke home. I come from nothing and I resorted to that it's I've chose to do it. I am a social person. social butterfly. I was always out there. I like to get high because isolation to me.

Being an only child, I would pay for people to get high honestly, just so I won't be alone. I would honestly have people around me for that simple fact. Just to get high with.

Bill 5:11

Yeah. So how many years would you say you doing? were you doing drugs?

Stephen 5:17

15

Bill 5:17

15 years? Yeah. Do you feel and do the doctors say that? What? That the drugs were responsible or in part responsible for what happened in your brain?

Stephen 5:33

Yes, they what caused my alma my injuries were self inflicted by drugs.

Intro 5:40

If you've had a stroke, and are 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?

Doctors will explain things, but obviously, because you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you find 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 AfterStroke.com](http://recoveryAfterStroke.com) and download the guide it's free.

Stephen 6:49

And I've learned we cannot change the past. I've done drugs I did em, I've been in those places. I've been to the worst of places but I've been to the best of places. Yes, I was given a choice.

Bill 7:02

Yeah. So tell me about the day of the stroke or

Stephen 7:06

yes

Bill 7:07

the time leading up to that. What did you notice that was different in your body?  
How did you become aware that something was wrong?

## **The day of the stroke**

Stephen 7:14

Well, tell you truth. I had no clue not that aware. Because what happened the day of the stroke it was actually pretty funny. We have a local county fair that comes to our town once a year. And at the county fair, there's this ride called the twister. They call it and basically it puts you in like a ferris wheel type roller coaster flips you around like that.

So after hanging with my so called good friend I call my sister Anne Valentine excuse me, I mentioned her name, but she's the closest to my father right now. I have to family. Me and her husband went in and we are all you say lack of a better word, like to have fun and flip it. So we kept flipping it and flipping it and all we would do is just flip that thing and it was a great time. Upon that we are heading home. I had different car than her and I decided okay, it's going good dad decided to make a call to a friend. And I had some extra money so I had stuff with me and I had and I went picked up this friend.

Bill 8:29

When you say stuff do you mean drugs?

## **Taking drugs led to stroke**

Stephen 8:31

Drugs? Yes, I did drugs with me already. So I went to go pick up this friend and we got back to my house. And no lie yep. But naked have fun. You know with drugs. Okay, that plain out, can't refuse it but yes, that's what happened. And I remember coming into my room, getting it ready, and just falling to the floor.

And I remember telling the girl I said or please call the ambulance called the air. Because I felt my whole left side just fall on my wooden floors. I have wooden floors and it went, bam. And thank God that yes, my left side went the whole thing I was like call call please.

Luckily, this girl that I don't know too well had the courtesy to call the ambulance after she did a little cleaning up, even though it's a federal law and our country that I don't know if nobody else knows but if there are drugs present at the time, and cops are coming to help someone that may be odd or something. A person cannot be arrested for drugs, no matter what drug it is,

Bill 9:48

Right ok.

Stephen 9:48

The most important thing is saved the person, get the person alive. You know, they can deal with the drugs later time. There's no excuse for it.

Bill 9:56

Yeah,

Stephen 9:57

but the matter is a person's life and drugs.

Bill 10:00

Yeah,

Stephen 10:00

the give you a one ride ticket and then eventually Yeah, so I was able to get dressed like I said we had fun I was able to put some clothes on

Bill 10:13

after you collapse you are able to still get dressed? So it wasn't that dramatic yet?

Stephen 10:19

it wasn't as dramatic I know I felt and I felt it coming and I knew cuz prior I've had incidents where my head sometimes seizures or sum so I do on clothes I said call the ambulance call she called the ambulance, they got here. She helped put clothes on me more and they got me and I just passed I fell asleep. I had no clue were my wallet was, drugs where I didn't care it was just me. And if I didn't have

this local girl or this girl here.

Bill 10:54

You would have been alone

Stephen 10:55

I would have died, I was all alone.

Bill 10:57

Yeah,

Stephen 10:57

I have no one and We didn't know supposedly what ever. I get to the hospital. They tried waking me up. And I woke up like sort of like saying. gibberish and knocked back out. So two days go by, and I finally wake up. And I'm looking around the worst feeling in my life I've ever had. I say, I wish no one. And I feel sorry for people with dementia or someone that forgets because I had five minutes of amnesia.

Bill 11:34

Yeah,

## **Recognition problems**

Stephen 11:34

I had just five minutes. I'm laying in this hospital bed and I'm looking at these people, doctors. My father was present at the time, too. And I looked right down. He said, Who are you? Who am I? What is this? Where am I? I didn't even know what a bed was.

Bill 11:52

You didn't recognize your dad.

Stephen 11:55

No, I didn't recognize no one. For the first couple of days. I had no clue where I was. After I woke up I started speaking saying, my voice was sounding I was speaking gibberish. I knew what I was saying. I knew how scared I was,

Bill 12:09

yeah,

Stephen 12:10

they induced a coma, they induced me into a week long coma. And after that coma, I woke up like nothing happened. I'm laying in bed like, I know who I am, where I am and what's going on. And I'm starting to think like, what happened?

Bill 12:26

Yeah,

Stephen 12:27

and I have to say that yes, I'm blessing for God. And this has changed me because I've always been spiritual. But I was laying there and the doctors couldn't believe

Bill 12:44

that you were waking up?

Stephen 12:46

Yes.

Bill 12:46

Wow. Okay. Do you know exactly what type of stroke you experienced? Did you experience one that will get clot or a bleed?

Stephen 12:56

It was, it was a clot and

I Got the paper and the best describe it is that because I had five of them it was the same artery, the same valve that clotted and they all clotted up and like they burst one after another I start bursting on the left hemisphere of my brain. So they started the birthday said five. And I thought maybe I had TIA cuz for accuracy. I'm remembering everything I know who I am now. You know, I'm moving my ligaments, I'm able to move my limbs. And I'm reading some of this history and it was till recently by Dr. throughout my glasses. And she said, she said, What are you talking about?

You had five strokes, five actual strokes, not just TIA's look at you. You had five strokes

Bill 13:49



proper

Stephen 13:50

I said,

Bill 13:50

blown stroke serious strokes.

Stephen 13:53

Yes.

Bill 13:54

So then when you woke up from your induced coma, you're going through the process what are you experiencing on your right side is the numbness is there you can't walk wherever you want with your body?

Stephen 14:08

When I was with my body in the hospital they would not allow me to stand or get out of the bed unless I was in a wheelchair or I was assisted, like it was pretty embarrassing that I had to be showered, I had to be held for the bathroom. Everything was wheelchair so you calling for people everybody knows in the hospital. Hey, hey, help, help me. And the funny thing Bill and the great thing about this is after the hospital stay because I was in the hospital a good month before they transferred me over to a rehabilitation, nursing home base. Basically, I I basically they kept me on they won't let me walk. The exercise they were doing they grabbed the back of your pants. expect you to walk

And I haven't used my legs now and a good two and a half, three months. So they were like jello. I remember I don't know if anybody else who had a stroke out there I remember using stuff to grab on to like I was spider man holding on to the wall because they wouldn't let me unless I had someone so I'd be in the bed now I got bathroom and I got to, I'm good the bathroom. So I jumped on the wide telling my roommate this guy Joe I'd be like Joe I'm going to the bathroom. Look at me Joe man I'm holding on to the wall.

Now trying to get to the bathroom and I made it and I remember one time I had a fall, going to bathroom I thought I'd be able to do it and I fell

Bill 15:42

Yeah.

## Balance Problems After Stroke

Stephen 15:42

And thank God i'm young, because I took a big fall and I had big bruising and they were scared that I broke some bones.

Bill 15:50

Yeah.

Stephen 15:51

So.

Bill 15:52

So tell me, David, did you before you woke up so you're in the hospital? You're in a

Stephen 15:59

yes.

Bill 15:59

induced coma. You're in bed for about three months before you finally got to get into rehab. Did you have brain surgery? Or was there no brain surgery?

Stephen 16:10

No there was no brain surgery Bill at the moment. What they were doing they were looking at it how do I best explain it? He OD'ed he something happen in is brain, wow he had these five strokes, okay it happened

Bill 16:23

i hear ya, I hear ya. so you so what happened was you went through this process of excessively doing the drugs over a long period of time you've been doing it for a long time you then after you you lost your mom you were doing the drugs excessively that one thing led to another you ended up collapsing. You ended up in hospital and then you're in hospital for three months before you go into rehabilitation. And you finally get to rehabilitation and what are the some of the things that you need to re-learn how to do? Obviously you need to learn how to walk and I would imagine use your arm. Did you have speech problems, memory

problems any of that kind of thing?

## Short Term Memory Problems

Stephen 17:02

The memory problems, long term memories, which I'm shocked and a lot of my memories I have, but you may ask me do something short term like, a lots been happened me I walk into a kitchen and I forget, you know, like, why am I here? Actually, to stop like, why am I here we are talking as you hear me? This happened less than a year ago and God willing, God is the reason why I'm talking like this.

Bill 17:29

Yeah,

Stephen 17:30

I'm walking. And I like to say more. I go to JFK Johnson, which is in New Jersey at good rehabilitation hospital. I go two times a week. And they have I was miserable at first, you know, being struck with this illness. No young kids have this. Everybody was old.

Bill 17:48

Yeah.

Stephen 17:48

And everything. So I got in this case, I quit smoking cigarettes. So that's a good thing.

Bill 17:55

So you were a smoker too.

Stephen 17:57

Yes, I was smoker at least a pack a day.

Bill 18:01

Yeah,

Stephen 18:01

I quit smoking cigarettes.



Bill 18:03

So tell me about So tell me about so you're in hospital now you you had a jobs. What happened? Like how did you get in touch with your employer? Okay, they just ended your employment.

Stephen 18:14

Yeah, yeah, he came to see me twice in the hospital in the east side I couldn't make words out. And this is a wonderful guy. He taught me a business of restaurants when I work selling tabletop, and he taught me the business and I was doing good. And a lot of my clients that I had Edward Don on, you know, I was able to Trump National Golf clubs in New Jersey, like the Gotham in New York which is a famed restaurant, a lot of these big hotel chains, Roosevelt and Hilton's restaurants. I was able to get my product into be used by now.

Bill 18:55

And you were because you were out of action for such a long time the only thing that he could do was let you go because he, I imagined your employer needed to replace you because they had still business to attend to. And they weren't certain on how long your your recovery would take. Would that be accurate?

Stephen 19:12

Yes, that's correct. And also a big thing. Why is writing because I right side, I can sort of use my hand but writing, I can write my name. But it may take me five minutes to write a simple two or three sentences.

Bill 19:29

Yeah,

Stephen 19:30

so cap out.

Bill 19:32

And I imagine you at one point lost the ability to drive is that what happened also?

Stephen 19:38

In definitely. Yes, it's suspended indefinitely. I got there from the DMV. I'm back and never job again. Well, I could drive I would have to go through tests again. And everything be gone from independent driving, doing everything on my own and having

Bill 19:58

Yeah,

Stephen 19:58

now I can't

Bill 19:59

Yeah. So, you're at home now on your own? Do you need care? Does somebody needs to be there to help you out to do certain tasks or are you getting to the point where you're, where you're able to look after yourself?

Stephen 20:15

At this moment in time, and it's been seven, eight months since the accident, I am grateful by God that could do a lot. I do have my father and I was mandate to go live back with him. Because someone has to be aware, you know, at the moment, I do pretty much everything my own laundry, I can bathe myself which I have trouble I just need someone present in case I fall in the tub or someone present there. While I'm taking a shower. Not in the same room.

Bill 20:44

No,

Stephen 20:45

just be around the case something happened. It's like you feel like a burden on people with this.

## **The Challenges For Carers Of Stroke**

# Patients

Bill 20:51

Yeah. What do you got to understand these, Stephen that people are not used to doing these types of tasks, most of them have never needed to do it or help anybody else.

They're just regular people going about their business. And then all of a sudden, caring for somebody who's had a stroke is a really complicated thing. They don't exactly understand what happens in the brain and how that makes you feel, and what the challenges are associated with it because they've never been in that situation. So we don't really want to give them too much of a hard time.

And if you just put yourself in their shoes,

Stephen 21:24

yeah,

Bill 21:24

not many of us would have not many of us would have woken up one morning and decided that we're going to go out and care for people who are doing are doing a tough because we don't have the time because life is like that in its really busy. We've got stuff to do. We've got our own lives, to lead chores, all that kind of stuff that we have to do. So. It's a big shift for somebody to make it their life about somebody else and to do that willingly, because they've got bills to pay. How do they know how they sustain their own lifestyle when these things happen it's very dramatic.

And care is often door very, very tough. You know, even if you are living with somebody who's, you know home, who you're going to start to rely on that person caring for you is doing a really tough because they didn't have the skills doctors and nurses, they get a hospital after many years of training, and then,

Stephen 22:21

yeah,

Bill 22:21

imagine what it's like to be a care of somebody who has a stroke and you've never had any training, it would be really tough. You know, you did a really good job of

you did a really good job of making it possible for your body to get really unwell man. I mean, at the beginning, didn't you? if you put the same amount of energy into getting your body better, you're going to get amazing results. So you were doing four monsters a day you're doing drugs, you're doing a packet of cigarettes a day. I mean, it is a miracle that you're still alive and I'm so glad that you are we get to have a chat about

Stephen 22:56

well thank you

Bill 22:57

So tell me about, Did you have some kind of withdrawals now from the drugs that you have taken for such a long time that you're no longer taking once you're in hospital? Were you dealing with that as well?

Stephen 23:10

I'm gonna tell you this. This is a big thing why I was pretty mad the hospital system that I am on in medicine called methadone right now for the heroin addiction 35 milligrams, which is a real low dose by standards. I go every day, I take a dose and there are people there. Let me tell you, I see people there. I see what goes on. Okay. I don't involve myself in it. I get my medicine. and I come home.

Bill 23:41

I was gonna say did you feel like you were doing drugs to deal with emotional problems or other challenges that you experiencing is that I know you said you were doing part of that because you wanted people to be with you when you buy drugs for other people, etc. But apart from using that to have people in your life where you're also doing it as a coping mechanism were there some things that you were trying to suppress

Stephen 24:08

the big thing when I feel my choice of drugs not only like you said this seclusion by for people accept that deal. But I chose do drugs because I chose to do and I want to do it. I wanted that x excitement rush online that adrenalin rush I wanted that high. And I will say that majority of the drug addicts if you ask some way because I didn't just I intravenously use drugs. So I pushed it to the limit. And most times people like that if you ask them question, you happy with your life

they'll tell you look, I'm just waiting for our last shot to go out high and they're just waiting to die hot. Because they're miserable about something.

I have had depression, whether it be parental issues, mental issues whether it be marital issues, whether it be anything people use as a coping mechanism they say poor me poor me and they try to use something to cater to them no all of a sudden I have excuse why do. I have excuse. There ain't no shoes you choose to do it. Like so many people they say like say no to drugs It is that easy. Just Say No,

Bill 25:27

but do

Stephen 25:27

you don't want it?

Bill 25:28

But do you think that's like other other resources where they don't have the resources to get counselling or they don't understand the benefits of counselling or how counselling can heal emotional trauma and emotional wounds? You think that's part of it?

## **Taking Responsibility For The Drug Addiction**

Stephen 25:44

That is part of it. But that takes the person because that person knows there's help out there because there is. AA anything there's help out there. You speak to a friend, especially a drug addict, circle, one out four people you ask have you ever been to a rehab? Have you ever been hospitalized? Have you ever been in the jail? I guarantee you one out of the four people you ask is you have been jail institutions or hospital?

So they already know the deal when they go at it. It's that's why people it's like, and I cannot understand why I feel sorry, because the tools are there. So not like yes, we do ignore to some extent, but there are the tools there. It's more of the person themselves like say, Yes, I want stop using. Yes, I don't want to do it. Cigarettes, oh their addictive. Yes, they're addictive, but I choose not to smoke.



Bill 26:37

Yeah.

Stephen 26:38

Why?

Bill 26:39

are you at that point? Are you at that point where you've chosen to not use anymore where you've made the decision, that's it, I'm not doing it anymore. And I'm going to do everything I can to change my life and do exactly the opposite.

Stephen 26:54

What I want to do and I will say this Bill, drugs, I'm done with drugs Don't need them I don't have to use for crotch no more. I smoke weed all the men I'll smoke weed every day and I still doing for the medical purposes the card and everything I have it I can get I have no problem I go right there dispenser I believe in it or for and I like the oils for the beeps. And when I look at things it's I'm not trying to get high I'm using for a therapeutically medical level because it does help with the stressors on you know the bones and you know how you feel and some days you don't want to wake up? Yeah, so you've got some pain that you experienced daily? Yes. Yes. What do you feel? muscular pain?

Yes, muscular and spasms I've allies spasm especially my speech. Last time I my speech is stuck. Like out of nowhere I can talk to you fine for like five minutes and then I'll just just

Bill 28:01

I'll just start stuttering I gotta stop and catch myself. Yeah, it's like a fast. It's really interesting. So do you feel like you've got a new purpose in life? You feel like you have a renewed purpose in life?

Stephen 28:15

Yes. And I explained to, I say now like not to have to help want to help but to show people like, I lived through it. I had a bad drug problem. I had it all though. I went to high school, I'm educated. I came from family, I had money. You know, it affects everybody. It doesn't just affect those in poverty city. You know, I lived god bless in a nice house. A family that was okay. But, you know, I had the benefits and now it's better for me to be a catalyst of help to help that person to show. This happened to me. I had because I deal with struggles.

I'm not getting paid. I just got denied for Social Security at my age twice already. I'm now got to go to a judge. And I have to they have to hear my case the state feels I can work. But my doctors take off their glasses and be like, Are you serious? You just have five strokes you can write your name.

Bill 29:16

Yeah,

Stephen 29:16

well, you're telling them I can work. You're telling the government I can work? I'll gladly I want social security. You know, I'm 32 Why would I want gone so security, I could go work, especially, you know, I am grateful and I'm blessed that on Social Security, I do make more in a month than some people ever see in a month they have been working 40 hours. But because of what I did, what risk and what liabilities my company took with me That's why I got paid my amount, but it did. And, to me, I would rather tell people, I mean, now I'm walking now. I'd rather show people that it can be done, no matter who you are. where you are?

Bill 30:00

Yeah,

Stephen 30:02

I do. I do push ups on my stairs. I can't get down on the floor. I'm afraid to get up. I do stair push ups. I drink a lot of water. I took my fish oil pill. I'm up daily.

Bill 30:13

Yeah,

Stephen 30:14

I I just try to keep active. Yeah, that's my problem.

## **Sharing His Story To Help Others**



Bill 30:17

Yeah, so you're sharing. So now you want to share a little bit of your story about what happened to you and how you ended up because of all the decisions that you made in your life, how it impacted your your health and your well being. And now it seems like though, you, and I don't know anyone who's been through what you've been through, before the stroke, I didn't understand that side of, you know, addiction and all that type of thing. I'm lucky like that. But you seem to have done a really massive 180 degree turn and you're going in a completely different direction than what you were on. And that's amazing. And that's astounding. And that's such a good thing to hear what I wondering

Stephen 31:01

I thank God

Bill 31:03

well, yeah, you do have to thank God but also you've got to take a little bit of credit for that as well.

Stephen 31:10

Yes, I do. But I God is been the big thing, because I'll tell you when it first happened I first got all poor pity me why this happened to me why this happened to me. Oh my God, this sucks. I can't do this. I can't walk no more. I had all those excuses of the world. And one day I just, yeah, I just woke up. I just said, I'm tired of making excuses. Like no one is going to shed a tear or turn their head and want to hear me cry when they have their own problems. Yeah, it's time for me to suck it up and do it myself. So you're happy.

Bill 31:47

So you reckon working. It's about taking responsibility now for your actions of the past. And now taking new actions to go forward in your life and be a better version of yourself. Do you strangely feel because I felt that the stroke kind of made me a better person too, and that it was the best thing that ever happened to me. Not physically and that part of the stroke just were it put me in a mental state and and where put me in a. What do I do now? And how do I change my life? Now? I think it was one of the best things that happened to me. Do you have similar feelings? And do you? Can you say that at the moment or not?

Stephen 32:29

Well Bill I would have to say if my stroke and they couldn't believe that I woke up. That's the key thing. So first off, I defied them and I defied death and I am blessed because I feel my mom recently has past away. She went out there and she used the last get out of Jail Free card to save my son, because I've OD'ed before stuff has happened where they had to bring me back to life. So this time, I actually struck out I was actually dead and they brought me back.

They told me I had died. And God willing and I'm going to share this that my friend recently this kid, Scotty, that I was good friends with cousin and come to find out from the friend a call my sister that he had the same reason. The same thing happened to him. But he didn't wake up. He didn't wake up I was praying and he didn't wake up so they legally declared brain dead because his brain wasn't coming back at capacity. They were trying they were trying but they couldn't do nothing and they legally had to put him away. I felt bad because he had a wife a kid a newborn baby he had all this but he had a bad drug past I never knew. Never know he hid it very well.

Bill 33:50

Did you hide it well? Were you able to be fully active at work and participate in your job the way you were meant to even though you were addicted?

Stephen 34:01

Yes, what I was good at at first I didn't construction, which paid a lot of, it help me through my junior college and helped put money in the bank for me. I did construction for many years. And with that money aside, I went into business. And it was great. I could wear business shirts, long sleeve shirts, so you couldn't see nothing. And I was always a good higher so I can hide everything. I could smoke a

joint right before I smoked a ball a couple balls before I spoke to you, honestly, I'm sorry. And you won't even though except my eyes be red or something? Yeah, now, I was able to hide drugs because I was proficient using or not using still did my job because I knew that was my money. You have to do your job.

if you don't do it somebody else will, somebody else will be able to do it. And, ya know, in sales, everybody could do sales. I did it, I took the job from somebody, God willing, God bless, I hope they moved on. And I helped the person that took my job and I hope he's helping the company I've worked for builds better, thats all I can all and it's just feel better. It's a philosophy. You gotta you gotta feel better every day. Like you said before, that 180 degree turn. gotta feel better every day. When you wake up with a purpose. And you say, today is going to be better than the last. Yesterday, was yesterday. You can't change. If we all could we'd all invent the Time Machine go back and change a lot things in our lives.

Bill 34:50

Wow

Yeah. So tell me what do you love to do now? What's the thing that you love to wake up and do that makes you feel good?

Stephen 35:47

Well, the main thing that I've been doing a lot is walking because I took it so much for granted driving everywhere. Now I just walk it feels so good. You know, just walking and like saying hello to people. I'm like, Back engaging in people again like Hey, how's it going? How's the day? Like, it feels so good and it's better I engage and like the things I want to do. It's like, if I take this if I get this done, this is only gonna make me stronger later on.

Bill 36:15

Yeah,

Stephen 36:16

like you said, I am very blessed. I am no child yet. I don't have a wife for no baby mama drama. So I didn't have to bring a child or someone I cared about other my parents through the chaos of 15 years of me. Now I draw a lot of people to chaos, my parents, let alone others, but I didn't have that. And I feel

Bill 36:41

you see it as a blessing

Stephen 36:43

Yes, it's a blessing. It's still very early in my recovery.

Bill 36:47

Absolutely.

Stephen 36:48

Yeah. And my physical therapist said she sees the, you know, like, I want to be better and everything and she said best to me. She's like, I know you're walking with walker every day. So I do those hyphens every time but she's like, don't work against us work with us. I know what you want. I know where you want to be. And I do. Like, I am grateful. And I'm blessed. I could use my body a king. But let me tell you, I people asked me, Oh, is it different is? Is it hard? it's like, yeah, this is the best way to describe it. And maybe you can agree with me Bill, you feel a different way.

On my right side. I compare this having a board and its stiff. Like you're walking, no weight. No, nothing. it's just stiff. You're bending it. You're bending your knee, but you don't feel it bend. You don't feel you can play like 30 pounds, like nothing, but then you put in this arm that can feel it. And that's why I tell people it's like having a board on you is like walk stiff. Yeah. And you have to learn to walk with it. And like you said, it can make you a better person can hurt you or what do you want to do it about it?

Yeah. And that's why I love about it. And like I said, My main goal now is to help more people like you and your website do you allow for me which I am grateful to get my message out there. And when it gets posted and when there are people listen to it, I hope they can take away, the main thing is you have to do it.

Bill 38:24

That's awesome look on that note. We're coming to that point where we have to end the episode. I really want to thank you for reaching out and sharing your story and telling us about how your drug habit caused strokes. I think it's really important that this story is out there and that people get to hear what can happen as a result of stroke wish you well in your recovery. I wish you well with all

Stephen 38:54

before before we close this session, I want to thank you and what you have done the work you've done as well as others across the world. There's more people like myself, like Bill, like others that have the good outlook on life, that want to do something that show, there is more after your stroke, you can still be it. And just remember it's do it yourself, you got to do it because and I want to just say God bless and I thank you and God is the reason if people don't have a spiritual, get God find your spiritual being because somebody myself, I can't explain why I'm alive. Bill, God bless that you're alive and many others that beat this. And don't let anybody stop you. That's all I want to say to those people out there.

And if somebody is in New Jersey, I liked my story and wants to help be a part of it. Hey, you can find me I'm not that hard to find since my name is Stephan Heaney. So not hard to find.

Bill 39:54

No worries. Stephen and what we'll do is we'll put some links to your Instagram if anyone wants to can with you on Instagram, they can go there. And they can get in touch now you don't have instagram? how did we find each other?

Stephen 40:07

I do have LinkedIn. Well, I found you through LinkedIn.

Bill 40:11

Ah thats right

Stephen 40:13

yes, yeah, but I have a LinkedIn you can type in my names Stephan Heaney, like I said and also the the main thing Bill is I just want to be an advocacy for hope for those here in New Jersey whether it be across the world that I have the worst past, yes addiction plagued it. Other things have plagued it. But because of like you said before, and not the greatest thing that happened but a realization that it's all gone, because not many friends god bless I'm in the best drugs have taken our lives. Yeah, God bless them and all the other. God bless.

Bill 40:55

Thanks, Stephen. I really appreciate your time mate

Stephen 40:58

No, I thank you Bill. Thank you and God bless everyone.

Bill 41:02

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