Ischemic Stroke And Aphasia – David Sweet

Ischemic Stroke and Aphasia are what David Sweet has to overcome after becoming unwell while at lunch with his work colleagues at the age of 50.

Facebook

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Transcript:

David Sweet 0:00
It was one of the best decisions of my life to have lunch with my colleagues that day. I mean, because on a normal day when eating lunch by myself in my office, I don't know how many hours would have gone by before a colleague would've said, hey, something's wrong.

David Sweet 0:15
But that's very fortunate because I got care immediately. And you know, I had to go to two hospitals before they could remove that blood clot from my brain. As a result of that. I don't have many physical symptoms like many of your guests have.

Intro 0:35
This is the recovery after stroke podcast, with Bill Gasiamis, helping you navigate

recovery after a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 0:48
David Sweet, welcome to the podcast.

David Sweet 0:52
Thank you, Bill. Honored to be here.

Bill Gasiamis 0:54
It's my pleasure to have you here. Tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

David Sweet had an Ischemic stroke at work



David Sweet 0:59
Yeah, so the reason I'm here is because of what happened on April 21, 2017. Yeah, so I was at work that day, it was a stressful period of my life, let's say at work. And for some reason, that day, I decided to have lunch with my colleagues.

David Sweet 1:21
And most of the days, I always get a sandwich from downstairs and eat at my desk. But on that day, I made this decision to go have lunch with my colleagues in a work cafeteria, and end up being one of the best decisions of my life.

David Sweet 1:41
So after lunch, we went to the cafe or the coffee corner, I guess you say in

English. And after the coffee, we gathered up everyone's cups. And then I noticed that I was limping. When I was walking to the trashcan, I thought, this is kind of weird.

David Sweet 2:08
But then I went back to my colleagues. And then we started walking back to the building we work in and I was thinking to myself, first I don't have time to go to a doctor now about this limping problem, and I felt that my limping had gone away.

David Sweet 2:30
But then about 75 yards or meters later, my colleague, Jonathan stopped me. He put his hand on my shoulder. And at that point, I knew something was wrong. And then I blacked out. And then for the rest of the day, I was kind of coming in and out of consciousness. Yeah, so then I ended up having a stroke that day.

Bill Gasiamis 2:57
So you ended up in the hospital and you're in and out of consciousness while you're at the hospital?

David Sweet 3:03
Yeah, so first in and out of consciousness when I was still at work, and I remember at work, one of the points was unconscious to say, having the realization or dream or something like that my right side was paralyzed and I remember feeling very sad and very angry about this.

David Sweet 3:26
I'm thinking what the hell, you know, because I wouldn't be able to play with my children anymore. It's just not fair. But then I woke up and then the thought went away. And then I had an ambulance ride to a hospital called Andrei Mineo in the town. And there they gave me anticoagulant but then it didn't work.

David Sweet 4:00
So then they had to go for another ambulance ride to another hospital in town and then the doctors did a thrombectomy. And this is an invasive procedure, where they slice a hole in my vein, in my thigh, and then they sneaked up a, I guess, a tube up there, and right into my brain.

David Sweet 4:38
And then they found out where the blood clot was and pulled it out. But then, I

was of course unconscious when they were doing that. So then I woke up that evening in the hospital. At that point, I felt very calm, and then I was surprised that my sister-in-law came to visit me.

David Sweet 5:05
And I was like, wow, it's good to see you. But one of them says, Hey, David, don't speak. So I didn't speak because I was very, very tired at this point. And, yeah, then my wife showed up sometime later. And she repeated herself over and over. Hey, David, I love you. I love you. I love you.

David Sweet 5:30
And I was thinking this is kind of weird. I mean, of course, I love you. And I hear what you're saying. But I think she also said, you don't speak. So I didn't speak. But anyway, I was very tired. So I didn't feel like speaking.

David Sweet 5:49
Yeah, so then at that hospital, I imagined the nurse told me that I had a stroke, but then a stroke in France is an obvious save. So they probably mentioned David Sweet you hadn't, have I have no idea why is. You know, this is I live in France, where I know, I speak in my daily life. But here are certain subjects where I don't have the mastery of the vocabulary.

David Sweet 6:25
For example, medicine, or say, when I go car shop, amas stuck there, because I don't know what the clutch is. And I cannot explain what's wrong with my car. But anyway, so some people told me, obviously, but I had no clue what that was.

David Sweet 6:44
So then I had to go back to the hospital, and there I was for a few more days, and the doctors and nurses told me, still not sure what this was. Then finally, my wife told me, Hey, David, you had a stroke.

Stress at work might have caused the Ischemic Stroke and Aphasia

David Sweet 7:07
And I was very surprised by that because I was thinking thirsty weird. After all, first I'm very fit, you know, I run several times per week, I have low blood

pressure, I don't smoke, I drink moderately, so I'm thinking must be stressed, because,se at this point, it was quite stressful at my work.

David Sweet 7:35
We're in the middle of implementation some new accounting guidance, as we had to analyze many things or ways of doing business at work. So there's a lot of that. And then I had this normal, normal normal management issues.

David Sweet 7:59
I was then as the manager of Europe, Middle East and, Africa teams, responsible for revenue recognition, at my work and so I just had that kind of issue as well. But then, at least in France, and maybe elsewhere, I don't know how it was for you.

David Sweet 8:26
Here in France, following a stroke, they'll do certain tests to try to determine why you had a stroke, for example, they'll do an ultrasound on my neck to see if it comes from the thyroid, I believe. And then one of the tests was I had to swallow a hose, let's say a big kind of tube with a microphone in it.

David Sweet 8:56
They listened to my heart, and then following that exam, the doctor said, you have a leak in your mutual valve in your heart. And even though I was surprised about it, because I went to a cardiologist four examinations, but none of the cardiologists determined that I had that leak.

David Sweet 9:28
And then he mentioned that this was a likely cause of my stroke. And then a year later, yeah, I had to leak repaired. So I had open heart surgery where they stop your heart for about 40 minutes. Go in there and repair the valve.

Bill Gasiamis 9:52
Wow. What a journey man. That's a pretty big deal. You've gone through a heck of a lot in a short amount of time, and more than most people go through in a lifetime. And that's what's interesting about this whole process, there are so many ways to get to the point of a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 10:15
And a lot of the underlying causes often then need attending to as well. And then

it’s a whole journey of getting through both the stroke, and then the heart surgery, and then the stroke recovery, then the heart recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 10:32
What I’m curious about, and then we’re going to talk about all those things that you had to go through. But what I’m curious about is, on the way you on the floor, in the cafeteria, when you were thinking the things that you were thinking about, Oh my gosh, I can’t feel my left side.

Bill Gasiamis 10:48
Oh, my gosh, I’m not going to be able to be active with my family. Was and? And was that the? Were you that aware? And that the first thing that came into your mind that it’s gonna mean all these things in the future?

David Sweet 11:07
Yeah, so I don’t know why I had that. Sinking, because upon exam, I didn’t know how to stroke reading. It was just a thought that came to my mind, you know, and at first, I didn’t know if that was a dream or there. I know if you have dreams when you’re unconscious or not.

David Sweet 11:33
I know when your recent guest, you know, he was in a coma. And he? Yeah, he then made things go into his mind. But there was no, so at that point, I was walking between the buildings and my work, I worked for a large software company in France, and many, many buildings.

David Sweet 11:58
And, then, yeah, my colleague, he put his hand on my shoulder, and then I, sometimes I lay down, and, and he had some experience with strokes before or stroke patients before. So he knew that it the better for me to lie down as opposed to standing up. And then talking to my colleagues later, I want my return to work.

David Sweet 12:29
They mentioned that. Then, my speech was jumbled when I tried speaking, but I remember speaking, that’s what they told me. And then, um, yeah, I work in a big campus in France, about 4000 people, where we have a medical facility at work.

David Sweet 12:52
And so when the colleagues ran off to get a wheelchair, and the real meat to the

doctor’s office at work, as to dinner, I woke up one time that woke up from a stroke, I see America being on the table and into a doctor’s office, and it was doctors, they’re standing around me.

David Sweet 13:14
And then the ambulance people came and then they had to go into the stash stretcher, then go to the ambulance.

Bill Gasiamis 13:21
Right. So you had a pretty rapid onset, and then you had care pretty quickly as well. You were cared for you managed to get there really rapidly and then transfer you immediately to the care of the paramedics.

One of the best decisions David Sweet ever made



David Sweet 13:38
Right. Yeah. So this is what I mentioned. You know, it was one of the best decisions of my life to have lunch with my colleagues that day. I mean, because on a normal day whereas eat lunch by myself at my office.

David Sweet 13:51
I don’t know how many hours would have gone by before a colleague would’ve said, hey, something’s wrong. And that’s very fortunate because I got to care immediately. And, you know, I had to go to two hospitals before they, you can

remove that blood clot from my brain. As a result of that, I don't have any physical symptoms like many of your guests have.

Intro 14:24
If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. How long will it take to recover? Will I recover? What things should I avoid?

Intro 14:39
In case I make matters worse, 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 14:54
If you're finding yourself in that situation. Stop worrying and head to recoveryafterstroke.com, where you can download a guide that will help you. It's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Intro 15:08
These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your condition, but they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery, add to the website now, recoveryafterstroke.com and download the guide, it's free.

David Sweet 15:27
And you have more physical symptoms than I have. You know, there's my stroke was on the left side of my brain. And that gave me aphasia. And I'm still struggling with that a bit, as you're probably hearing.

David Sweet 15:46
But you know, after two days in the hospital, the three kinds of work with this stroke patients, she asked me to just stand up, and then try walking a little bit. And so I walked by, she was holding my arm. And then, I was limping.

David Sweet 16:09
And she said, Okay, now you can walk so you can walk by yourself now. And so at that point, I was walking around the floor, and then limping which also affected

my writing. So it's still even today, six years later, holding a pencil, pen, or pencil and writing is more difficult than it was before.

David Sweet 16:34
I've had to now make sure the pen is in my hand correctly and, and write correctly. But yeah, unfortunately, fortunately, I got the care right away.

David Sweet 16:47
And I understand like, they say, I heard that you begin to care within four hours, that's key. That way that not have so many physical symptoms, find a stroke, and I did get the care within four hours, fortunately,

Bill Gasiamis 17:05
yeah, within four hours, they can administer TPA, usually when there's a blood clot when a stroke is ischemic, and then they'll that'll prevent a lot of the damage to the brain. And then it'll support the healing of the brain a lot quicker.

Bill Gasiamis 17:25
But then some areas have been damaged and impacted. And most people do have to rehabilitate from something.

Bill Gasiamis 17:32
But I have interviewed a few stroke survivors who have had a stroke and had TPA, literally within an hour, and then look completely, perfectly normal, but then they do suffer from fatigue and other symptoms that are associated with stroke, but because it was so rapid onset, and then they got treatment so quickly, there's a bit of a disconnect in their understanding of how serious it was that they kind of feel like, Oh, well, I had this thing.

Bill Gasiamis 18:05
And then I went and got this thing. And then I was gone, and it was alive. And now I'm dealing with the aftermath of it. And I didn't realize that it was going to be such a long journey. And I was going to be on such a path, and I was going to be struggling with different things.

Bill Gasiamis 18:19
Because every other aspect of them appears to be fine. But once the brain has been tampered with, in some way, shape, or form, that tends to be a bit of a bumpy ride to to recovery. Now, that being said, How long did you spend in the

hospital for the first but to deal with the stroke and all the things that you had to overcome to get home?

David Sweet 18:48
Yeah, so as in that hospital for 11 days, the first hospital, and then so in France of these, when you're in the hospital, you can go home for the weekend. If you're not in intensive care.

David Sweet 19:05
Before I went home, we could end and the reason is because the medical staff in the hospital they're also home for the weekend except for the doctors and so forth who were working in the emergency ward and I intentionally said.

David Sweet 19:23
So when at home that weekend then, you know, so my father, he came over from the United States to France, follow him he didn't learn that I had my stroke. And I was quite excited about that.

David Sweet 19:39
You know how my father is here in France and and that weekend, I decided to have a barbecue barbecue is something my father likes and something I like doing as well. And, and I decided to make barbecue and hamburgers. And so I got to a hamburger And then also made buttons.

David Sweet 20:03
And the reason is because the buns that you buy in the store, here in France are not very good. So I make the buns. But then I realized, oh my god, it's so difficult to understand the text in the recipe and then follow the text. And, so I mean, for sure I made some mistakes, but Okay, the buns turned out more or less. Okay.

Bill Gasiamis 20:25
So, what period after the stroke was that?

David Sweet 20:32
Just 11 days. Yeah, and I know, I know, it's for you. So it's so soon.

Bill Gasiamis 20:45
It's so soon, I'm thinking what I would prefer David to have been doing on the 11th day was lying down and somebody was making the food for him. Was what I

would have preferred that they brought the hamburger to you, instead of making every bit of the ingredients and then delivering a bunch of hamburgers to them, but I understand what it meant to you to have him there. So I get it.

David Sweet 21:07
Yeah. But you know, it's part of my nature. I love doing stuff. You know, like, when I'm a gardener, I love working in the garden. I've always been active, you know, and I like doing that, you know, and it's part of me. And so. So yeah, home, making food, you know?

Bill Gasiamis 21:31
There's the enjoyment part of that. How difficult was it? Did it bother you that you realized that you couldn't particularly understand and read the recipe? How did you respond to becoming aware of that?

David Sweet 21:45
Oh, yeah. At that point. Okay, at that point, I felt, okay, this is, this is where it's difficult to understand each recipe. But at that point, I was still convinced that I'd get better really quickly, you know, just like, some days.

David Sweet 22:09
And, you know, just following my stroke, you know, I think yeah, okay, I'll take a month off of work month such then, I think in a month is a long time. And I think, okay, I rest, and I'll be back at work, and I'll be everything we had it was before.

David Sweet 22:27
But then I realized it was a stroke in such a long project process. And, even today, you know, six years later, I, I view myself now, compared to where I was a year ago, and as I differences are still improving my speech and my thinking and speaking at the same time, and so forth. That's the beauty of it. But yeah, the recovery

Bill Gasiamis 22:56
continues, it continues forever. And it's ongoing. And if you're focusing on it, and you're practicing, and you're noticing your wins, there will be wins there. And it's just some people will have a different path to recovery. But, I'm noticing, I noticed all the times when things are better and different, I feel okay.

Bill Gasiamis 23:18

Or I have more days where I feel like I have fewer days where I don't feel okay, more days where I don't notice my deficits, fewer days where I am noticing them, you know, so it continues, it becomes for me, it's become a lifestyle that I live that supports recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 23:34
So the whole lifestyle is about supporting recovery. And I would consider myself very recovered, even though I have these ongoing deficits on my left side. If people ask me, I'm like, Yeah, I'm recovered. Don't worry about it, I'm over it, I'm past it.

Bill Gasiamis 23:53
Because I don't think that I don't think that the stroke is doing my issues or being I think kind of that part of it has resolved and whatever it left me with is separate from being unhealthy or unwell. So I feel healthy. Although I'm leaving with this feeling in my left side and the deficits that I experienced I don't feel unhealthy because of it. Does that make sense? I've got

Dealing with ischemic stroke and aphasia

David Sweet 24:24
Yeah, it makes sense to me. But um, yeah, I understand what you're going through and in a way Yeah, it's like that for me, because you know, I still wake up and I feel like my light right leg is almost cramping up in my sleep, you know, several times per week and I contact you back that that before. It's still to this day, several times per week and that this is now it's it's part of my life now. And

Bill Gasiamis 25:04
yeah, and it's part of your life and it's not impacting you in a way where you feel like you're unwell because of it, you're just, this is the thing that I have to manage. What's interesting about your leg getting stiff when you sleep, I experienced the same thing.

Bill Gasiamis 25:23
So some mornings, I wake up with a cramp, and it's excruciating. And it's just my left leg. And right happens after I stretch it. So you know, have you had the morning stretch after you wake up? If I do that, and I don't forget, and I don't remember, then my leg is going to seize up. And I'll put myself into,

David Sweet 25:46
right, okay, yeah, that's different than mine, because mine is when I'm still in bed. Just before waking up, you're ready to put a timeout? Wait, wake up, you know, that's when they will. Almost cramp. And Mike, my case is more when I'm not thinking about this. Well, that happens.

David Sweet 26:06
It happens more when I am dehydrated. dehydrated. So maybe that is a sign that I didn't drink enough the day before. And so that's when my late cramps up. That's interesting that yours is different, is I thought it was I thought were you with caffeine at the same time. Exercises.

Bill Gasiamis 26:35
Yeah, I kind of make a cramp-up. It's weird. I don't know how I do that. And sometimes, it's too late after I've realized it's too late. I've been a cramp. And then I'm trying to settle it down, and it won't settle down. And I haven't gotten out of bed yet. But it is in bed that it happens more than anywhere else.

Bill Gasiamis 26:52
And dehydration is important. I mean, it's going to make you feel fatigued. It's going to make your brain operate less optimally anyway. But then it has an impact on muscle cramps.

Bill Gasiamis 27:05
And I know Yeah, people with deficits on one side or the other, that often report muscle cramps and pain and stiffness and all the things that we associated with, you know, with deficits because of a stroke. So you're so you're you're living in France, how long were you in France? Or this happened?

David Sweet 27:31
Right. So actually in France before it's happened. It's 19 years. So I moved to France in 1998. Then, I was well from California, and it's working in California. At the point when when I moved over, and I was working for a software company called Netscape is remember that that software company was the first software company that made Internet browsers.

David Sweet 28:03
Before Netscape came along, the Internet was kind of an academic thing that existed, but there was no easy way to access the Internet. And then Netscape

came along and opened that internet up, opening the Internet to people everywhere in the world.

David Sweet 28:26
But I told my management, yes, I'd like to work overseas and eventually had the opportunity for me to come to Paris. Because Paris was a European headquarters. And at that point, I didn't speak French at all, I can say this. Thank you. Merci. Er. Hello, bonjour. But that's, that's it.

David Sweet 28:51
Then Fortunately, for me, or maybe, unfortunately, it depends on how you look at it. The language spoken in the office with English, so then made it more difficult to learn French, because it involved speaking English all day, Reading, English documents, and things like that.

David Sweet 29:11
But I still want to learn French. So I studied on my own hanging out with French people, like on the weekends. And then you gradually or the time I learned French.

Bill Gasiamis 29:26
So not too bad. The French people. We've had some time in France. I enjoyed my time there. But I didn't notice how difficult it is to communicate in French. And to try and have the correct accent and pronunciation of the words.

Bill Gasiamis 29:44
It seems to be very difficult to pretend like you're, you're talking French in that. If I was using Google Translate, for example, and I had a sentence that said, can you tell me how to get to the train station? Yeah, getting reading that in the French way. And then yeah, saying it out loud means nothing. It comes. Yeah. Strange.

David Sweet 30:10
So yeah, actually,

Ischemic Stroke and aphasia

Bill Gasiamis 30:12
I'm curious about your challenge with your aphasia. When you were in the

process of recovering, and you were interacting with people in French, and people in English, what was that? Like? Did you notice aphasia was causing challenges for both languages? How was that working?

David Sweet 30:35
Yeah. Yeah, that's a good, very good topic to talk about. Because for sure, it's more difficult in French. Okay.

David Sweet 30:47
Follow my stroke, okay, it kind of went, my recovery went in waves, you know, right away, just, my wife came to visit me, but it's still not a first hospital, I could only speak one-syllable words, you know, in English, you know, and not, I couldn't speak French, basically, at all, you know, and then two syllable words, and that over time, the English came back, where I can speak fairly fluently.

David Sweet 31:15
So long as I wasn't stressed, or something of that sort of, as long as I was relaxed, I could speak English quite well. But for the French, it was a difficult, different story. And, I'd be curious to hear what if you have other guests of yours, or people listening to this podcast, you are having an English mother town, and they had a stroke.

David Sweet 31:41
Living in a country where English isn't a spoken language, I wonder if my experience is the same as theirs. So it was very much more difficult to speak French, in this case. And I could understand everything that the tummy.

David Sweet 31:59
So as long as I knew that vocab before, I mean, I didn't understand that. But that was the specific topic that I didn't have the vocabulary for. But just on everyday things, it was very difficult. And so and so for example, in a hospital, is it difficult, to get a point, get myself get my point across to the doctors and the staff there?

David Sweet 32:34
Also, going into the store, there's a difficult as well, like, you know, I remember one time, I had to go to the hardware store, and I need to get some special type of washer, you know, and you're screwing and you have a washer between the screws.

David Sweet 32:51
And so I I practiced that before I went through this asked to make sure I could pronounce what I needed to say. And then of course, they say something like they asked me some questions today where I don't I need to need to talk more and describe more and more detail.

David Sweet 33:14
And then at the toll messes me up. So then I don't know what it did. Anyway, they finally got your plan.

Bill Gasiamis 33:26
I'm gonna say this, they are going to say that and I'm gonna get a washer. And then Exactly, yeah. You said this. And then they said something else. And that was? How do you plan? So you hadn't yet for that part of it?

David Sweet 33:38
Exactly. Yeah, exactly. And so that, so that's more difficult. And then, actually, it was quite loose, lonely for a time, you know. You had in hospitals find my stroke. And, and then not be able to speak.

David Sweet 34:04
And that's why I'm curious to hear from some of your guests, you know if the year is English speakers, and had a stroke in a country where you just didn't have the spoken language, and at aphasia. How did you deal with that? And

Bill Gasiamis 34:21
yeah, wow, that was difficult. I had a friend of mine who had a stroke, I think when they were in Vietnam with a family, okay, on a holiday, and they were from Australia. So when they were in Vietnam, and I was trying to deal with the hospital system, it was a mess.

Bill Gasiamis 34:37
I mean, they couldn't deal with them because they didn't have any form of being able to communicate and try and get the message across about what was wrong, and when they were treating him they weren't able to communicate back and explain to him what they're treating him for and what the issues were.

Bill Gasiamis 34:53
So it was a real challenging time, amongst other challenges that they had to deal

with, which is like how do you cope With all the stuff of stroke when you're in a foreign country, how do you also try and get to communicate that and it was unsettling for them?

Bill Gasiamis 35:09
It was difficult for them to feel like they were going to be cared for. Because they didn't understand the hospital system. And they're not, it wasn't the type of system that they were used to from back at home. So there was a whole bunch of issues around that.

Bill Gasiamis 35:24
And then, yeah, somehow they ended up getting back to Australia can't remember the interview was quite a while ago, but it was one of the most, it remains, in my mind, for them has been one of the most traumatizing parts of the whole experience was being in a foreign country and trying to deal with. Yeah, non-English speaking people.

David Sweet 35:47
Right? Yeah. In Vietnam, I mean, I'm happy to hear that your guests got the care that was needed. So I guess their strokes are quite common, I guess, in Vietnam as they are everywhere. Medical staff knows how to care for them.

Bill Gasiamis 36:11
No doubt about it, they'd know, they'd be equipped to deal with it. And they would know how to deal with it. And they would be helping a lot of people and they're saving lives. The but they've hardly ever dealt with nausea, that's coming, you know, stroke or whatever.

Bill Gasiamis 36:27
And then it adds further complication. But they managed to, they managed to get through it. But then, of course, at the same time, nobody knows how much that impacted his deficits and how much. I mean, you can speculate about all those things, really, about what a difference it might have made.

Bill Gasiamis 36:49
But he was overseas. And that was the way that it was and they had to get the best. They had to do the best they could and all things considered. They did all right. You know, they, they got to deal with. They got to deal with it and got him help. And then eventually, he was sent back home, and repatriated home.

Bill Gasiamis 37:09
I think, when he left for Australia, I don't think he was in a very good state. I think it was quite unwell. Oh, yeah. He's still really unwell. Right, and then finally got back to Australia, where he got where he was, I think admitted to an Australian hospital. And then they took they took, they took over from there.

Bill Gasiamis 37:31
But I can't imagine what it's like. That's why I was curious about the French situation. I remember how difficult it was for me when I was in France, trying to just communicate about the train station and those types, right? Yeah, I speak Greek. So I'm pretty fluent in Greek. And I know how I know how simple it is for me to go to Greece and interact with people over there. Because it's no, no big deal.

Bill Gasiamis 37:58
But and, and it's fun to go to a foreign country because I wasn't born there. My parents are Greek. And I learned Greek because of them. And it's so fun to go to a foreign country and learn about them and live with them and get to experience them.

Bill Gasiamis 38:14
And also being able to communicate, takes the experience to the next level. And then when you go to France. Yeah, I don't understand anything. It's so hard. And when you're having a stroke, it's even harder. But it's good. It's I'm glad that you were there for quite several years before then and then re-enlist somehow embedded in the

Bill Gasiamis 38:38
in the system and you understood how things worked. And you were at least able to Yeah, okay, your needs perhaps. And Rebecca, what about your wife? And your kids? Were they French speakers or?

David Sweet 38:51
Yeah, exactly. So my wife is French. I met her in 2000. We got married in 2001. And our children in 2003, and two and five, they're dual, French and American, but didn't France our whole time that they've been alive. We got to the United States for visits and they stayed in France.

David Sweet 39:15

I speak English at home so my kids can learn English and my daughter responds to me in English, with no accents at all. My son who is now on my team, still responds to me in French, because he knows he knows I understand French. And he speaks with a bit of a French accent.

David Sweet 39:39
Different way when it's in a hospital, it was for sure good that my wife was French. And so she could talk to the doctors and understand the system more than I understood the system. You know, even though I lived in France before I hadn't medical issues before.

David Sweet 40:04
There are some things I never dealt with before. For example, the French Social Security, also my insurance for work. Getting money from that, you know, because I never I Okay, this is some found I have a signed a contract when I joined the company, but I think it just never happens to me, you know?

David Sweet 40:28
And so my wife is dealing with those kinds of things following my stroke. And as that for sure that was good. I was gonna say, yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 40:47
yeah, that's all right. So she supported? Of course, yeah. Another Yeah. Another good thing to come out of it. I mean, yeah. What's, what's interesting is that you've been in France for such a long time.

Bill Gasiamis 41:00
And that's why I asked, and you still, even though you had been there for such a while, navigating the system is a difficult thing to do. How old were you when you went to France?

David Sweet 41:14
So when I went to France, I was 31 years old, yeah, 31 years old. And then I was 50 years old when I had the stroke. And, you know, even though I had learned the language, in between times, still working at companies where English is the official spoken language.

David Sweet 41:38
Again, this is a lesson for me being a negative English speaker because I can

write correctly, can speak English correctly. And, in that sense, I have an advantage over native French speakers, because maybe sometimes don't write correctly or speak correctly, and some people, some, I imagine two colleagues who don't speak English at all.

David Sweet 42:08
And so the French to the Netherlands, it is worse for me, if my learning French, because you know, I have so much opportunity to speak French, even though I'm living in France. In that case, during my working days, I'm speaking English. And then and then when I'm at home with my children, I'm speaking English as well.

David Sweet 42:30
And then, and then, but then it's like when they go to bed, then I can speak French to my wife. And then we go to the stores, those kinds of things. I could speak French. And then we have good news with the French people. I speak French there.

Bill Gasiamis 42:45
Yeah, I can see what you're saying you're embedded in an English environment most of the day. So it's really easy to sort of stay in that space and stay in your comfort zone and not get out of your comfort zone, especially early on when you've just arrived and right when you want to get to work and be rational at work and communicate well with your colleagues. Right.

Leading up to the open heart surgery

Bill Gasiamis 43:13
I understand that. Yeah. Yeah. That'd be tough. Tell me about the time out. So it took you about a year to have the open heart surgery. So what was the lead-up to that? Like, how did they prepare you for that? Because you're still recovering from a stroke, and aphasia and all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 43:31
So what's that process? Like? And how did you feel about the upcoming surgery?

David Sweet 43:38
Right? Okay. So, yeah, between my stroke, and my heart operation, it was quite a journey, let's say. So following my stroke went to the hospital, many identified the

head and a leaky heart valve, and they told me, I probably needed to have a heart operation sometime soon.

David Sweet 44:01
At that point, they mentioned to me that it probably wouldn't be within six months following my stroke, because I guess my brain or something like that needed to calm down fulfilling my stroke before the dare operated on my heart.

David Sweet 44:17
And nevertheless, I think there's more time to take off work. I don't know how to deal with that. Because I didn't know then. Well, first that would take 21 months to work return to work, and even there.

David Sweet 44:34
It took years and years and years for me to get better, but then, I was thinking, This is crazy. But then, thenI had a depression issue following a stroke. And I understand that many people who have strokes have depression, but this totally caught me off guard and I've never had anything like this before.

David Sweet 45:05
And yeah, it's something. So, about two months after my stroke, one day, I got to thinking, My children are growing up, they're almost teenagers now, or my son was already a teen teenager, and my daughter was 11 years old.

David Sweet 45:24
And they're no longer as cuddly as they were before my daughter, no longer holding my hand, we were walking the streets and stuff like that. And then I got this thinking about that, and I think this is sad, you know. I feel like they missing out on them.

David Sweet 45:45
And my spending so much time at work is, is, is too bad, you know, it's just too much time at work as opposed to time with them at home. But I got this thinking in my head. And then, and then I couldn't sleep thinking about that.

David Sweet 46:03
And then, I think, because of the lack of sleep, and because of thinking about this all the time, pretty soon, everything became sad, you know, just, you know, my father's age and everything. And so it got to the point, I think because of the lack

of sleep, sleep and also thinking about this all the time.

David Sweet 46:25
It became still suicidal, you know, I was thinking about killing myself at that time point in time. And even though I even though I had a loving thank family. I got to that point. And then, fortunately, I got some Yeah, cared for the French hospital system.

David Sweet 46:50
So then I had to go to Psyche Psychiatric Hospital here in France. Again, everyone speaks French there. Some psychologists spoke in English, unfortunately, but other doctors and staff spoke French. And then I had to make a phasic speech to tell me what was wrong with me.

David Sweet 47:12
But there are in those kinds of hospitals that did more of this give you the pills and stuff like that, that deal with your issue, as opposed to doctors taking the time to listen to you. But they're, they put me on sleeping medicine, antidepressant, medicine and anxiety, essence medicine for me, and then got better quite quickly. And yeah, so then, yeah.

David Sweet 47:43
And then following that, then different chips make family and it's like, it's your childhood with them. And then then, a few months later about my heart. I went to the doctors and they said, Okay, you need to have this hot heart operation quite soon now.

David Sweet 48:04
And when did the heart surgeon mention to me that you live, let's say have this heart operation? And so we scheduled a heart operation in August that year, that August 2018. And it didn't scare me so much. Because I mean, I just hard operate.

David Sweet 48:30
I needed doctors, they work on people's hearts every day. And when France there's really good medical care. So that it wasn't it was it was for sure it was a bump in the road. That bump in the road, but it wasn't that difficult. Was it metal metal difficult for me?

Bill Gasiamis 48:53

Wow. That's, that's brilliant. I love it. It's a pretty serious operation as well, right? Just this? Yeah. He says,

David Sweet 49:01
open up your chest. Yeah, and go in there and operate in the heart. But then, you know, there as well. My, daughter and my wife came to visit me and I didn't want my daughter to know that it hurt where they operated on so we decided to go walk into town today that day.

David Sweet 49:24
And even though it's hurting and stuff like that, I pretend to know payment meals kind of dancing around better was hurt, though hurting. But that's

Bill Gasiamis 49:37
just trying to protect her. Yeah, yeah, I understand. I understand. It's interesting what you said about those thoughts that you went on. And so you started those thoughts and then the cycle of thoughts. You just couldn't break it for when in time.

Bill Gasiamis 49:55
Made you think of other things now you said that you thought about your age now that's something that I do. Right? And I don't know why. And I don't. It's something I've recently started doing. And I think about his age. And I think about his ad. And then what comes?

Bill Gasiamis 50:15
What's coming next, I think, the bloody time and it's not something that doesn't, it doesn't get out of hand, the thinking of it doesn't go out of hand. But I'm paying attention to my dad's age and the fact that I used to see him a certain way. And now I see him differently is older. His Yeah, more frail. And, you know?

David Sweet 50:41
Yeah, exactly. I mean, it is if is this the first time you're realizing that your father's getting older, and sometimes they will die.

Bill Gasiamis 50:54
It is I, I, and I probably noticed that. And what's interesting is my mom's not that much younger than him. But I don't have the same. I'm not sure if the word concerns or worries about her that I have about him. And my dad, but saw him

confused and disoriented.

Bill Gasiamis 51:14
Just a few months ago, maybe about a year ago, it was in summer, and I could tell that he had gone to do some stuff and property that he has. And he hadn't taken water with him. And he had looked dehydrated to me.

Bill Gasiamis 51:30
And I seemed strange in what he was saying and what he was speaking. And of course, I picked up on it immediately. No thought, right? Yeah. Yeah, that a monitor this guy because I don't know what, what's wrong with him. And it turned out to be nothing.

Bill Gasiamis 51:45
It turned out to be that he was fatigued and dehydrated. The other thing I think that causes me to think about my dad, as much as I do was when I was in the hospital the first time I ended up in the hospital three times.

Bill Gasiamis 52:04
The first time when he got the news, the Saturday morning that I was admitted to hospital.

Speaker 3 52:12
They left home and they were going to come and see me, my mom and dad. And he was supposed to take some medication. And I think he talked about it, he didn't eat. And it made him dizzy. And he felt at home and he ended up coming to the hospital in an ambulance.

Bill Gasiamis 52:29
Gosh. So I'm in the hospital, in a hospital bed, because they've just discovered a bleed in my brain. And, now I'm getting the news that my parents have come to see me and it was just my mum. And I said, Well, it was Dad.

Bill Gasiamis 52:45
Dad's downstairs, Oh, tell him to come up. So well, it's not like that. He's upstairs because it collapsed at home. And he hit his head and I couldn't, I couldn't get him up and I had to ring the ambulance. So he's an emergency.

Bill Gasiamis 53:00

So that whole thing has kind of made me feel uncomfortable about his frailty that he's becoming more and more frail. And that rain is what plays on my mind. And I might wake up some nights, I might wake up some nuts just to go to the toilet. And the damn thought will enter my head.

A link between a stroke and depression



Bill Gasiamis 53:25
And I won't be able to get back to sleep. And I'm wide awake at 230. And then I have to get out of bed by seven o'clock. And then I haven't slept since 230. And that is a new thing. That is something that never happened to me before.

Bill Gasiamis 53:42
But it right? It happens now weird stuff like that comes into my head and they're strange loops. And I know that they're strange. I know that it's happening. And I try and tell myself to stop it. Right. But it just doesn't. It just doesn't.

David Sweet 53:57
Right. Yeah. Yeah. It's strange. I mean. Yeah, I don't know, it might with myself and yourself. Is that because of the stroke or not?

David Sweet 54:10
For myself, at least, when I was having depression, I was aware that was depressed, you know, and so do some internet research to see, if there was a link between the stroke and the thoughts that are in my brain all the time, and I couldn't get rid of the thoughts, you know, and I saw that, okay.

David Sweet 54:32

It’s quite common for stroke patients to get depressed, but I couldn’t find something that linked that to my, my depression I was having.

Bill Gasiamis 54:44
I think there are very few studies and research done. To answer the question that you just asked is one of those things a result of the stroke? I don’t think there’s a definitive way to know but, but it’s common.

Bill Gasiamis 55:00
And I think the statistic is that I think around 1/3 of stroke survivors experienced depression after the stroke. Now, yeah, you might wonder, well, is that because of something that happened before their stroke?

Bill Gasiamis 55:13
So are ongoing issues related to things that I haven’t dealt with from the past as a result of dealing with a new identity, the loss of identity, or the challenges that stroke creates? I mean, there are just so many things to consider.

Bill Gasiamis 55:30
But it is a fact that people who have had a stroke, about 30% of them or more reporting, that they get depressed, and you can completely understand that because they’re dealing with mortality, they’re dealing with what this means for me for the rest of my life, they’re dealing with losing some of independence, losing their hobbies, they’re not able to work.

Bill Gasiamis 55:58
I mean, it’s completely normal for somebody to feel bad about that stuff.

David Sweet 56:04
Yeah. Yeah. And also, then, when I was depressed, you know, how do you go to the hospital at that point? Several times, for a week for the rich education in the hospital. There are people in world wheelchairs, people must worse, worse off than I was.

David Sweet 56:26
And I asked myself, you know, is this maybe the cause of my stress or my depression, it can be around these people? Because, for sure, that was, what it was. That was not something that I was used to being around those people in wheelchairs and not able to talk walk and stuff like that. But I didn’t know that so

is

Bill Gasiamis 56:58
emotionally taxing on you, as well as seeing that there are a lot of people who are doing a tough as well as suffering from the aftermath of a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 57:07
Okay, well, that makes sense as well. There's an emotional side to feeling to having depression or feeling like you're depressed is an emotional aspect. Right. And be triggered by many different things.

Bill Gasiamis 57:21
Yeah. Well, and it seems like you got through it somehow. It seems like that medication. Yeah. Right. that cycle of thought.

David Sweet 57:31
Yeah, exactly. It did. And so for sure, the medications, so the sleeping medication, I was able to sleep. And then anti-anxiety stopped that thought going around around around in my brain stuff like that. Different eventually, you got better.

David Sweet 57:53
I could stop all these medicines and medications. And it took a while. Unfortunately, too frustrating to, unfortunately, but to get off those medications. And, yeah. And

Bill Gasiamis 58:11
it's a great outcome. So then you eventually went back to work. It took us did you say it took you a couple of years to get back to work? Yeah. So

David Sweet 58:19
it's 21.1 months to go back to work. So the number 20 seems to be a pertinent number for my stroke happened on the 21st. of April, as I've worked 21 months and went back to work on the 21st 21st of January 2019.

David Sweet 58:40
And, and I think in France, the law is that they have to you have a stroke, or something seriously, they have to keep your position open for you to go back into. But I told them that I didn't feel up to managing a team of people anymore.

David Sweet 59:00

And so I returned as a Nam, working in the corporate revenue recognition department. And I'm doing things more where I don't need to speak so much to people. Nevertheless, when I went back to work, then, I realized going back to work that it was very difficult for me to think of something and speak at the same time.

David Sweet 59:30
And I've gotten better since then, for sure has gotten much, much better since then. But this caught me off guard because before going back to work at that point, in my daily life, I was quite comfortable with speaking English.

David Sweet 59:45
And then been trying to think about, let's say the the policy or a national text and then talk about that at the same time. It's very difficult But you know, yeah, that did that has become better over time.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:09
And the the responsibility the list of responsibilities made it easier for you.

David Sweet talks about the Recovery After Stroke podcast and how it's helped him



David Sweet 1:00:15
Yeah. Yeah. And also now I'm working just four days a week it is for sure this is

great. Having a break during the week, I don't work went work on Wednesdays.

David Sweet 1:00:26
So I just work on Monday, Tuesday Thursday, and Friday, and then have a mental break where I can do other things on Wednesday, for sure. It's good. And

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:36
it's a great strategy. Yeah,

David Sweet 1:00:38
yeah. And, you know, for example, now, I was 16. Now, I'm getting involved in another kind of medical thing that just, you know, for example, just several months after I arrived in France, I had cancer.

David Sweet 1:00:55
At that point, I didn't speak French and the doctor spoke to me in French, and I didn't understand anything they were saying.

David Sweet 1:01:02
But at that point, I was single and so I told him to tell myself that, okay, this cancer I had was very common, for I trusted data, the till do what is needed to curate the nevertheless, that it was a difficult experience for me being alone in France had to go through chemotherapy and stuff like that.

David Sweet 1:01:29
And I thought, since then, someday, I'd like to volunteer, volunteer to be with an English speaker in that situation. And, and then recently, I heard about a cancer support group in France, for English speakers.

David Sweet 1:01:50
So now, I'm involved in that song. It's on Wednesdays, Wednesdays, I'll do some things for that group now. And then I told that group about my stroke as well. And so I so if, if, eventually, there's a stroke patient in France, who is an English speaker? I hope I can do something for them as well. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:14
I imagine there's going to be a few of them are already there. That's the hard part is finding other people when you're going through there finding other people so you don't feel alone. And yeah, even so great. But

David Sweet 1:02:27
your podcast is amazing. Talking to you and hearing your your stories. Yeah. It's great.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:36
I need it. I need it. Everyday. David, I mean, I've, I've, I've mentioned that a few times in the last few episodes. For me, the podcast is it's so that I don't feel alone. It's still that important to me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:51
And I've done 250 episodes, and it's not enough, I haven't been able to fully get beyond that thing where nobody else around me, thankfully, and frustratingly doesn't understand what I'm going through. It's still a thing for 11 years later.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:09
And yeah, if it wasn't for the podcast, I don't know what state I would be in, it's just great that I can, I can make a difference to other people when they reach out. And at the same time, they're making a difference to me. And we're doing this journey together, I couldn't do it alone. And even though I'm in Australia, and I live in a city where there are 5 million people,

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:36
it's still hard to find where those people are, that you can connect with that want to talk about stuff, and they're in different stages of recovery, right? So if they're in the very early part of recovery, then it might be very difficult for us to interact.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:52
If they're younger than me, they might not relate to me, and they might not want to catch up with me. And that's fine if they're older than me the same thing. So I figured that if I do this online, the chances that people want to interact with me are going to increase and I have a larger pool of people to reach out to, and I'll do my thing, and I'll let the internet do its thing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:19
And that's the beauty of the internet. It does its thing and it brings people like you to the podcast. And that's the whole reason for it. You know, and I know that that I really, that is an amazing thing that I got out of stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:38

I got the ability to do things for other people where previously I was still a dad and I still have that for my wife and my kids and my family but I was more selfish. It was about me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:52
The stroke has made it about other people and at the same time I have, that's why making it about other people has made it better for me, whereught being selfish was the way to go at the beginning, right, and now you're seeing what benefits?

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:16
What are the benefits that you see in helping other people who have gone through cancer? In English speaking how is that benefited? Well, how does that improve your life while it's improving other people's lives?

David Sweet 1:05:31
Right? I mean, for myself, it's really, I feel like giving, giving something to them, I received the something in return, you know, and the point yes, in some, so working other days that week, but some days I hope to make when I retired, is to be with an English speaking person going through chemotherapy, and day in and day out.

David Sweet 1:06:03
And in with the with with them. Nevertheless, at this point, just making, like, for example, I'm doing some publicity for the association. So visiting hospitals, and then the other hospitals about the association. And so we get a poster put up in hospitals. And that's the kind of thing I'm doing now.

David Sweet 1:06:28
And yeah, with other people who had gone through cancer, so the working in association with them, and it's, we have that comment. And it's a good feeling, you know, do that stuff together,

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:46
understanding each other. You know, what you similar stories, you've been through similar things. You guys are now making a difference for other people. It's, yeah, community, it's the best thing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:57
It's such an important part of recovery from any condition, whether it's stroke or

cancer or heart condition, and you don't muck around you've had everything.

David Sweet 1:07:08
I know, my wife asked the question, what's next? And I don't know, but enough no more. Yeah. Who thinks is enough? Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:20
Struggle lady. I imagine she's putting up with everything that you've thrown at her. Oh, my God. Yeah, yeah, exactly. How is she doing six years? Out? How is she feeling about this whole thing?

David Sweet 1:07:34
Yeah, so she says, I've given her some, I guess, motivation, or I can't think of the correct word, but it's, so she had breast cancer in 2012, I think. And I told her about my cancer stories. And I still told her that for me, then, I said, this is like, I have the cancer, like a bad cold.

David Sweet 1:08:06
And I had to take my medicine and is done, you know, medicine was chemotherapy. And and I told her about that and gave her the courage to go through her case with radiation therapy. And so it was very encouraging for her to hear my stories.

David Sweet 1:08:27
And yeah, and then you know, she's she became a quite a question lady, because my medical issues you know, at some point students can really freak out and then to be human in a very Christian I guess, Father Jesus find my stories that

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:51
encourage them to become more religious or more. Was she a nonpracticing Christian before that?

David Sweet 1:08:59
Yeah, exactly. So she as a child in the same way as it the same way as a child, we go to church on Sundays. And then as a young adult, we're not going to church. Very nicely mean for some Easter, some Christmas and stuff like that.

David Sweet 1:09:15
And then um, and then. Yeah, and then and then it finds some Okay. I have quite a

few medical histories, but at some point in time, yes. She said that's enough. And then somehow she got to see Jesus or something like that and decided to follow him. And

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:43
conditions like this and going through tough times do deepen people's faith. Some people have to have something to believe in. That's beyond what we are going through. There's got to be a greater story, a greater purpose, a greater reason to go on.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:58
You know, there's plenty of reasons to go On locally, but also, there's got to be a greater purpose in life then. And there's got to be more to it than just us. Now I am, I was raised as a Christian, but again, I used to go only when my parents dragged me, and now right exactly Easter and Christmas.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:17
So I'm not deep. I'm not a practicing Christian to the extent that some people are. And I've kind of internalized God, I mentioned that on a couple of podcasts that I that I haven't released yet that I've recorded. I've internalized God. So instead of having God outside of me, I've put God inside of me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:39
So that when I ask the question of God for guidance, I'm not asking an external being or something external of me. So that when it fails to give me the answers, I don't feel like I've been let down. When I internalize God, and I go to, alright, what do I do now?

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:03
How do I overcome this situation that I've found myself in? I feel like what it does is allow me to come up with the answers, rather than externalize the request and go to some kind of external source for solutions.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:21
And by internalizing God, when I describe myself as God, God's within me or I am God, or God lives within me when I do that. It brings the whole faith into me, and I'm doing it with myself. And with that external thing, if it's an if it's a, if it's a thing, or I can't describe it, but Right, okay.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:47
But that way I try to, I try to, it's how I've deepened my faith by breathing it in internally and then trying to access it from in here. Right. I'm kind of doing it. Okay. Yes. I'm being guided by my God at the same time to know, right,

David Sweet 1:12:09
okay. Yes. Okay. Yeah, if that works for you.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:13
Yeah. That's the thing, right? It's beautiful. What you said is, if it works for you, that's the beautiful part about it. And whatever works for your wife, awesome. And I write if I asked some stroke survivors, you know, what's the best thing that they got out of stroke?

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:28
They'll say, Oh, it was finding God again. Or Right, exactly. Who did you reach out to help to for help with the hard days? Oh, I was god. Wow, man, whatever gets you through, I agree with it. And it took me some time to contemplate that topic again.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:48
Religion, God, spirituality. It happened after this big dramatic episode in my life at 37. Yeah, up until then, I never considered it. I just did what I was told. When, I became an adult, I stopped doing what they were telling me, you know, and I didn't go to church and I didn't see it at all.

David Sweet 1:13:08
Yeah. For me, like, my faith has become stronger, stronger, because of my stroke. You know, the same thing before. I noticed because of me, the kind of person I am or the kind of job that I do or whatever, I'm, for me, I just okay.

David Sweet 1:13:31
I see some things like, okay, for me, when I die, you leave a device out, and that's, I won't be eating anymore. Nevertheless, that's the level. Nevertheless, some of your guests, for example, one of your recent guests, saw Jesus that many of his comments, and then I thought, Wow, this can be true and other stories out there.

David Sweet 1:13:57
That tells me there is life out there. So I believe that as well. So that's why I

decided, okay, I've found Jesus. Because it's likely your that that is likely the way it's still, you know, sometimes I think maybe when a diet lights are out, that's it, you know, so

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:19
yeah, it's plausible. It's plausible that when we go it just lights out. But that's that interview fascinated me as well. Right? Yeah. Tell everyone what that interview was that you were talking about. And he was having a stroke. And he was in the hospital and he was in a coma. And he was walking through. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:43
It was Rafael De Leon. And he was episode 243. And right, he was imagining he was dreaming that he was walking for 21 days or something like that. Yeah. And his feet while he was lying down. Were becoming calloused and they will. Yeah. Like he was walking barefoot.

David Sweet 1:15:04
Yeah, that's amazing. That's amazing. It was a great episode. Yeah, it was a great

Bill Gasiamis 1:15:10
story. And I, and it made me think again, and it made me feel like, alright, let's not discount everything, I'm not going to just put everything out of my mind and say nothing is possible. I'm just going to accept that many things might be impossible, and I don't know which ones are right.

Bill Gasiamis 1:15:27
It feels good to internalize God the way that I said, and to make God myself and to make me God. And if it feels good, and it's not doing harm, and it's supporting me, and it's helping me recover. Go for it. Absolutely. Do that. Just like your wife and many other people, we've found God is a serious illness. Yeah, it does something. It supports healing. And that's a great thing.

David Sweet 1:15:57
Right? Yeah. There's one thing I wanted to ask you and ask your, guests for input on several years ago, I'm following my stroke, I met a man who had a brain injury, as you said, not it's rare for stroke, but another kind of injury, he failed to say.

David Sweet 1:16:19
And then he was trying to do things that make his brain recover. And he got this

idea of taking cold baths, putting ice in a bath in going out for a few minutes. And then he told me about this guy, the Wim Hof Method, and showing a book here,

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:40
I have that book.

David Sweet 1:16:42
Alright, you know, he had this book. And so the Wim Hof Method combines breathing exercises, and taking a cold or cold shower baths. And, and I tried this method falling, learning about that. And, and I was amazed by the results, you know, the breathing, probably the breathing, made it.

David Sweet 1:17:12
So, I, my speech recovered temporarily, completely, you know, and so I remember going to my speech therapist, who I still go to once a week and I told her Hey, my speech is bettered, this guy is amazing, you know, but then eventually deteriorate deteriorated.

David Sweet 1:17:37
And so, anyway, just looking for other people's experiences, if they blend the Wim Hof Method did the the benefit them and go back to otherwise before or not also on the Wim Hof Method, with red hot methods, on the websites and so forth. They don't it is written I don't recommend it for stroke patients.

David Sweet 1:18:08
I talked about this to my cardiologist and my neurologist, that this kind of method. And both the neurologist and cardiologist said they didn't see anything wrong with me. I also wrote to them, and they sent me something back.

David Sweet 1:18:30
And he mentioned that the warning is only a precaution. And rather err on the side of caution that we don't have specific scientific studies to support this.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:46
Yeah, so it's a complicated issue, and I'm probably not a good person to comment because I didn't have the guts to do a cold shower. I cannot bring myself to put myself into a cold environment. I've never liked the cold.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:02

And now even with my left side with my deficits, I've tried to mentally prepare myself and have a cold shower. I just cannot bring myself to do with the deficits. The left side is more sensitive to cold than the right side. And it hurts just feeling a cold breeze.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:22
Just feeling a cold breeze on my left side hurts and Okay, yeah, imagine what it would be like if I got into a cold shower. Yeah. Now maybe I'm just playing in my head too much and making matters worse. But the breathing I believe breathing has a lot of good outcomes because what does what it does is oxygenate the blood and the tissues of your body a lot more than our standard way of breathing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:54
So I think that his big intention is to sort of get people experiencing what it's like to be fully breathing and to be oxygenating your body and how you can do that on your own at any time just by going into the process.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:14
So I feel like what he's trying to do is empower people, to show them how much they can positively influence their body, simply by changing the way that they breathe. Now, with the cold stuff, I don't get that honestly, I just, can't get my head around it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:31
Right. And it's because of my own beliefs about how I don't like it's one of the stories. I've always told myself how I don't like the

The benefits of cold showers and plunges

David Sweet 1:20:42
Yeah, but one thing I, myself, I've gone beyond the kind of reluctance to take a cold shower some nights. And it too, makes me for sure happier, and more energetic than before going into a cold shower.

David Sweet 1:21:04
For they mentioned in a book, and yeah, on the website and so forth, that people have depression, the cold showers help them. And it makes them less depressed.

Bill Gasiamis 1:21:24
Yeah, yes, because it stimulates the release of certain neuroscient neuro neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin. And, and it creates, it puts the body into a state of shock. So the body has to kind of reset itself and go into this sort of survival, survival mode.

Bill Gasiamis 1:21:45
And it isn't only temporary, it's only temporary. And in that survival mode, the body does a lot to support the well-being of the organs and the rest of the body. So it has this reset, kind of it has this reset type of result.

David Sweet 1:22:06
Yeah, results.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:07
Yeah, it has a kind of like a reset result in the body. And when you take the body to an extreme environment, the body just goes, Okay, well, let's get going. And let's make things work. And let's give that person as much as they need to get out of this trouble that they're finding themselves in.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:26
As a result, people feel the rush of the release of dopamine, serotonin, and all the other things that it does, it also converts your fat, and your fat cells uniquely and differently to make them more supportive of your health rather than negatively. And it decreases inflammation in the body. So it causes the release of other chemicals that support an anti-inflammatory response in the body.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:04
So I kind of know what it does. I kind of hear lots of good work about it. Lots of good words about it. But I haven't yet done it. I haven't yet had the guts to jump into a cold shower or a plunge bath. It's just Yeah, I just can't think of anything worse.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:24
But one day, see, that's the thing. I'm thinking about it in my head. One day, I've just got to do it and just get an experience. I know it's not going to kill me. Right, but just I'm afraid of the cold on anions we

David Sweet 1:23:39

Okay, now, you did that had to get describing the benefits?

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:44
Yes. They're just some of the benefits. I will ask the question. If anyone's listening and watching this on YouTube, leave some comments below the video about your experience with cold plunges, especially if you've had a stroke. And I'll also ask my Instagram followers and see what they have to say. I might get you involved in that conversation if you're on Instagram.

David Sweet 1:24:15
Yes, I'm on Instagram. So yeah, I'll look you up actually.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:20
Yeah. All right. Do that. Follow me. And I'll ask the question in the next couple of days. And we'll see. If we get a response. I'm sure. There's been a whole bunch of stroke survivors that follow me that have done it.

David Sweet 1:24:33
Okay. Wow. Okay. Fantastic to know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:36
We'll get some feedback. But look, I appreciate you reaching out and being on the podcast. Thank you so much for joining me and telling us your story. And I wish you well in your ongoing recovery. And yeah, congratulations on the work you're doing in the cancer space.

David Sweet 1:24:56
Right. Well, thank you much Bill. And it's a real pleasure to meet you on Zoom. And thank you very much.

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