

Ischemic Stroke Recovery Story - Shane Duffiney

Shane Duffiney was in a car crash that damaged the blood vessels in his neck causing an ischemic stroke at 42 years of age.

Facebook

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Introduction - Shane Duffiney



Bill Gasiamis 0:00

Hello everyone. Welcome back to another episode of the Recovery after Stroke podcast. My guest today is Shane Duffiney, who contacted me initially to thank me for the podcast and tell me how it has helped him navigate recovery after he experienced an ischemic stroke at age 42.

Bill Gasiamis 0:19

His stroke was caused by damage sustained to one of his blood vessels in his neck several months after being involved in a motor vehicle collision. Today, he joins me to share his stroke recovery story. Now just before we dive into the interview, I'd like to take a moment to mention my book *The Unexpected Way, That A Stroke Became The Best Thing That Happened*.

Bill Gasiamis 0:38

10 tools for recovery and personal transformation. It's a collection of inspiring stories from 10 stroke survivors, showcasing their incredible journey from adversity to personal growth, covering everything from nutrition, and exercise to handling the emotional challenges. This book is a beacon of hope for those on the road to recovery. For more information, you can check out recoveryafterstroke.com/book or simply search by name Bill Gasiamis on Amazon, and now it's on with the show. Shane Duffiney, welcome to the podcast.

Shane Duffiney 1:15

Hey, thank you, Bill, I appreciate it. It's good to be here.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19

It is really good to have you here. Thank you. Tell me a little bit about what happened to you, Shane.

Stroke after a whiplash injury

Shane Duffiney 1:25

Ah, you know, the short version, I'm at a relatively young age of I think I was like 42 At the time I had a stroke happen. It was caused initially it was caused by a car wreck, somebody decided they didn't want to pay attention on the highway and ran into my car and I guess the the whiplash from the wreck caused some internal arterial damage. It went undiscovered and in my understanding without using big medical words, arteries started building up a scab.

Shane Duffiney 2:11

Five months later, the scab broke free and got stuck as it was flowing through, went up through my brain, and then came back down and got stuck on the way back down. And that's as pretty far as my medical knowledge goes about strokes at the time. And so it's a little bit better now. And so I had a complete ischemic stroke. I was just driving me some friends at seven o'clock at night. And the world fell out from underneath me.

Bill Gasiamis 2:49

Was there anyone injured after the collision?

Shane Duffiney 2:55

No, we all walked away and nobody was injured. I was driving a big old truck and I don't know what kind of car he was driving because we couldn't tell I couldn't tell what it was his car was totaled. So safety gear works great for theirs I know I have my seatbelt on. It's just something that happens actually, according to the doctors that happens. Like the damage from the whiplash happens to a small percentage of people.

Shane Duffiney 3:23

Specifically, a small percentage of people have their arteries flowing through the spine. But at one point for a small percentage of people, the artery pops out from the spinal column, it was like this little loop and it goes back down. You probably know all about this.

Bill Gasiamis 3:42

Not about that one specifically.

Shane Duffiney 3:44

Right. And so for those that small percentage of people that have that very minor genetic defect where the artery comes out, it loops around the spine and goes back into the spine and so if your neck is pushed just far enough, just quickly enough instead of like when the spine is like starting to pinch on that artery now since it's outside of the spinal column.

Shane Duffiney 4:13

Normally it would just slightly push it out of the way the artery either way, but it does it too quickly, it'll pinch hard enough that it will cut the artery wall the internal wall because there are layers of the wall it will cut the internal layer of the wall and that's where the whole dividing us into self-repair mode and builds up a scab and tries to repair that. In my case, it didn't repair itself but it did break free and get stuck and that turned into a stroke for me.

Shane Duffiney 4:52

And yeah, I was 42 years old, had had no cholesterol problems, and had no high blood pressure, which was shocking to the doctors when I walked in, and somehow I walked into the hospital because I was like, I think I'm dying. And there happened to be an emergency room, three minutes down the road, and it was like, okay, I can wait 45 minutes for the ambulance or I can see if I can make it three minutes down the road.

Shane Duffiney 5:18

And the doctors were like, you can't be having a stroke, you have no your foot, you're not old enough, I mean, you're kind of fat but you have no cholesterol, like zero cholesterol, they tested me three times. And you have no high blood pressure. And it was the nurse, the nurse was like he is having a stroke, we need to put him in the MRI machine. And she insisted on it. She saved my life.

Bill Gasiamis 5:52

How long was the duration after the collision and the onset of the stroke?

Shane Duffiney 6:02

That was five months, it was five months. The neurologist said that's typical. They said they said when somebody has these conditions to create a stroke, it takes about three to five months for that back to layman's terms for the scab to break

it's like a six-syllable word they use for it, but it takes about three to five months for the scan to break free. And it either just continues flowing through the system and passes through and doesn't get stuck.

Shane Duffiney 6:38

Or it gets stuck. And, they said it's a one-time occurrence. Like even though like in my case, the arterial tear didn't heal, I still have the arterial tear. He said I swear this is like sci-fi. He said, my body my brain know that in the process of trying to heal the artery, and almost killed itself. And so it will not try to heal the artery again, it will not try to build up a scab on that artery again, it's a specific type of white blood cell that it releases to specifically heal arteries.

Shane Duffiney 7:18

And then he said it would not do that again because it knows that it almost killed it. After all, I was like, wait a minute, what if it's still there? What if it tries to build another scab and that scab is gonna break off eventually anyway, and it's gonna get stuck right behind the other one? He was like, no it won't happen. He said the body is like, the brain is very self-preserving. It will not do that again.

Bill Gasiamis 7:43

That is amazing that it does that. It's amazing. The body does what it does, regardless, of all the things that it does, but then to have that intelligence to go. No, we tried that that didn't work. Let's move on.

Shane Duffiney 8:03

That's very cognitive thought that's like, right, you know, that's like decision trees. Like, like, and you're like, wait a minute, we'll move to somewhere in there. The brain just does that. Like the body just does that figure that out? And like, bad, bad plan. Don't do that again.

Misdiagnosis of stroke and TPA shot for Shane Duffiney

Bill Gasiamis 8:26

I love that idea. I love that it is but how did the medical team resolve that issue? What did they do to open up the blood flow again?

Shane Duffiney 8:37

So once it was identified and thank God they did, even after they had the imagery back I walked into a training hospital. So they had a lot of residents on staff and that's who was attending me. So it's like no fault to the medical system, or the doctors.

Shane Duffiney 9:01

They just had only been like a year in the field. Right. You know, and, whereas the nurse had been doing it for 15 years, 14 years, and she said her father had just had a stroke two months before so she was very familiar with all the symptoms.

Shane Duffiney 9:19

But, yeah, even after they got the imagery back, the doctor was like, this is just a headache. This shadowing and your brain is just a headache. And they sent it off radiology and the nurse was like, No way they'll get back with us in three minutes and tell us it's a stroke.

Shane Duffiney 9:36

But they resolved it as best they could. They did a TPA shot. So I'm sure most of you are familiar with that. But for people who might not be like the TPA shot as my understanding of it is it's like a supped-up blood thinner with a whole bunch of stuff in there to try to break up the clot and try to try to get your body to want to flow blood.

Shane Duffiney 10:07

And it's actually in Please Don't Ever Limit Anybody you gotta at least here you have to say yes to if you're conscious, you have to say yes, I want the shot. And so they were like, Hey, do you want this shot? And again, back to the doctor not having a lot of experience was like, Hey, I'm supposed to ask you they told me I need to ask you if you want this shot, and I was like what shot?

Shane Duffiney 10:35

You know, what does it do? And they she's like, well, it makes you bleed and it makes your blood flow faster and you'll bleed. And that's like, I don't want to bleed. I don't feel good right now. I don't want to be bleeding too. And she was like, No, you want this, it's fine.

Shane Duffiney 10:53

It's like what like, doesn't sound like it's going to be fine. And by the way, like it's not normal too that's another thing. It wasn't normal for somebody to be very

cognizant of what's going on around them while they're having a stroke. And so that was another reason why, you know, it was misdiagnosed early.

Shane Duffiney 11:15

But you know, and finally, the nurse was like, look like I hate doctor I think the doctor is calling right now as they want you to answer a question. So the intern or the resident left, the resident left the room, and like the nurse just snatched me up off his tiny little nurse snatched my massive frame off the table was like she goes, what do you do for a living?

Shane Duffiney 11:41

I was like, I am a business development manager for I like, I don't know, I throw out some big fancy likeness. And she goes, Oh, so you walk and talk for a living? Right? And I was like, Yeah, I do. And she's like, well, you won't be able to do that tomorrow if you don't take the shot.

Shane Duffiney 11:55

And it like dawned on me like I understood all of a sudden where the urgency the nurse just kept like, like pushing urgency on the doctor pushing urgency on the rest of the nursing staff. And it just dawned on me like, Oh, crap, like there's a time limit to that shot.

Shane Duffiney 12:12

So yeah, at that point, like she's trying to hold me back because I'm dragging her out of the room. She won't let go of me. I'm screaming out the door. Like, give me a shot. But yeah, so that was the TPA shot, and it didn't dissolve the clot. To your question, it didn't dissolve the clot, which is one of the things they hope it does.

Shane Duffiney 12:36

They believe later on, they kind of guest it. That's another back to magic right back to some science fiction stuff. My body my artery built a brand new blood vessel that bridged around the blockage.

Shane Duffiney 12:57

So like the blood vessel, like so, and he could see it, he said, It looks like it built the bridge to go behind the clot the blockage, and it got went and attached it built a bridge to a separate artery or vein that was running next to that artery.

Shane Duffiney 13:18

And he said it's discharging so it's flowing around the blockage and it discharges on the other side of the blockage. And that again, I was like, that's like some alien stuff or anything. It's like some, he said, that's very common. And actually, I've talked to some of you that have heart attacks and had like, you know, they said that that's their hearts have done that too and he said it was just so either way.

Shane Duffiney 13:46

So that's what it ended up doing. And they never did or able to dissolve the clot I still have the clot in my neck is still there. But it's bypassing right there's there's enough flow going around the clot and he said maybe it's also it opened up the vessel enough that their flow or not just the bridge, but it's also flowing he said Either way, you're getting enough blood to your brain that you're not dying.

Shane Duffiney 14:15

And they decided not to dig it out. He asked where that stuck out in your head. It's gonna if we try to dig that out, we're gonna do more damage to you. And then of course, I was like, I don't know, man, I kind of went I don't like the thought of this thing here. Man. But yeah, so. So it sounds like

Bill Gasiamis 14:36

I made the right decisions. I mean, I might have fumbled their way around explaining things to you and discovering what the issue was, but it sounds like everything else was probably done correctly and in the right way. And there's little, you know, as less invasive procedure as possible was done.

Bill Gasiamis 14:57

And that seems I've got a great rule what were your, what were your symptoms of strokes? Or what did you notice? WherWhatdo you think? I need to get to the hospital. What were the things that were obvious to you that kind of like, something's not right?

Shane Duffiney 15:15

Great question. So I didn't know anything about stop or whatever, I guess I've missed all that in school missed the sign, because they're all over the place, right? The I Am I so for me, like, initially, I thought, like the world just dropped out. Have you ever been on a roller coaster when those roller coasters where just like take you high?

Shane Duffiney 15:39

And they just let you go? That happened, like immediately, and it wouldn't go away. It wouldn't go away in and it just like, exponentially got worse. By you know, by the second it was like every 10 seconds it got like 1% More where it just kept getting worse and worse and worse.

Shane Duffiney 16:03

And then I was like, okay, something's wrong. And of course, I'm like, am I having a heart attack? I know. And I was like because there's no pain here. And I was like, am I having a stroke? And, as I was thinking about this half of my fate, my body got numb, right? That's about all I knew. And the best I had. And so then I start kind of poking myself and scratching my face.

Shane Duffiney 16:29

Right? It was weird. Like, my forehead had gotten the left side of my forehead had gotten my left calf had gotten right, but you know, and so it wasn't, it was all on one side of the body. But it wasn't the whole side of the body. For me at least. Like I think like, let my left lip go.

Shane Duffiney 16:50

And I was just like, okay, stroke, probably. But all I knew was I mean, I don't know, I've lived a little bit of a hard life. And it was the first time I'd almost died. But I was like, so I was like, Oh, you're dying.

Shane Duffiney 17:05

You're dying right now. And I just kept kind of feeling like I was going in and out of consciousness. And I was just I felt like I was just always on the edge of going out of consciousness and very abruptly, right? It wasn't a gradual, like, I'm falling asleep kind of thing. It was very abrupt.

Bill Gasiamis 17:22

Was that legitimate? What you said was, accurate did you do it? You've nearly died before. And therefore, if you've nearly died you knew what that felt like, and therefore you recognize this different version, but felt like your life was on the line?

Shane Duffiney 17:41

Yeah, definitely. I've had jobs where I was an explosives ordinance person, like in the private sector. And you know, I got blown up once by accident, right? Fortunately, usually, if you get blown up by accident, they try to find enough for

you to put in a box. And I didn't. That wasn't my case.

Shane Duffiney 18:05

But it was definitely like, strangely, like the movies where you're like, the person's like on the ground, and everything's like, whoa, so, so I'm definitely like that. It's been a few other times, that kind of got blown up again, in a different job. But, but is one of those we're all about to die, kind of like where everything kind of slows down for you.

Shane Duffiney 18:27

And like, if you make the wrong thing if you do the wrong thing. And the neck, like, every second has to be done perfectly, where everybody is going to die, or at least you are and you know, I've been in the oil field for also for a while. And so there was, you know, going in that and you know, I've been homeless before as a kid and I've can't I left school, I left home like 14 It was just a lot safer to not be home.

Shane Duffiney 18:58

So I left and so it was a little bit of a little bit of a rough. I guess I didn't even really think about it as rough in a rough life until somebody was telling me like Shane, that's not normal recently. They were like, That's not normal.

Shane Duffiney 19:08

I was like, Oh, no. And yeah, so then you got like starvation that comes with that and like but those are the top three, three things other than the stroke I can think about top my head where I have almost been killed.

Bill Gasiamis 19:24

Spidey senses, gut instinct, stuff kicking in and going, Hey, you've been in a similar situation before you need to take evasive action.

Shane Duffiney managing stroke recovery with a slow and steady approach



Shane Duffiney 19:35

And the big difference. There, you know, for the stroke was like what the other ones? You know, you're trying to make yourself dump more adrenaline, right? Yeah. And in times like that, you're too you're trying to like whatever like you're passing out and you're like slapping yourself to like, you know, maybe and you know, to make sure you don't lose consciousness.

Shane Duffiney 20:00

In this case, there was a very, very different in the sense of like, there was an eternal thing wrong and I was afraid like I could feel I was afraid with this whole, like, the bottom dropping out feeling. I didn't want to start trying to get my blood to flow harder, right I just something just like back to the spidey sense.

Shane Duffiney 20:23

Versus the other times where it was just like, yeah, as much as we can get it to make it through the next three minutes. Right. Whereas on the other in this sense, it was just like, go slow. Yeah, very slow very patiently. Like I was in my car was driving, I was driving my truck. And that was just like, I had my I had one hand on the door handle.

Shane Duffiney 20:46

And the other hand, like between the shifter to throw it in parks, as far as like, if you start to go out completely fall out of the truck into the street, somebody can find you, right, like, and I was trying not. And I was intentionally trying not to psych myself up because I knew something was wrong.

Shane Duffiney 21:02

It was like, it was like every heartbeat, that's when it would get worse. Right? I think that's probably why I was like, don't try to psych yourself up. Don't try to get your blood flowing.

Shane Duffiney 21:11

Because it's like, there was like every heartbeat I was like, Oh, crap, I start blacking out. And remember that now, but yeah, I was just like, so it was like three minutes getting down the road, like, if you start going out completely try to fall into the street. And hopefully, your truck doesn't hit anybody as it drives.

Intro 21:32

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? In case I make matters worse, doctors will explain things. But, you've if never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 21:56

If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to recoveryafterstroke.com where you can download a guide that will help you it's called Seven Questions to Ask Your Doctor about your Stroke.

Intro 22:15

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

Bill Gasiamis 22:34

I love the idea that you're able to kind of be cognitively capable enough to make all these really important decisions slow yourself down. In fact, by slowing yourself down, you probably made it easier for your blood to receive oxygen.

Bill Gasiamis 22:51

Instead of constricting your blood vessels going into stress and all that kind of stuff, your blood was able to flow and still support the rest of the brain. Your heart was able to do its job, you know, just normally and calmly. Probably didn't

spike adrenaline or cortisol or anything like that.

Bill Gasiamis 23:09

You just, you know went through nice and steady. And that's probably the best thing to do you go to the hospital. And when you got there, what did you say to them? Other than did you say I'm dying? Or did you say I'm having a stroke? Or what did you say?

Shane Duffiney 23:29

Like I was like, Okay, this is kind of embarrassing, because I was just stupid really, at this point. I like the stupid male ego thing kicking in, right? Like I, I got this, you know, so I didn't know that. At least here. At emergency rooms, you can pull your vehicle right up to the emergency room door and jump out right and they'll valet Park. I didn't know that.

Shane Duffiney 23:53

So like I go find the parking deck. I drove by the door, right? And I'm even thinking you should probably just park your car right here in the middle of the street and be like, forget it. Like, you know you'll you'll find it later. And I don't know and I get out in the parking deck and I was like I need to figure out how to get in like I told him at one point I make sure I find somebody my head right and I'm moving slowly.

Shane Duffiney 24:18

Very aware. I'm dying. And I'm still just like I got this in like a dumbass and. And I was like, Maybe I should look for somebody that asked for some help. And it is just like this. I told myself in my head. I said if you ended up dying in the parking lot because you didn't ask for help.

Shane Duffiney 24:40

You're an idiot. And I was like, Oh God, and that's what I just saw the first door I saw and opened it and walked in and there was this long high hallway which was a very surreal walk for me to go down the hallway to find somebody you know very much those very classic like life flashing before your eyes like, oh gosh, I, you know, there's some things I need to do better with my life kind of moments.

Shane Duffiney 25:07

And some things I need to put more value in kind of moments. And if I found somebody I was like, Is this the emergency room? And they were like, No, it's not

you got to go out that door, go back down the hallway, take a ride, go out the door, and go around the corner and you'll find the door.

Shane Duffiney 25:23

And I was like, Okay, thank you. And I'm like, slowly turning, walking and somebody hollered out, do you need help? And I was like, Yeah, I think I'm dying right now. Back to just being stupid. Like, don't ask, I was very, very silly, but thank God, the ladies are like, Do you need help?

Shane Duffiney 25:45

And so then they brought me out a wheelchair, and then they will meet, wheeled me into the ER, and that's in the nurse was standing in the waiting room. And she immediately went, you're having a stroke? And, Kasey, saved my life so thank you, Kasey.

Bill Gasiamis 26:05

How long were you in hospital?

Shane Duffiney 26:08

Three days, that weekend, three days, they, once they diagnosed me and shot me up with the TPA shot. I didn't know this. But after you take the TPA shot, they don't let you sleep. Because it can kill you. And they need to make sure it's not burning up your brain. Which is why there's a time limit. Just again, you probably know this, but other people might know there's a time limit.

Shane Duffiney 26:35

They, wouldn't give it to me after two hours, which is you know what, the nurse was yelling at me when she pulled me up off the table. And I was like, well, I'll just wait until tomorrow and see about I think it over tonight. She was like No, they won't give it to you tomorrow.

Shane Duffiney 26:48

They'll either give it to you within the next 40 minutes. Or they won't give it to you at all. And so I've been awake all day till seven o'clock now it's like almost nine o'clock at night. And they're like, Okay, now you're gonna put they just put me in the I was there the whole weekend.

Shane Duffiney 27:04

They stuck me in the ICU for the rest of the night for the rest of the weekend. And

they kept me away. Because this lady's in charge of the ICU they slap this slap the shit out of me. Like I wake up, I wake back up I go my kid, you know, I guess they were saying hey, they're calling Mr. Daphne a lot that was was was it a weekend?

Post-Stroke Deficits of Shane Duffiney

Bill Gasiamis 27:30

And when you left the hospital, what did you leave with as far as deficits are concerned?

Shane Duffiney 27:38

I was blessed. I was blessed. You know, I have a friend and she had suffered brain damage because she worked in a prison and an inmate attacked her and she had some brain damage. And she was like, you know, she told me she was like, you're gonna go to the neurologist she visited me while I was in the hospital that weekend.

Shane Duffiney 28:06

She said have you thought about what it's going to be like when you do your follow-up with a neurologist? And I was like no, and then she was like that waiting room is pretty rough. And I understand what she means now. And how lucky I was to the discharged ICU doctor or the emergency room ICU doctor you know, he discharged me himself personally.

Shane Duffiney 28:31

And he was like, you know, we don't normally have somebody he said I wanted to personally discharge you because I don't normally get to see somebody come in with a stroke and then walk out of here in better condition than they came in here with and, and I understand that now since I've sat in the waiting room.

Shane Duffiney 28:53

You know, all that being said though, I still had to learn how to walk and talk again, I didn't have a like anything that resembled the world. I just had Aspasia so I had to learn how to do you know think I had to learn how to process information again and like formulate full cognitive sentences and ideas and get those out because like you start my brain would just stop the process of getting it out my mouth.

Shane Duffiney 29:24

And anything that that involved the multi-sensory anything like looking and hearing at the same time or like petting my cat and listening at the same time, like I would immediately basically you know, I would have results like like having a concussion-like very dizzy very to the point if I keep doing it, I start getting nauseous and fall and start throwing up.

Shane Duffiney 29:51

And then so yeah, I had to do vestibular therapy because I couldn't I couldn't walk very well. It took me five years. It took me five months to be able to walk and talk at the same time. I'm again. And to this day, I still have headaches, you know, I had the pain for the next week was just intense.

Shane Duffiney 30:09

And if you think you can't sleep with the most intense pain in the world, yes, your body will shut down just long enough for you to rest up and wake back up. So, thankfully that level of pain is gone, but I do have long-term headaches, I always have headaches.

Shane Duffiney 30:28

They've gotten me on a medication management for that very ended up being a very low cost. So just got to make sure I take it to go to bed. If I don't, I'll read it tomorrow. But yeah, other than that back to work, fully functional. But on yet longer road, I learned how to walk and talk again, at the same time, at least.

Bill Gasiamis 30:54

You said earlier that you've almost come close to death a few times. But sounds like this time. It's impacted you differently, there seems to be a little more of an emotional or mental impact. Like and I'm not talking about cognitive, I'm talking about psychological impact. Is that accurate? Or what's going on there?

Shane Duffiney 31:21

Yeah, maybe you can relate to this, I was reading some of your stuff and the title of your book, or at least the first one. And I probably like I thought, at least, I feel I still feel maybe I am I probably like the only person in the history of the world that, like, was so thankful he had a stroke, right?

Shane Duffiney 31:44

You know, cuz I mean, I think there's a lot of other ways to have a midlife crisis, you could do it without having a stroke. But for me, it took a stroke. I, you know, I

was a very ridiculously driven person. Like I said, I left home at 14, I had nothing my whole life for a long time.

Shane Duffiney 32:13

And at some point, like in my late 20s, I just kind of was like, Okay, you're gonna change everything. And I became very obsessed with finance and business. And, you know, I went from being the guy who sweeps the floor at the company I work for to being in charge of the northeast area, in Canadian business development.

Shane Duffiney 32:36

And, and it was just like, so very driven, you know, went from nothing to financially nothing to beat, okay, you know, being pretty okay, and just learning and to the point where nobody wanted to be around me anymore. Except for the business people.

Shane Duffiney 32:56

None of my friends, none of my family, my family was like, Dude, you know, like, we don't want you to come over for Christmas, all you want to do is talk about work, you know, and then they're not being mean. But just to give you an idea of, how difficult it was for me to be human around other people.

Personal growth and overcoming emotional issues

Bill Gasiamis 33:18

You were unknowingly kind of like, you just shop talk all the time all the time, yeah, it was your identity, it sounds like it was ingrained in you. And it probably gave you a lot of safety because we're going from homeless to having financial freedom. And being able to put a roof over your head is a really important thing for you.

Bill Gasiamis 33:44

Because you didn't have that now you have that you know what it's like to have it, you'd rather have it and then it's like, I'm gonna do everything I can to keep having it and dedicate your life to it. And as a result of that, you alienate other people, because you can't relate to them, and they can't relate to you. And they're like, chill out, and you're like, No, we've got to keep going and keep doing this.

Shane Duffiney 34:08

And to be honest, like, I knew it, and I didn't want to be that way anymore. I didn't want to keep losing loves in my life, and, you know, good people who care about me, and I care about them. Trying to get away from me, right, you know, I knew it was going on in my personal life, and I couldn't stop it.

Shane Duffiney 34:36

And, you know, I tell the story. You know, I remember getting down I have a bay window at my house and we were getting out three days before the stroke. I got down on my knees and I just begged God and just made this it was like an addiction was totally like an addiction. And you're very accurate. Like all the introspection I've had these past three years.

Shane Duffiney 34:55

I agree with everything you said about why we're in some of that room. cause was coming from that I remember like, like, on my hands and knees praying like God, please, I cannot on my own make this stop, make this stop.

Shane Duffiney 35:10

And I remember I sat down right after that in a chair. And I thought, Man, how stubborn Are you? I thought how hard Is God gonna lop you upside ahead to get it through? And I was like I'm fixing to have a heart attack, I'm thinking three days later I had a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 35:26

I couldn't relate to that completely. Because I would have described myself as somebody who was a headcase totally in my head over, you know, overthinking thinking that my head is going to resolve all the problems like your cognitive brain can't resolve emotional problems.

Bill Gasiamis 35:44

Your cognitive brain can't resolve whether or not you've got the guts to make a hard life decision or an important life decision, you know, you have got to have the guts to do that. And for emotional problems, you got to have the heart to do that, you know, you got to be able to go where it's painful and make emotional decisions, right? And I always thought my head was probably overdoing.

Bill Gasiamis 36:11

It took all the tasks on and it was overruling my head and was overruling my gut

instinct, right? And I couldn't break out of it. And when my head had the two first blades, I felt like it had gone offline completely.

Bill Gasiamis 36:29

And spaced out like in a different timezone in a different you know, when, when a theory warp, like I don't know, what it was, was just out of the out of this world is something completely different.

Bill Gasiamis 36:44

And going completely offline, meant that my gut instinct in my heart was sort of starting to come forward and start to express themselves and like, say, alright, now here's our opportunity to get back some of our power from the head.

Bill Gasiamis 36:58

And it's like, it was such a blessing because I had things I needed to fix and resolve, especially personal problems that I had, that were minor in comparison, some other people but important with important people like my kids, or my wife, you know, where I was a complete headcase give them a hard time over everything all the time, for no reason.

Bill Gasiamis 37:22

Come home and look for problems and started being angry and yelling, and all that kind of junk. My kids were teenagers, right? And I could see, I knew that it was going to create a divide between us.

Bill Gasiamis 37:35

And I had no idea how to change myself, you know how to stop being the idiot that always found myself in the same place all the time causing the same, like, irritation in the family. And when the head switched off, I was able to address those issues. And it was a big blessing, like, it was hard.

Bill Gasiamis 38:02

And I didn't know if I was going to survive. I didn't know if I was going to be able to ever work again to make money or any of that stuff were so many uncertainties, but there was one certainty, and that was that I was going to be able to address all the emotional stuff that I needed to address.

Shane Duffiney 38:19

Well, that's a beautiful story, but just to get a very great summary to get across

and express to me. That journey it sucks to be sucked to be on the front end of all that knowing, like knowing that this is what's going on in like, like, I can't fix it, you know, and then and then it's I'm assuming that it's better now for your family and your personal life. And so that's why I was saying it's a beautiful story, as I'm assuming that part.

Bill Gasiamis 38:50

It's, better because what they've seen is the actual effort that I made to make things better, to apologize to them, except when I was wrong and to give them a break because they're kids and they're making mistakes and that's how they grow up.

Bill Gasiamis 39:06

And that's how they learn. And to just get off my wife's back, you know, with just being parenting differently. I thought that there was only one way to do things that was my way. And what they did was they accepted my apology and then they gathered around me more like they came closer.

Bill Gasiamis 39:27

They were able to say hey, I'm gonna go hang out with the old man for a little bit you know, and talk about stuff or whatever. They were able to come to me because I was vulnerable and express to them my personal emotional and mental problems.

Bill Gasiamis 39:42

They're able to go okay, well I've got an example now of what a man is because they're both boys are both men. This is what a man can do if they want to. So now when they're going through a tough time as adults, they can come to me or they can go see a counselor or they can go to anyone they can talk through their tough times instead of sitting with them and making matters worse just by sitting in there and overthinking things.

Bill Gasiamis 40:09

So yeah, it helps to bridge the generation gap. And then it helps to heal the wounds, and then it helps to just overcome, overcome some of those things that you don't realize you start with the best intentions, but it causes a rift in the relationship and then you've lost them and it's hard to get them back.

Shane Duffiney 40:33

It's funny, like, in a way, it's funny, like I Yeah, at some point with all that success, quote, success, like I started thinking, Well, okay, you've become the person you're the man you always wanted to be in, like, in the reality is like, my, my cousin sent me a letter, a thank you letter I got last week, you know, my uncle passed away.

Shane Duffiney 40:59

And, you know, I like dropped everything went to, to help them. And that was months ago. And now I went back over there to help them close up best just just just to be in the room with them while they're going through everything, right, you're going through the stuff and seeing what they want to carry with them throughout the rest of your life.

Shane Duffiney 41:18

And you know what I've ever gotten to get that letter. That's very heartfelt. Thank you for being there. And thank you for just being this presence that was, you know, helpful and calming. And, and I was just thinking, Okay, now, now I'm the person I'm the man I always wanted to be, you know, and to, because that's, that's, yeah, I want to I want it to be that person. That's, that's more honored.

Bill Gasiamis 41:47

Yeah, you can't just be a big hit on a body and turn up to places and cognitively solve everybody's problems. When they lose somebody, right? You can't go in there with a head-based solution, you're gonna go there and just be present.

Bill Gasiamis 42:02

And even if you don't know what to say, and you're just there and you're calm, and you're loving, you're expressing love, just by being there, right? People catch on, and they sense that and, it's appreciated. And it's easy to do. Shane, you didn't have to do much.

Shane Duffiney 42:24

You're right it is sometimes it's hard to just shut up and sit there. But you're right it doesn't take, it doesn't take a lot. It doesn't cost anything doesn't cost anything. And it's so invaluable. And it took a stroke for me to become the person I wish I had always wanted to be.

Bill Gasiamis 42:41

That's crazy, good. And just crazy. It's insane that words come out of more than

one person's mouth, you know those words. So many people have said the same thing. And I love that what it does is it transforms this terrible thing that happened to you, you almost took your life and all those things, but it's transformed into this amazing thing.

Bill Gasiamis 43:08

And that is what's great about like, where are the gifts in this terrible time that occurred in a way is the possibility for growth. And that's what my book is about. It's about the unexpected way that a stroke became the best thing that happened. And it became that it, it states that wasn't the best thing that happened.

Bill Gasiamis 43:29

It didn't start as a great thing. We were completely overwhelmed by everything that it did and caused and the challenges, but somehow we managed to drag some positivity out of it. And that aim, almost like you said, instinctively, it was just these things all happened without me putting a lot of you know, an in a business decision.

Bill Gasiamis 43:55

You know, these are your goals, right? If I do this, this, that and that, and that and that. I'll get that result or come very close to getting the result with a podcast, but I didn't have any of those thoughts. I was like, I should have a podcast. And that was it. I did it. And then oh, I think I need a bit of microphone.

Bill Gasiamis 44:13

I'll just get a better microphone when I can manage to bring the money together. Oh, and then I'll learn how to edit. And then do you know what I mean? Like there were no pre-conceived things that I was going to do with this struggle.

Bill Gasiamis 44:28

I was going to transform it and I was going to know it was just me acting from a heart space and going alright, what could be good about doing a podcast or meeting other people? Okay, what else and then I'm here and it was like that old relate to me or relate to them.

Bill Gasiamis 44:45

And then what I didn't realize was that after X amount of episodes, it was making a difference to other people and that was helping them and they were feeling better. And that was making the stroke recovery. I knew I knew none of that stuff.

I never had any of those extra quotations.

Bill Gasiamis 45:01

And then it's like, wow, here we go. And it was all simply, from me, just going, I'm going to follow my heart, and I'm going to do the thing that I think is a great thing to do. That's it. And I never had a lot of time, energy, or cognitive ability. In the beginning, it was really hard to put two episodes together, one after another.

Healing journey after stroke and writing a book

Bill Gasiamis 45:23

So, you know, I couldn't do one episode a week. But then about four or five years after, putting episodes out incrementally, I started to find my mojo. I was able to put out and commit to one episode a week. And that's been like that for about three or four years now.

Bill Gasiamis 45:40

So it took, it took a long time, and it's part of the healing journey, it's helped me recover, it's helped me heal, it's helped me look back and go look how far you've come. Volunteering did that as well, going into volunteering at the Stroke Foundation here in Australia and meeting other stroke survivors.

Bill Gasiamis 45:59

That was not something that the old me would have ever done, volunteer and help other people for free. And well, like, What are you talking about? As if Why would you do that? So it was like, a massive opportunity for growth for anyone listening. And it's like, Where? Where is the path of least resistance?

Bill Gasiamis 46:21

Where can you go and get the massive, most massive benefit in return, whether it's emotional, mental, or physical return by doing the smallest, putting in the smallest effort possible? So it's almost the lazy person's approach to life, but it's to preserve your energy so that you can attend that event or that thing and do that thing, and then reap the rewards from doing it.

Bill Gasiamis 46:50

You know, it's just the episodes are recorded before this one is with a lady who adaptively teaches yoga to people who've had neurological issues, whatever they are, okay. And she talks about, like, going to adaptive yoga, it's got nothing to do

almost with that.

Bill Gasiamis 47:08

That part of the process is called Yoga. She says the benefits far outweigh the yoga part of it, because it's community, it's people understanding, it's chatting, getting ready. It's finding a way to solve a problem like, how am I going to get dressed on time? Or how am I going to get to the event on time?

Bill Gasiamis 47:28

Or what am I going to do when I get there like, it's all these other peripheral things that you don't pay attention to you don't notice? That, okay, another benefit, the yoga is just an amazing excuse to turn up somewhere and meet with like-minded people, but the other peripheral benefits are just huge.

Bill Gasiamis 47:49

And that's what the podcast has done for me. And that's what volunteering did for me. And, then that's how the book just came to be. It seemed to be a natural progression, it took four years to write and develop the idea and all of that, but it was just a natural progression.

Bill Gasiamis 48:08

And it came to an end. And now there's a book. And people think, ah, that's impossible. I can't do that. But believe me, I never read a book before my stroke, because I didn't think that was useful.

Bill Gasiamis 48:22

But then when I needed to learn about my recovery, and how to get better. So I did I dove into books. And I became educated. And I learned all because of the stroke this all this stuff is not build before, you know before the stroke is not this guy.

Shane Duffiney 48:40

Yeah, and I'm really glad you pointed out that you have so many of those things. Because somebody might take it the wrong way. When I say like, it was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. And they look at me like, oh, yeah, well, you're walking, you're looking at your you're fine.

Shane Duffiney 48:54

Right, you know, and they don't, they didn't hear the fox. I didn't say it, but you

did. You know, there's a part of the story where you're back to that, like weeks of pain, and have to learn how to walk and talk again. And fortunately, I was able to quickly, like you said, like the peripheral things these people are experiencing together, because you have to learn how to get dressed again.

Shane Duffiney 49:20

You have to learn how to put your pants back on you have to learn how to button them again. You have to learn how to, like, Cook was like being in my 90s Like, you know, I'm like oh, this is what is old and invalid. Like I couldn't. Somebody would take me to the store so we can go buy food.

Shane Duffiney 49:41

And I couldn't get in the door. And I'd be like yes take me back home. Because like like I'm about to pass out. Right, you know, and it was like getting then it was just like incremental victories, being able to be able to get down the stairs, being able to get to the car.

Shane Duffiney 49:58

Like you know, if I didn't put the work in today, to be able to function tomorrow, like practice walking, practice turning my head and looking at something. Like until you lose the ability to turn your head and look at something you don't know what it's like to fight to get that back, you know, so yeah, those peripheral things, and then only other people, you know that in that situation can't have had.

Shane Duffiney 50:28

And again, I was very fortunate I got the shot, you know, the people who, who, you know, seven years later are still very visibly, you know, not functioning well, like those people didn't get the shot, but there are still probably pretty, I mean, a few of my mad at ones that met and I'm so excited when I hear somebody talking about like,

Shane Duffiney 50:49

My son just had a stroke, like, I'm like, Hey, he'll get better. Yes he well, I mean, like, or, like, people come up to me and talk to me, because I'll be telling a friend, you know, I see a friend, I used to live in Texas, I live in Pennsylvania now. And they were in town.

Shane Duffiney 51:04

And we caught up and somebody heard me telling the story. And they came up to

me and they said, My son just had a stroke, you know, and it's like, these are anything you think I should tell him, I was like, he will get better, like, there are trained, committed people out there in the medical field, the medical community to help him get better.

Shane Duffiney 51:26

Like, just do it, he'll get better one inch at a time. But it will happen. And so yeah, it's great to be able to have that. I mean, it's like the most rewarding thing. And now here, I'm trying to do financial, like I'm doing financial coaching now. Because I love, like, that's where my heart is gone.

Shane Duffiney 51:45

Like I love seeing, like I just talked to I was having a haircut the other day, and I was talking to this lady, and she's like, I can't retire, I can't afford it, and she told me some things. I was like, well did you check this? And did you check that? And she was like, No, I didn't, I didn't know you could, and like, by the time I left, she was like, I think I can retire.

Shane Duffiney 52:02

And you know, just like I changed her world. Like that information changed her world, I was high on life for a week after that. Like, you know, so it's great to be able to follow your heart a lot more, right, you know, and reap the rewards, whether they're financial or you know, or whether they're just so like I said, I was high on life for a week. From an eight-minute conversation.

Bill Gasiamis 52:34

And I love what you said about reaping the rewards, it's like, when something is really difficult, you know, you can't walk. And the deficits have caused problems for people and it's in that fight, it's in that fight, you know, no matter if you're fighting for better movement, more walking, more flexibility, more whatever, there is always a positive payoff, you do get something out of it.

Bill Gasiamis 52:58

And if you judge yourself by, I'm not running, like I used to run before the stroke the same, then you're gonna feel deflated. But if you understand that you're able to continue biting and improve incrementally, and you may not get back to before stroke, what it was like before stroke, but you can continue to improve always, well, there's when you have the guts to go after that you do.

Bill Gasiamis 53:28

You get rewarded, and your effort doesn't go wasted. You know, that's not how it works. When you go after something, you learn something, you grow, you get challenged, you prove yourself wrong.

Bill Gasiamis 53:47

And, it's really important to not judge yourself by what you weren't capable of previously, you know because the stroke happened and you have your character now gets the opportunity to build itself from what you do now, not from what you did in the past.

Shane Duffiney 54:07

This was like such huge some of what you said is such a huge factor on you know, I reached I thanked you, I sent you an email to thank you because of course, I started looking some of the stuff up after it happened to me and in and you know.

Shane Duffiney 54:24

I saw these headlines on YouTube and for your podcast and I was like I watched some of it and what I could and I was like, okay, these people just like my friends are talking about they got better, and they're all happy. Admittedly, I was happier.

Shane Duffiney 54:45

Three days after my stroke, unable to walk and talk, and intense pain that I had three days before my stroke. Because there was just such a life change that I like, I'm like, I want to spend time with my niece and nephew right? I don't want to like to skip Christmas anymore because I gotta go finish this deal.

Improving the quality of life for people with neurological conditions

Shane Duffiney 55:04

But, you know, you invited me to be on this podcast, and, and I, you know took forever to sign up for that. And you know what brought me back to make sure I sign up for that was because one, you know, looking at through the lens and thank you but also, I saw somebody in my neighborhood I saw somebody walking in my neighborhood and I was driving, I saw like a pastor.

Shane Duffiney 55:34

She had this weird shuffle gait limp with her left leg and her right hand was not functioning, and she was trying to keep it up. And, you know, and, her face wasn't functioning correctly, or just was in this weird position. And then I saw the determination and the drive in her eyes, right?

Shane Duffiney 55:55

You know, this slightly older lady. And I saw that determination and drive in her eyes, I was like, I will, I will be able to I will learn to do this again, right, you know, and I recognized I should say, I recognize that. And I thought to myself, like, you're gonna get better, like, you're gonna get better.

Shane Duffiney 56:20

What you're doing now those little, little, little incremental. Admittedly, it was, it was a war of inches, for me, and it's going to be a war of inches for her. But I just thought like, if one person could hear you would get better. Like, that's why I made sure I signed up on your calendar and just just so I could give back a little bit. And just just make sure somebody hears that, like, you will get better.

Shane Duffiney 56:51

The reality is, for me at least, like every day that I did the work that I was being told to do at home, the physical therapy work, like I could tell the following day, I was a little bit better, right, just a little bit better it which was incredibly encouraging. So like, if you're at home, and you happen to catch this podcast, you know, and you're very depressed, totally understandable.

Shane Duffiney 57:20

But don't let the depression stop you from trying. Because because it will get better. And I was the guy who told that I told the frickin neurologist, because he was like, I'm gonna sign this paperwork to the to your out for the rest of the year from work. And I was like, no, no, no, no, I'll be back in three months, I'll be back in three months.

Shane Duffiney 57:38

So you fill that out for I think I said five months, or something like that, like, I'll be back. You know, and, and I made him feel it out for like, whatever, three, five months, I don't know. And like, I humbly went back to him. And I was like, I just didn't realize how bad I was. I was the last one that I was.

Shane Duffiney 57:56

And I humbly went back to him and was like, You don't understand who I am, I make things happen. And I went humbly back to him apologized and just told him I was sorry for thinking I knew better than you. You know, that was very, very ignorant. I mean, I did and, asked him.

Shane Duffiney 58:18

But again, like, it's it for me being here. It's all about, you know, for those people who are down and depressed, like you know, you know, you will get better if you put in the work, and I hope they do.

Bill Gasiamis 58:33

Yeah, and it's true, and I don't care what condition you're in now, you can always make a better you can always adjust your nutrition and eat better, healthier, whatever. And make sure that you're not making your deficits worse by eating the wrong food or drinking alcohol or smoking still and that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 58:55

You can meditate and make your emotional state calmer and better. And that doesn't cost anything or you don't need to go anywhere to do that. You know, you can do so many things that can improve your situation, even if you don't look like the person that you looked like before.

Bill Gasiamis 59:18

You know, even if you don't feel like the person they felt like before you can still experience improvements and benefits, and technology is rapidly changing. You know, I did a podcast episode about a tennis court. A little while ago. It's an injection.

Bill Gasiamis 59:39

There's a Dr. Tobinick in Florida who injects people it was previously an anti-inflammatory medication, which is still useful people for rheumatoid arthritis. And somehow they stumbled across it improving stroke symptoms for a lot of people and it doesn't work for some people.

Bill Gasiamis 59:58

And that episode has just offered so much hope for people being able to understand that technology and medicine have moved in a positive direction towards being able to support us in spaces where they never did before. And then

I was watching this sleep.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:18

That was on the Joe Rogan podcast, he was talking about Randy Travis, an American singer who had a stroke some years ago and lost his ability to sing. And now there's AI technology that's been able to sample his voice and turn from his previous records and the diff.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:41

And the songs that he'd released in the past. And they've been able to create a new release, even though this guy cannot sing anymore, and can't talk anymore. And he's just released the song. I don't know if it's very recent, or how recently, but they released the song with AI, in his voice singing this new song.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:00

So I don't know that life's over for stroke survivors, I don't know that you should just put yourself on the, on the bench, you know, and store yourself away and forget about life anymore, think you should go after things and find a way to solve your problems.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:23

Because even in that fight, the finding of ways to overcome that you just grow in that as well, just in the fight to find solutions. Rather than focus on problems. You know, if you focus on problems, you're gonna get tons of them. If you focus on solutions, you're gonna get tons of them.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:40

So it's just about where you put your mindset, you know, you can shift that easily. And that doesn't cost extra either. It's just a free experience that you can have. Sounds like you've very much taken a lot of those lessons and run with them. And it seems like you're thriving and benefiting from them.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:00

Even though you've been, you know, we'll call it like, a little bit scared or nicked by this thing, you know, and you've got, you know, a physical thing to show for it. It's, there is a physical thing in your brain, right, that has been damaged.

Shane Duffiney 1:02:16

I've seen the scan, there's a little bit smaller on the golf ball size, a dead spot. I

was like, so that's dead. And they're like, yep, that's dead. I was like, that's gonna never come back to life no.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:36

Yeah, right. But around that what's interesting, also, is that I did an episode on hyperbaric oxygen therapy as well. And they're finding these areas, they call them penumbras that are areas that are offline, that have been put offline, because of the injury, and then because of the damage that's occurred in that main spot.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:58

And what they do is this clinic of clinics in the United States as well, I think they are in New York and a couple of other locations. And what they do is they put you, or people through a whole bunch of tests to discover whether there's these numbers, these areas that can be rehabilitated around the dead zones, so to speak.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:23

And if they find them, they can put you through hyperbaric oxygen therapy sessions. Their protocol, I think, is one session a day for 60 days. And people recover some of those areas that have been put offline. So even though it appears as though that part that's gone is gone.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:45

Usually, it's surrounded by other parts that can be rehabilitated, that can be helped with again, technology, and medicine. So I would encourage people to just leave no stone unturned, no stone unturned for things that they can do to recover.

Shane Duffiney 1:04:05

Glad you told me about that. I mean, it's Yeah, I mean, I anything, anything that can help with the Neuroplasticity? Back are the building up stronger, blood veins. I mean, that little bridge going around that blockage is much smaller than the original original vein. Let's, I'll take two or three more of those little bridges.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:33

And the more you can support them, the better the more you can put oxygen through them and encourage blood flow the better, and even then, that's fascinating as well. I never knew that blood vessels do that. That's unreal. I love that.

Shane Duffiney 1:04:47

Oh, yeah. Okay, I mean I just to me You're like the foremost Doctor authority on the subject matter like you've been doing this a lot. Yeah. When they told me that I was like, that's some sci-fi Yes. Yeah, that's an alien step right there.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:03

It is, I must admit, I've learned a lot about stroke, stroke recovery, and all the different conditions and all that kind of stuff. And it's, you know, I'm not an expert in any medical sense or any of that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:16

But I can relate to a lot of things that people are saying, and give them a sense of go there, have a look there or speak to that person, or check out this, or this is another thing I came up with, or I remember on that interview, somebody said that, something like that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:31

So, you know, I'm like a hub of information that I could send people to and from, and it makes a massive difference in being able to decrease the amount of time that stroke survivors find that information, right? So previously, they might have had to stumble across it over a year or two, or months, or whatever.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:51

And now, if they happen to know me, or know of the podcasts and ask the right question, and I answer it, I can decrease the time that it takes for them to get that answer. Because, you know, squeezing into weeks and days instead of years of research and discovery, and all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:09

And it's good because I learned that from my stroke survivors who have interviewed, my neurologists don't know that some of that stuff, you know, my doctors don't know that stuff. You know, and certainly, my experience is a lot of the doctors in the neurologists that we deal with in the acute phase of our stroke, we never see again afterward.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:30

So you can't follow up with them, and you can't get more information out of them, all you do is get patched up and sent home. And that's the hard part, that's where the gap of information lies, you know, it's not their job to do that. I don't feel like

so I don't want to be too hard on them. And that's where I feel like I fit in, that's my job to do that. To create a network of inflammation so that people can get to it more easily.

Shane Duffiney 1:06:57

Yeah, it's, you make a really good point. I mean, again, not to go down to be too rough on the doctors and medical people in this field. Because I mean, these, you know, I pointed out to me, for, like, the neurologists to be the, you know, to make it and be a neurologist, that's a lot of dedicated time in schooling.

Shane Duffiney 1:07:20

And it's not like a kind of school where everybody just gets an A if you do good enough, no, it's like only a certain amount of, there's like, whoever's the best of the best is allowed to be that and it's, that's how it goes on the ranking system. And, like, we know, upfront, like, somewhat like this, many of you are going to fail, because you're just not as good as these others.

Shane Duffiney 1:07:40

It's not like, you just get a certificate or degree in it, you have to be the best the best either way, you know, and so they have their reasons to to go through all of that. And to be that committed to getting into to become a neurologist who does brain surgery does work with stroke victims and in and you know.

Shane Duffiney 1:08:06

That's back to the comment I made about committed medical dedicated professionals who come up with off-the-wall things that, you know, really maybe aren't approved, or aren't what's considered the medical way of doing it, because but it's like, well, we've seen patients get better when they stand on this Wobble Board right?

Shane Duffiney 1:08:31

Now, when I take them off for a hike outside and have them look at the skyline while they're walking, they seem to recruit better quicker than if they use this tool, right? So then that becomes like, again, it's like people are going in there, like professionals are going to their off hours to go with patients and how that but either way, right, you know, it's like, you know, they're very in the trenches of it.

Shane Duffiney 1:08:53

And it's in sometimes, you know, I've gotten a view I've done some things and

helped my tried some things that I found out, oh, they do in another country, or they try to some other point, you know, and some other time and it was worked out sort of, well, you know and you know, maybe it's not just like what's considered like the most modern.

Shane Duffiney 1:09:13

I think you make a point to like back to the neurologist, but like, you know, my neurologist who was for my stroke is very different than the neurologist from for my ongoing pain in my brain. Right and so, you know, the neurologist right strokes like Well, yeah, they do this and they do that, you know, he can, you know, they can work with you for getting turns out like Botox, or you do Botox to try to alleviate the pain.

Shane Duffiney 1:09:37

And so I go to the neurologist for headaches specifically and he's like no, we don't do that first. Like, like, we don't do that first. We do that in extreme cases. And so just, there's very different there's differences and discipline and fields and skill sets of neurology, you know, so to be able to find a source like yourself or your webpage or your podcast, you know, the internet.

Shane Duffiney 1:10:15

To get some practice on things get some resolutions or just try something different. And again, if it works, if it even helps a little bit, like, like a little bit 2%, better today than I was yesterday, is a lot, especially what I can do 2% I can be 2% Better the following day, and 1% by the next day. And yeah, I'll try anything.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:39

Accumulated benefits, massive, massive, and YouTube is an unbelievable resource for stroke survivors. I mean, it's endless, what you can find on YouTube, about how to support yourself.

Shane Duffiney 1:10:50

More and more information on that subject, at least, like three or 2021, I think it was when this happened. Like, it seems there's more information out there and I ischemic, like the cardio, care, whatever they call the special medical term, there's a lot more information out there.

Shane Duffiney 1:11:07

Now, just on that tear, there's very little information to find out there, but I can

find there's a lot more out there on YouTube to find and I'm like watching like a two-hour lecture by some doctor in Toronto, right, you know, and in Toronto, Canada, and I'm like, wow, like, that's good to know.

Shane Duffiney 1:11:25

And like I you know, and turn it around to like, at least I wrote into this like going to a doctor for something else. Just anything else, whatever. Like a normal general practitioner. It's funny because the discharging doctor even though he was like, I want to discharge you personally, because I don't get a discharge, somebody's in better condition.

Shane Duffiney 1:11:49

And they walked in here very often. But also attendees, he wanted to make sure I understood fully what happened to me like you had an isometric or ischemic stroke, you have full-on, he was very specific, you had a full-on isometric stroke, nada, nada, a wandering stock, or whatever they're calling them and whatever part of the country right now for like a partial stroke.

Shane Duffiney 1:12:15

And I've run into that to where like, again, like, because of the effort and the work put in, and how fortunate I was like, to me, like, Man, I would never know you had a stroke. And it's like, that's a great compliment because of the work. But then they'll go to a general practitioner, and they're like, they don't believe me.

Shane Duffiney 1:12:33

You know, and then I'm like, and you know, they see like, Oh, you've been prescribed high blood pressure medication. So you have high blood pressure, and you have all these other ones.

Shane Duffiney 1:12:42

So maybe the reason you're here for me now is because like your symptom would be the high blood pressure, like I don't have high blood pressure, they just prescribed me that medication. After all, that's what they prescribe to people so like, so also like e being able to be more informed on the subject matter.

Shane Duffiney 1:13:00

And especially when it comes to technical terminology, like to be able to kind of throw some of that, even picking it up from another dot from professionals in that specific field on YouTube.

Shane Duffiney 1:13:12

You have to walk into least I run into it a lot, where they're just like, you know, they don't want to like sometimes they don't want to the doctor doesn't want to listen or Yeah, like, Hey, I had this I started using, like explaining it to them. They're like, Oh, okay, no, I see that now.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:27

They want to be the one source for medical information, which they can't be you know, that's like, that's an ego thing. What they need to be is the need to listen, and they need to embrace what you're saying, and they need to respond appropriately in a medical way and say, Yeah, I'm not sure about that, or I'll look into that, or you might be mistaken about that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:49

They need to allow you to have the conversation, the days where you go to the doctor and you let them do whatever they want. And then you just accept that. That was my dad's generation. My mom's generation not us, we don't do that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:06

They need to step up, they need to know, they're the stuff and if they don't know this stuff, they need to be able to know who to send us to, if they don't know their stuff, and that's okay, I'm not expecting everyone to know everything. But I'm expecting them to respond appropriately when I challenge them.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:23

And they can't respond. I'm not doing it to teach you a lesson or to make you feel like you're a terrible medical professional. I'm not doing that. I'm just trying to protect myself and I want to make sure I make the right decisions going forward because I'll have the cognitive ability to so I am going to do it and I don't have time for you to make mistakes and to create setbacks for me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:49

I've already had enough of those and I need to be efficient. So that's all I'm just doing. I'm just having a proper conversation and I want you to respond appropriately. And if you don't know, I'm not going to hold that against you. I don't expect you to know everything.

Shane Duffiney 1:15:04

Don't Don't Don't dismiss me at least don't dismiss what I'm saying or what I

mean. There. I mean, I will tell a medical professional who listens to me and listens, listens. Does. I will thank them. Like, thank you so much for patiently listening to me.

Shane Duffiney 1:15:23

And in I do I have run, I think everybody's kind of run into it, at least if the older, more experience you have with some of the, you know, the medical profession, the more you might I always I've run into where it's like, they get stuck on trying to prove their right.

Shane Duffiney 1:15:41

Instead of right, like, you know, instead of like, well, okay, like, none of the symptoms are actually at this point pointing to that. Why are you still really working on trying to prove that that's what it is? If everything's kind of pointing over here now.

Bill Gasiamis 1:15:56

Medication is one of those things, right? It's interesting what you said about medication. So there are some protocols for stroke such as high cholesterol, medication, blood pressure, medication, and all that kind of stuff for somebody who turns up because of carotid artery dissection.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:12

Okay, and then don't have any of those underlying causes. I would question whether or not you need to take the medication at all. Now, in the initial phase of we don't know, what's going on with you exactly. So why don't we take some preventative action? I accept that I accept the preventive action.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:34

But if I am not on task, I don't have the risk factors, if I don't have pre-existing conditions, you know, why should I be taking the medication? And I think like, in those instances, you should be able to challenge a doctor and go, I think I want off of these things.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:48

And, you know, this is what I'm requesting this is what we should do, let's talk about how we're going to go about doing that and achieving that. If you've got high blood pressure, and you can't control it, you should not be off high blood pressure medication, under any circumstances, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:17:05

And it's just stay that's the thing is like, and I've had interviews where I've interviewed stroke survivors who have said that, that they will, they'll they'll put on all this stuff preventatively.

Bill Gasiamis 1:17:17

And then they will like, I think I went off and found the right doctor and disgusted and became monitored and did Bloods and did all that stuff. And eventually, they got off it. And it's better to not take a medication that you don't need to be taking.

Shane Duffiney 1:17:36

Yeah, and I ran into like I said earlier, like, the big thing I brought it I ran to I did I said similar I fought to get off some of it to get it, you know, some of it like went back on later. And but it mostly was because there's in general, the protocol before discharges.

Shane Duffiney 1:17:55

And that's what that's what they told me like, it's the kid the residence, it was like, Okay, well, this is what we get, we sign up and sign you up for once. It even I remember they even had a conversation with a resident who said no, but he doesn't have high blood pressure.

Shane Duffiney 1:18:11

And they were like, well, yeah, but that's what we give him. You know, it will let's just give it to him, you can get taken off it later. And the thing I've run into is, then my chart now says that and like you're on this and I start getting misdiagnosed for other things, because then they the medical professional in the future uses what's happened to me sees I'm on high blood pressure and now starts Miss diagnosing me because they assume I have high blood pressure.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:45

Complicates the medical issue.

Shane Duffiney 1:18:48

I've fought to get that taken off, like, hey, let's get that off of there. Because it's like, I don't have again, as you said, I don't have time to come back three more times. When we pray it probably could diagnose this the first time we eliminate the high, just as example, the high blood pressure that's out there.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:09

Yeah. So that's the thing, like being accurate in your diagnosis and your medical history. Your actual medical history is really important to be accurate, you know, and that's the thing.

Shane Duffiney 1:19:21

I just updated my medical history correctly. The other day, I said, You need to correct this. Like, very important. It's funny, you said I'm sorry, I interrupted you.

The hardest thing about the stroke for Shane Duffiney



Bill Gasiamis 1:19:31

That's all right. Look, I'm, I'm curious about a couple of things as we wrap up. Now, what I'm curious about is what's the hardest thing about stroke.

Shane Duffiney 1:19:48

Hardest thing about stroke and I want to kind of want to get this answer right for your audience. Man, the hardest thing about stroke I'm tossed up between, like not getting depressed through it. Right, you know, especially the early phases, you know, in knowing you're gonna get better because I've said, and I say that, like, especially about the depression.

Shane Duffiney 1:20:27

Because as I walked, I walked into the place like freaking ecstatic because I was like, this is going to change you for the better. Like, I knew it, like you're not like,

I remember walking down the back to that hallway, I walked in the door, walking down the hallway, and it's just like, total cliché, but, you know.

Shane Duffiney 1:20:49

It's flashing through my mind, all the things that I'm gonna miss, like, if I don't leave this building, because that's what I was the reality, right, you know, and I was very aware of it, it's like, you might not walk out of you might not leave this building a lot. And so it's like, you know, the family, the friends, that cliché, but it was so true. And I was just like, and you have not been doing enough of that.

Shane Duffiney 1:21:15

And so, back to the depression, I was thrilled. For being and all that pain and being able to again, I had to learn how to turn my head and look at things. I learned how to do that again. I got to spend weeks learning how to do that. And I still had dark moments, right? You know and scared like, sad, dark, not suicidal.

Shane Duffiney 1:21:42

I didn't get that point. But I could see how somebody would write you know, and so that, I would say the depression, you know, like, like, so many people, I didn't know how it affected so many people in my life already, like so many people texted me found out heard about it, from all over the country all over the US.

Shane Duffiney 1:22:04

Because I've traveled for work, travel, I've just lived all over the place. I've been everywhere in this country. And in so many people, you know, my brother-in-law's family, you know, that I met for Christmas one time had great people, like, texted me heartfelt. Hey, you know, I heard you're going through some stuff.

Shane Duffiney 1:22:25

You know, and I, you know, you're cared about like, those was like bright shining star moments for me in that depression. And I've made so for myself, I made sure every one of those people who reached out to me, like, when I see him again, in person, I thank them, I look him in the eye. And I thank them.

Shane Duffiney 1:22:45

I tell them how much that mattered in that moment. So it was very, it was very depressing. And I was probably about as happy as you can be. Like, and it still was very depressing. And those for anybody else who's watching and hasn't had a stroke like yeah, those little, that little text message was very helpful.

Shane Duffiney 1:23:05

So yeah, I mean, the depression I would say is probably the hardest in the thought of I won't get the I can't get better. Like there's no like, my life is over. My life is over. Like, it's not back to why I finally showed up for this, right? Like, my life is over.

Shane Duffiney 1:23:23

My life is over and that lady walking down the street, and I was like, Oh, I know where she's at. She's she's had a stroke. Like, she's fighting this and her life is not over. It might feel like it right there.

Shane Duffiney 1:23:36

But she's doing what it takes, you know, and it's yeah, the world is not over life is not over and it will get better. And man, you know, and if you have to have a you have to have a midlife crisis by us by Porsche instead. Know, but this will do.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:58

Buy a Porche, drive fast, scratch it, and realize it wasn't the Porsche that was gonna make me feel better at 42. Right? And then sell it for half of what you bought it and you know, let it burn a hole in your pocket and then go, Okay, now what do I have to do?

Lessons from the stroke

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:25

What has stroke taught you?

Shane Duffiney 1:24:27

Oh, cherish the moments. cherish the moments, cherish the moments. Every once in a while I start forgetting that, you know now recognize, recognize, cherish, take, you know, I do this thing. Like you know again I didn't realize how much it was going to help other people.

Shane Duffiney 1:24:49

But it did. So people would come up to me when they saw me again. I do this thing where if I stop cherishing the moments, I mean any not like I I'll make a point in my day to take a look around my day and find something beautiful in the day. And it might be in that might be a car on the street, like my experience.

Shane Duffiney 1:25:14

If I put myself in the right mindset, I can find something beautiful and an ugly object, right, you know, and inside, take a picture of it. And I just that angle that where I'm seeing the beauty of that. In that post, I posted on Facebook, and I put the view from my window.

Shane Duffiney 1:25:31

Right? And when people asked, like, why do you do that, it's like, because, because I'm making sure because I'm forgetting right now I'm forgetting to cherish the moments, and I'm getting kind of depressed with it from it, you know, and, and I'm making a point to make sure I do.

Shane Duffiney 1:25:45

And other people like me, that helped me out a lot. You know, it made me start realizing I need it. That made me start looking at the world around me differently. So I would say like, that's been the, the biggest thing is cherish the moments. Like, having a yacht and going to be I guess not, it's not worth all that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:26:09

You happen to find yourself on a yacht. And it's a beautiful day and you're cherishing the moment.

Shane Duffiney 1:26:14

That's perfect, perfect.

A message for other stroke survivors from Shane Duffiney

Bill Gasiamis 1:26:20

What's the message you want to leave the people watching and listening with? You know, what do you want to say? Other stroke survivors?

Shane Duffiney 1:26:27

Yeah, I, yeah, I've kind of kept throwing it out there. Thanks for asking that question. Again. I'll reiterate it, you know, you will get better at it. This isn't the end of your life. This isn't it? You know, whatever the old saying is, it's always the brightest after the darkest moments, right? You know, and it's very true.

Shane Duffiney 1:26:55

In this case, there are like, you will get the I took me weeks to learn how to turn my head and look. There, they will put a Z on the end of a stick and now like, Okay, follow it with your eyes, I guess I wasn't even turning my head. It took me weeks to be able to do that.

Shane Duffiney 1:27:16

Like, you will get better. Further stroke survivors out there. And like, don't, don't, please don't look at the condition I'm in now or here like and look and think and let that turn into well, you aren't as bad as me. Because you were never as bad as me maybe I wasn't bad off after the shop is immediately after the sharpest me.

Shane Duffiney 1:27:42

Maybe I wasn't but there are dedicated professionals who are committed, who have made it their life's journey to find ways to to help you. And if you put any effort and an effort in the beginning is just mentally saying I'm gonna do this and then eventually you will physically also be able to do it.

Shane Duffiney 1:28:05

And I know there's been plenty of people on this podcast that have been worse than I was that have said the same thing. So please, like that's that guess that's just the big thing like you will get better keep keep keep on keeping on. You'll you'll get better if you've tried it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:28:23

Awesome. Shane. And on that note, thank you so much for A reaching out and sending me that amazing email B agreeing to be on the podcast sharing your story. I appreciate it.

Shane Duffiney 1:28:35

Absolutely. Thank you very much. Bill thanks for following your journey and finding your journey with this and being there for everybody.

Bill Gasiamis 1:28:45

Thanks for joining us on today's episode. If you're interested in a copy of my book, you can go to Amazon and use my name Bill Gasiamis In the search bar or visit recoveryafterstroke.com/book. To learn more about my guests, including their social media links, and to download the full interview transcript head over to recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes.

Bill Gasiamis 1:29:10

A huge thank you to everyone who has left a review it means the world to me. Reviews are crucial for podcasts to thrive and your feedback helps others find this valuable content making their stroke recovery journey a little easier. If you haven't left a review yet, please consider leaving a five-star review and a few words about what the show means to you on iTunes and Spotify.

Bill Gasiamis 1:29:34

If you're watching on YouTube, leave a comment below the video or like the episode and subscribe to the show on your preferred platform to get notifications of future episodes. If you are a stroke survivor with a story to share now's the perfect time to join me on the show that interviews are unscripted and don't require any planning. Just be yourself and share your experience to help others in similar situations. Thanks so much for being here. Once again, I appreciate you see you on the next episode.