

Share Your Stroke Of Genius - Kyle Mengelkamp

Kyle Mengelkamp is the founder of Share Your Stroke Of Genius

Kyle Mengelkamp experienced a stroke at age 11 and this interview recording coincided with his 22-year stroke-aversary.

In 2017 Kyle along with Tammy Chan entered and won the AT&T create-a-thon documentary competition #Strokeofgenius which saw Kyle and Liam Alexander drive across the United States of America capturing and sharing stories of people overcoming life-threatening health challenges and thriving after their ordeal.



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Transcript:

“I didn't know what anything was” Kyle Mengelkamp



Kyle 0:00

So, I didn't know who my parents were, I didn't know who, I didn't know what anything was.

Kyle 0:08

I just opened my eyes and that's it. And then, a couple of days later, you know, I began to, you know, get who my parents were, and then memories started to come back.

Intro 0:27

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

Bill 0:36

Bill from recoveryafterstroke.com. This is Episode 70. with Kyle Mengelkamp.

Kyle is a film producer who wants to enjoy life and reach others discover new adventures and make a difference. We recorded this episode on Kyle's 22nd strokeaversary.

Bill 0:57

Kyle has experienced a stroke when he was 11. In the interview, we'll talk about the process that he went through to overcome stroke and what he's doing now to support others who have experienced stroke. Also, just before we get stuck into it, I wanted to let you know about something that I've been working on that is finally completed.

Bill 1:20

It's a free webinar that people can download directly from recoveryafterstroke.com/webinar, Go to recoveryafterstroke.com/webinar to download a free webinar that I created for people on the recovery journey. In the free webinar, you'll learn how to take action on your recovery now how to build a vision of the future that will inspire you, and what to do when you are faced with hard decisions about your path forward. You'll also learn the importance of creating a supportive team around you and what kind of people that may involve as well as how stroke recovery coaching can help speed up your healing.

Bill 2:01

So don't just be a stroke survivor. download this free webinar at recoveryafterstroke.com/webinar and become a stroke thriver. Kyle Minglekamp from Share Your Stroke of Genius. Welcome to the podcast.

Kyle 2:19

Thank you. Thank you very much for having me.

Bill 2:20

You're welcome. And that was a pretty rough introduction. But anyway apologies

Kyle 2:26

What was so rough about it?

Bill 2:27

I don't know. It just didn't feel like it came off my tongue properly there Kyle.

Kyle 2:31

Well, I mean, I don't want to, like, have you fear, we did have strokes. So, yeah, I mean, you know, not to use it as an excuse, but it just like that's the way it is.

Bill 2:48

Excellent. Every once in a while, we could throw that in, do use that as an excuse for having a stroke by the way, so I get away with a few things, but it's getting old with regards to my wife.

Kyle 2:59

Yeah, I mean, my mom doesn't want to hear about it anymore. I mean, it's Yeah. Next week is my 22nd strokeaversary. You know, there's only two excuses in life for us.

Kyle 3:22

There are only better seats on the airline.

Kyle 3:29

And the front-of-the-line passes at Disneyland. That's it. Okay. Yep. Well, everything else is just a matter of fact.

Bill 3:39

I didn't know that about Disneyland. I was there in 2013. And I didn't ask for a

Bill 3:46

free pass to the front of the row. I stood in line and headed like everybody else.

Kyle 3:51

Wow, you're a trooper.

Bill 3:55

Man, you look very young still, so tell me what 22

Kyle 3:59

Well, thank you.

Bill 4:02

22 years ago, you had a stroke how old were you?

Kyle 4:06

Bill 4:07

Wow, man, what happened to you?

Kyle 4:11

Um, I don't know. I just like, life was great. I just got off of all-star baseball

Kyle 4:21

You know, pitching a no-hitter.

Kyle 4:23

And I was out with my friends away from my parents in Santa Barbara, which is two hours north of you know, LA and we were camping.

Kyle 4:36

And I asked, I call home you know, every evening, and one time it was just different. I said, Hey, Mom, it's okay. Like, I'm brushing my teeth. And my mom said, like, what? Like, it was so random.

Kyle 5:00

And then she called my dad who was away on business. And, you know, my dad said. It's just one more night. And then he'll be home. And my mom knew it. My mom knew.

Kyle 5:18

And it was the next day, just it felt like a knife was stabbed me at the top of the head. And my right side felt like it weighed 500 pounds. And I kept on trying to get up and get up and just like, boom, boom, boom.

Kyle 5:39

And my life changed from there.

Bill 5:44

Wow. At 11, nobody's imagining that a child can have a stroke. I had no idea that there was such a thing as adolescent stroke or stroke in utero or any of those things. No idea.

Bill 5:59

How could you possibly know that and comprehend that unless you've been through it? Your parents.

Kyle 6:04

Well, I mean, you're pretty young too.

Bill 6:04

Yeah. I was 37. And that was the first time that I experienced that and it was seven years ago.

Bill 6:19

So that's young, but you know, 11 just shouldn't be happening to anybody at all but children at 11 like that's, not good is it?

Kyle 6:31

No, and you know, we found out that it was, first of all, they classified it as an AVM, then it was right there in the very of the brain.

Kyle 6:50

As soon as the swelling went away, they classified it again as a Cavernous Angioma.

Kyle 6:57

The same brain aneurysm as Mimi Hayes.

Bill 7:04

Mimi Hayes who I interviewed for Episode 60 of the podcast.

Kyle 7:05

Exactly. And so, that was rare as it is, you know, for us to meet you know, because we have a rare, you know, brain aneurysm. So it's a little bit more deeper than an ABM.

Bill 7:22

Yeah. So I experienced AVM and AVM is similar in that it's something that's sitting in the brain and then for some reason it decides to bleed. And Cavernous Angioma is similar but slightly different in the way that it's made up.

Bill 7:41

So, the day that I discovered that there was something wrong was the day that you came home or what was happening with the other adults around you? Didn't anyone notice that something was strange with Kyle?

Kyle 7:55

No. I you know, I was boogie boarding I was climbing trees I was out there, there's this train as it passed by this bridge and then we would go on the other side of it and try to get as close as possible. I mean we were kids I mean you know and pretty athletic ones I mean we just got off All-Star baseball and I was hot shit and you know.

Kyle 8:31

I'm

Kyle 8:33

Excuse me, I rephrase that Ty Cobb If you follow baseball, Ty Cobbs great grandson hit a home run off of me so I wasn't that great.

Kyle 8:47

But, I mean, those are my golden years. And so those are my only time to brag. But, you know, I had no symptoms.

Bill 9:04

You had no symptoms. But did you feel strange on your right side on those couple of days?

Kyle 9:09

No, it was a hit. And so some people have a slow bleed. Some people had a medium mine was just down the first account.

Bill 9:21

Okay, so it was while you were on the phone with your mom that that happened that you were out for the count, a little bit later.

Kyle 9:29

No, so the night before my mom, I go every evening to a payphone this is 1997, and then call my mom call my dad, and then go back and play around with my friends. And, the night before we were leaving, you know, I called them on and said that and it was just, you know, weird. And, when I had the stroke it, they carried me out, in front of the campsite.

Kyle 10:12

And they said, you know, all these guys were around me and people were like I

would be able to see half, one body and half of another, and it was all white and all blurry. And I was like, What is wrong? What is this? And I thought that clear as day and they laid me down and a whole bunch of men asked What is your name? And I said Kyle Menglekamp, and they said, No, I'm not getting anything.

Bill 10:49

Now if you or someone you know, has experienced a stroke, and are in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be.

Bill 10:59

You're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind like how long will it take to recover? Will I recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse, doctors will explain these things to you. But, because you've never had a stroke before, you may not know what question to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing the 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. These are the seven questions that I wish I had asked when I was recovering from my stroke. They'll not only help you better understand your condition, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery. head to the website now, [recovery after stroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com), and download the guide. It's free.

Kyle 11:55

And I'm like what do you what do you mean? Kyle Mengelkamp, do you understand me? And I was just like that, you know, just like, I was kind of upset. And they said, No, this is like, I think he's trying to say something in German because I was born in Germany. And so, which is crazy.

Bill 12:20

So what they're doing is they're trying to get you to respond, you're responding, you think you're responding normally, but you're not responding normally. And they haven't been able to work out what you're saying. But, what's going on is, that you've experienced a stroke, and your right side has gone offline. Your vision has been affected and your speech has been affected. And now you're this kid just lying on the ground, I imagine with all these people around you, and they're trying to work out how to help you.

Kyle 12:50

Yeah, that's it.

Bill 12:53

So did you go to the hospital after that? Or was it on a bus?

I heard this sweet woman's voice



Kyle 12:57

I don't know. You know, supposedly I did, I passed out shortly after that. I passed out and then I heard this sweet woman's voice. And she said, It's okay. "It's okay. Just go to sleep, just go to sleep". And I have no recollection of who that is, you know because I had men all around me. So just, It could be someone in the nurse, or someone in the ambulance and I woke up, you know, three days later and completely a new person. I was a vegetable.

Bill 13:45

In the Hospital?

Kyle 13:47

Yeah. So I didn't know who my parents were, I didn't know who I didn't know what anything was.

Kyle 13:57

I just opened my eyes and that's it. And then a couple of days later, you know, I began to, you know, get who my parents were. And then memories started to come back. And I don't know if you've seen Face Off.

Kyle 14:22

I couldn't say anything, I couldn't do anything. My parents didn't know that I

knew it was them. But my mom was, right by my side and I did this to her. And that was from the face-off and I had just seen that movie with my mom. And I had no idea where I got that from, but it was just those parts of my memory that started to come back.

Bill 14:55

So you're 11 you're recovering from a serious stroke. And is there a time for rehabilitation? Do you recall whether there was the amount of time that you spent in the rehabilitation hospital?

Kyle 15:10

In total, two months, of ICU and critical care for two weeks and then six weeks in rehab. And it was tough, you know, eight hours a day speech therapy, OT and PT and, you know, even I wasn't bringing everything back up to speed, you know, I was still

Kyle 15:49

damaged. And, yeah, and so, it was a long process.

Bill 15:56

Yeah. Were you able to walk when you got out of the hospital were you up on your feet, yet?

Kyle 16:00

Yeah. About a week before I started walking again. Still, I was very delicate, you know, I had fallen a couple of times. Yeah. And, you know, they advised me to take a walkout. Well, I mean, just, you know, discharge me with a wheelchair. And my parents said, No, he's gonna walk out, and I walked out. But you know, with an arm brace and a leg brace and, saying one-word sentences. And so, I didn't know any better. The hypothalamus was, you know, damaged. So I would eat everything, and you know, ask for seconds, and I loved the hospital's food. And it was like, I didn't know any better.

Bill 16:58

You are a completely different person. You're kind of starting from scratch.

Kyle 17:02

Yeah, I was an infant.

Bill 17:11

It's really good to have the contrast now. So I'm speaking to you now. And I didn't get to experience that part of you. So it's great that we get to hear from you describing yourself, then, What was it like, when you finally got back to school? I imagined that there would have been quite a large amount of time where there was readjustment and people would be trying to look you out. What was happening there? How did that go?

Kyle 17:40

Well, I don't know, in Australia, where, you know, that line of elementary school and middle school. And but I just graduated from elementary school, and I was going into, like, you know, adolescent.

Bill 17:58

Yeah, first year of middle school.

A Young Stroke Survivor Questioning, Where do I belong?



Kyle 17:59

Yeah. And so, I went back late. And when the first day, I had all my old friends, you know, waiting, you know, at the, at the guards at the, at the, at the gate, to walk me back. And then everyone went to separate groups. And I'm like, What do you mean? Where do I belong? And, you know, we had the people go and play basketball, the people go on to where the cool kids hang out, and people, you

know, who go straight to their classroom, I didn't know what to do, you know, because the doctor said, I can't play basketball ever again. And I'm like, this is so weird. And so the second day, I cried, like I didn't know where to go. And I thought that someone would be there for me. And it was a real culture shock. And then, on top of that, in middle school, and high school, you know, adolescence, puberty, so you're finding who you are. So being, you know, a brain aneurysm survivor. On top of that, you're going to find out who you are twice. And, you know, because it was so different.

Bill 19:47

It's a lot to ask of an 11-year-old or 12-year-old, isn't it that, you know, going through all the hormonal changes going into a new middle school? They're meeting new friends, they have this strange, different version of their bodies. And adding all these layers together, and it's quite a large challenge. Did you find yourself settling in after some time? Was it a couple of years? How long did it take before you started to feel a little bit settled?

Kyle 20:16

When I quit my basketball team, in high school, before you know my stroke, my high school basketball coach was looking at me. And so you know, and training me. And they were very involved with my, you know, post-stroke. And so I began to develop, so basically I said, can I cuss?

Bill 20:51

Yep.

Kyle 20:52

Ok, "Fuck you doctors, I'm going to get back on the court". And so I developed the Kyle style, you know because I wasn't getting my arm and leg back, still with an arm brace and a leg brace. And then my dad said, You know what, your leg brace and arm brace are hindering all those small muscles, Why don't you play without your arm brace and, leg brace, I broke my arm, I fell like 500 times. But, he was right, you know, I then developed you know muscles, still it's limited. But I could move the range of motion a lot more, and I could do a lot more with it. And you know still wasn't playing like I wanted to. So in high school, I wanted to, make the high school basketball team, that was my goal. And I did, and I wasn't being played a lot you know in games, and it was very frustrating because I was used to being the number one picked, versus sitting on the bench.

Kyle 22:25

And, and I knew that my value, and I knew I could go out there every day and play. But, two years into high school, I sat down with my coach, and I said, Hey, you know, is this right for me? Like, there's this new video production class opening up, and I want to go make enriching videos for other people, and, impact the lives of others, and I think I have the eyes for that. And so my coach said, Kyle, whatever you do, do it because of love. And if you want to stay on the basketball team, then I'm going to support you. If you want to go off and do what you want to do, to better your future, then you got to go take that journey. And that kind of struck me kind of like a stroke of genius. And I was like, holy crap, and so I quit the basketball team still stayed in touch, still stayed on the team. But then I set out to discover, my new passion, and 20 years later, now that has all come full circle. And yeah, It was quite an awakening. Two years ago, for my 20th anniversary, it was just like, holy shit. That's what I'm supposed to do.

Bill 24:31

That was brilliant. Your young self, you know, your teenager and your first daughter, I'm going to, well, after you've gone through a period of you know, considering your self-worth, and all the things that you had to do to get there, your first thought after that was, I'm going to do things that are going to make it better for other people. That's a pretty big deal for a kid who's a teenager, Most kids who are teenagers, don't think about other people, they just think about themselves. And you would have been excused for thinking about only yourself in that, you know, you were doing it a bit tough, you were struggling a little bit, you had some physical challenges you had to deal with, and instead of going "Yeah, I'm going to do this thing for me" you've gone, "I'm going to do this for someone else". That's a pretty big thing.

Kyle 25:19

But I don't want to be like, an authentic because, you know, it's not every day that you go through college, and, parties and you know, I mean, that was just my life goal. And, you know, to work with brands, and to make a difference through the lens and eyes of Stuart. And so, that was my life goal. And, you know, there we are the the parties and drunkenness and everything in between.

Bill 26:07

All the usual stuff no doubt about it man. We're normal we're human absolutely.

Kyle 26:14

Fails and successes and Uh-oh's.

Bill 26:20

I get you. So we'll talk about Share Your Stroke of Genius. I came across your Instagram page, it looks slick. Man, I loved some of the photos on there and the videos that are on there. Tell me a little bit about what your idea about sharing your stroke of genius is.

So What's Your Story?



Kyle 26:45

My idea of what share your stroke of genius is? Well, the entire thing was not made by me. almost two years ago, Tammy walked into this AT&T event. Tammy is his six-year-old Asian woman who's spunky and you know, doesn't know a thing about the film. She walks into this AT&T event in New York. And I just had to be there networking. And you know, I had to go to the Mets site to produce for the New York Mets baseball team. And she sits down right next to me in the seats. And she goes, so what's your story? And I was like, Okay, and so make a long story short. She got my email and emailed me when it was like 10:30, eleven o'clock, five emails. And she goes, I'm demand a meeting the next day, and I'm like, What? And you know, I've already celebrated my, anniversary, by posing nude that's a long story.

Bill 28:13

Hello. That's something we're gonna have to talk about. In a little bit. Tell me about Tammy first.

Kyle 28:19

Okay. And so I took her on. And, so she goes, we should enter this contest, she comes bursting through the door, and she goes stroke of genius. I'm like, really, and so you know, just the name caught. And so basically, we had till tomorrow to produce that short film. And I had this idea for a short Doc, that was very simple to make. The band was very infectious, and I pitched it to my old hospital, and they denied it. And they said, No, we don't have that money, and blah, blah. And I'm like, come on, you're one of the most famous, you know, hospitals around. And so I let that die.

Kyle 29:22

And but now this one, it rose again. And so I just said. Okay, let's do it. And you know, we won the AT&T event. And Tammy said, Now, let's go, across the country, finding other people's stories. And I'm like, holy crap, it's all coming full circle. Like, that's what I was supposed to do. And so we raised \$20,000, which isn't enough to go across the country and film. But I called up Liam. And I said, Hey, do you want to go cross country about, you know, this docu-series? And he just said, Yes. And I was like, You didn't even hear what it's about? And he goes, Okay, what's it about? I told him and he was like, "Oh my god" yes.

Bill 30:24

Who's Liam?

Kyle 30:26

Yeah. Liam is my, business partner. He's a creative director. He's an artist, he's a fashion photographer. He's had nothing tragic happen to him. But he has a human connection. And to draw from a different perspective. And so we would go and you know, I would connect, and then he would always ask or phrase things, and just a different perspective. And who would really, that marriage was unique?

Bill 31:14

What's it like to have somebody like that in your life? Liam, who you say, do you want to end before you finish? He says, Yes. What's that like?

Kyle 31:38

You know, I was at a down point for, my projects. So I was just on the search for, something new, Liam and I had collaborated, on several projects, but nothing came up of it. And so, it's where I did is just like, I just called him. And, you know, when I heard that, it was just refreshing, like, I didn't even know this idea would

stick. I thought Tammy was just talking, you know, and I was like, Tammy, I gotta go back to work. That's where my mentality was. And I'm like, Yeah, that'd be great, docu-series other people, you know. But it began to sink in, after Liam said it, you know, I just, it began to be whole, you know, because, like, I knew I was onto something.

Bill 32:55

Yeah, you are definitely onto something. And that's kind of how I felt when I came across your Insta page, and you know, your business partner there. It's a great thing to experience that from somebody who's going to just support you, no questions asked. They just want to be there and support you isn't, but it doesn't make you feel amazing to know that you've got somebody like that in your corner.

Kyle 33:19

Yeah. And then he had nothing. He has no experience dealing with other people who have gone through something like this. Now, I mean, this is 20 years later, yeah. Like, I'm okay. You know, I actually kind of forgot about it, you know, and moved on, like, after my 10th anniversary. And, you know, I was dating around, I mean, life was good.

Bill 33:53

Everything's normal.

Kyle 33:55

Yeah. And so it was just a little point that, like could work, but just to hear that when coming back into, you know, my feelings again. And you know, that's a very delicate part of my childhood. And so I, of course, I'm not afraid to talk about it. But, just showing who I am, on-screen so that many more people can see it. Like there's a reason behind the creative producers behind the screen, behind the camera. Like, you know, I didn't think I could jump out in front of the camera.

Bill 34:53

I hear you. It's good that you're doing something different. And you're seeing the production of a piece of art or a documentary, I love that you're seeing it from another perspective now. And how good is that, that you have these multiple perspectives? The one behind the camera, the one in front of the camera, I think will probably make you a better, more well-rounded producer, or developer of these types of concepts going forward. So good on you for doing that. And isn't it

empowering? To have a medium such as video for me it's audio to give you a voice.

Kyle 35:34

Audio and video. That's what I love about, your channel, because you can see them. And so it's, one thing to hear it, but see it and their emotions, and the way they move their face and the way that their eyes squint. And the way that your mouth and you know, they their posture changes. It's those sensibilities that make what we're doing. So magical.

Bill 36:13

Yeah, I agree with you, man. So tell me, there are a couple of other people involved with sharing your stroke of genius, Mimi Hayes, who I mentioned, who I've also interviewed on Episode 60, who wrote the book, "I'll be Okay It's Just a Hole in My Head".

Bill 36:29

Tell me a little bit about Alyssa.

Kyle 36:35

You got to interview her next.

Bill 36:37

Yeah, She contacted me, and we'll do that interview. But tell me a little bit about Alyssa before I get to interview her about what she likes,

Kyle 36:44

Oh, well, okay, so I told her like, you know, contact Bill, like contact him right now. And so that's why. I don't know. I mean, you know, she was approaching her 10th anniversary and created this nonprofit. And Mimi and I were like, best friends now. You know, Where, we call it like, brain twins. And well, I mean, we had the same kind of brain aneurysm.

Bill 37:20

I love it, The Three Stromies came up with something amazing. Whoever doesn't know who the Three Stromies are. I hope to interview them too. But three ladies experienced the stroke and came up with the name Three Stromies which comes from three stroke homies combined. And they turned it into Three Stromies. So that's creative the way people describe themselves. So you guys are brain twins.

Continue to tell me about, Alyssa.

A Show and Tell

Kyle 37:55

Mimi and I met with Alyssa a couple of months ago. And then I just connected the dots. You know, because I've had this this brain salon. In my, in the back of my head. I've been to the influencer salon, and the music salon, A salon is a different way to meet up a different way to network, a different way to just do things goes way back to the French 1700s to wear a gathering of like-minded individuals under the same roof, celebrate stories and art of conversation to where they at the end of the night. They walk away with more knowledge. And there's something about that, that strikes me like, we're not only going as supporters, like stroke survivors going to an AA meeting. But we're seeing, like, cool things that people can do. And you know, like, a show and tell.

Kyle 39:13

And, it's so, so cool. And so when we met Alyssa, the light bulb went off. And I was like, Oh my God, then I was like, Mimi. With Mimi's network, Alyssa's network, and my network, we can really create something special to enrich the lives of others by creating this brain salon, and you know, and connecting all the brain community because there's something about the brain and brain injuries how we all are alike, and so I brought it up to the ladies one day, and they were loving it. And then Alyssa came up with the Brain Bar. And so it was like, done. And so we had our first one last month

Kyle 40:25

30 people showed up and it was great. And we're having their next one. On the 15th right before my anniversary. Yeah, well that's the whole thing. That's, my talk. No one knows.

Bill 40:43

Yeah. Okay, cool. I wouldn't tell anybody. So the Brain Bar is that a, what's the Brain Bar? How's it different from the brain salon?

Kyle 40:54

Oh, it's the same thing but we just gave it some other name. So like the influencer salon, they call it Mere.

Kyle 41:08

I forget the terminology, but then the music salon. It's called the Sound Shop. Yeah. And actually, we're partnering with them on Music in the Brain. And it's going to be an epic event. So you should bring your ass to New York and, be a part of it. Because it's amazing.

Bill 41:36

Dude, I'm a bit far but I'd love to. I'm planning on getting back to New York very soon. We love New York. We've been there before. My wife has been harassing me since 2013. To get back to New York. So we just have to make it happen. Our time of the year we have a lot of time off is in December When it's summer in Australia, but it's cold in New York. So I've got to leave a beautiful warm summer. And I'm going to come over when I have time, which is cold in New York.

Bill 42:13

So look, I might do it. Anyway.

Kyle 42:15

That's the best time though.

Bill 42:17

Why?

Kyle 42:19

The snow. Why did I leave Southern California? L.A?

Bill 42:23

No, you crazy person. How many people leave Southern California to get to New York for the snow?

Kyle 42:32

There's a lot of people.

Bill 42:36

Come on man those guys must have had a stroke. I can't

Bill 42:42

I can't imagine myself doing that dude. Like, I hate the cold. Does the cold affect you because it affects my hips now?

Kyle 42:49

Every once in a while you know, I'll get tight. The tone starts to kick in. But then other times I'll be looser than ever before. And so it just I don't know, I haven't pinned down on. Like, maybe it's something I ate or, the same thing when I'm when I get sick. If I take medicine, my right side gets so stiff. Like where I cannot walk.

Bill 43:28

Yeah, I don't drink much now. But every once in a while I have a drink. So when I have one too many, which for me is only two drinks now. Yeah, my left side goes limp. And I've and my balance goes out and I can hardly feel my left side. And I can trip over a lot easier. So that's what happens to me, I feel drunk on my left side a lot quicker than I feel drunk on my right side, my left side left the party and my right side still wanting to party.

Completely Reborn

Kyle 44:03

Well, I mean, we're, when you have a stroke, and what I find is you get you you're completely reborn. And, of course, you're going to go, you know, the, through the peaks and valleys. But you're like a little kid again. And of course, you're not going to be able to drink as much. But, you know, it's kind of special, when you actually can find out that you're, that you have to leave the old Kyle back, you know, the old Kyle is dead, like, and set out on that new adventure. To become a completely new person.

Bill 44:55

Yeah. I love that. It's kind of like drawing a line in the sand and saying, Okay, well, this is what I was doing before. And I'm going to do something different, which is going to be just as amazing, etc. But I've got to change the way I go about things. So I know for me, I don't need to drink anymore. And I don't drink. And I wouldn't suggest somebody continues to drink after they've had a stroke, especially in the first few years. avoid drinking one hundred percent, right?

Bill 45:22

But I'm a normal human being right? So you go out to a party, and you want to have one drink, just so that you can have one drink. So I'm okay with that as well. I'm very happy for people to do that. But understand that the brain doesn't deal

with alcohol, as well as it did in the past. And that's all that's about. Yeah. So now that we are back from the bad internet connection, and we've got some light, I can see you again. The Brain Bar, was that held at a local bar? Is that where it was? Did the 30 people get together at a public venue?

Kyle 46:02

Yep. You know, in New York, we had an event planning team that we met and said, you know, we pitched them the idea. And I said, Okay, yeah, we, you know, have a couple of restaurants and bars, you know, who would be down for something like that, because New York is not all greedy, and money hungry. You know, they also like to do great causes. And so we just played against our network and our connections. And you know, because we didn't have any money to do it. And it turned out to be a great event, and yeah.

Bill 46:59

Sounds like it's well-supported. I didn't have that experience in New York, greedy people, man, we were in New York, we were lost at Grand Central. And the amount of people that came up to us and said, You guys need a hand. Are you lost? Do you need to go somewhere, was amazing. That was happening to us all the time. We were in New York for nine days that was happening to us all the time. We love that the people were amazing.

Kyle 47:22

Yeah, it's so much easier than Hollywood. Cuz LA and Hollywood. It's just so materialistic. And New York feels like home, you know, people are honest, people are authentic. And they're cut straight to the point. And I don't know where that stigma comes from, like how we're all depressed and stressed. And, I'm living in Brooklyn, Williamsburg. And I'm loving it. You know, I can hear birds chirping out my back door.

Bill 48:04

That's beautiful. The Brain Bar how was it received, the people that attended, what was the feedback,

Kyle 48:11

They loved it, and we're going to get a lot of, you know, it's the summertime. So people are on vacation but a lot of people are going to come back. And you know, because we're renewing, we're curating new people, according to the theme each

month. And you know, everyone loved it, because, people walked away with more knowledge than ever before. You know, it's, it's a brain community. And there are not just people telling their stories, there are people that are telling the stories of triumph, you know, but there are people like the neuroscientist or medical doctor, you know, to give their perception or perspective, and then alternative media or alternative practice, you know, and give their perspective, but it's all about what they're doing now. Like, you know, right now in that moment, and so they get a little bit of story and they get a little bit about like a show and tell.

Kyle 49:41

And, like, what cool things they're doing right now. And I can, and they can be so little. And they can be like really cool. Big venture. Like, Matthew Zachary. I can't say it here. But he's the founder and former CEO of Stupid Cancer. And he started about 12 years ago. And it was, you know, the number one nonprofit, you know, he had brain cancer, and he had a stroke. And so, he became the face of, this hottest kind of, you know, a nonprofit that made the cover of Time Magazine. He recently left, and he's starting on his new project, We have him coming and speaking next week, and I'm super excited because we cannot livestream it. It's, it's too new.

Bill 50:54

Yeah, perfect man that's awesome. And talking about amazing people who have come and you've had the opportunity to interview you got to interview Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor.

Kyle 51:04

Yes.

Bill 51:05

What's Dr. Taylor like? Tell me about that, because I've tried to get her on my podcast for about 18 months now, and I haven't had any luck, but I'm so glad to say that somebody has.

Kyle 51:17

She came to New York and you know, a friend of a friend, you know, was connected, and we just saw the opportunity to make something of it. And when she walked into, no, Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, she had her stroke 22 years ago, eight months from my brain aneurysm, and she was in the shower. I was in the shower.

And she had a very similar experience, you know, from the TED Talk. And so I, you know, I, immediately connected with her,

Bill 52:14

She had an AVM, that ruptured, and she was 37, and I had an AVM that ruptured, and I was 37. So that's why I've been trying to chase her.

Kyle Mengelkamp - Unbelievable Harmony

Kyle 52:26

Yeah. And so, you know, we had so many things in common, you guys have so many things in common. And, you know, she walked on to set you know, the first time I met her, I went to Carnegie Hall, which was her 60th birthday party. You know, her friend drew up a score for her 60th birthday of her book, and her experience, going through the TED Talk translated into music, and it was probably the most unbelievable harmony I ever heard. And I'm a big stickler for music for my videos. And I just like, I saw that the entire time. You know, because I, felt it. And then the next day, she comes on to the set. And we just connect, and like no other. Just like, two energy forces meeting at the same time. And it was just something I can't describe.

Bill 54:03

That's awesome man. I also have photos and some of the videos that you guys did. And anyone watching, and listening, it's well worth going to Kyle's page and checking out that stuff with Dr. Taylor. And if you don't know who Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor is Google search her. And listen to her TED talk and watch her TED Talk. Because she's the only person I think that's ever walked out on a TED stage with a real brain in her hands.

Kyle 54:29

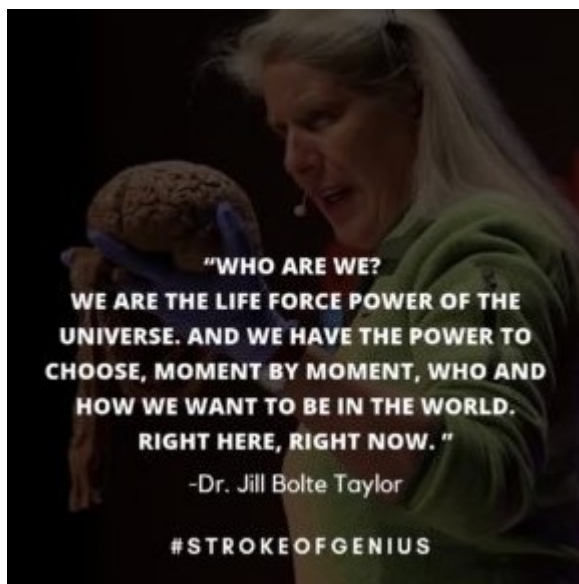
Yeah, and she's the number seven most-watched TED talk of all time. Yeah, that's a million viewers over Tony Robbins. And so, I wish I could say more because it was just a magical experience. You know, because everything that we had a question for, she had an answer, like, we walked away in awe. And the full version is on Thrive Global. So it's, not on Instagram, though, We are putting, you know, one-minute clips on Instagram, but the full version is on Thrive Global. And so we encourage people to go to that. And we've gotten, such great feedback from the event. And from the video. In where like, people have seen it like three times. And

I was like, 38 minutes. And so I was like I'm sorry, I just I wish I had something more to say.

Bill 56:02

I get it. She's somebody that you have to hear. And see and watch if you can, her book is fantastic, as well. And because I don't like to read, I downloaded the audio version, and it's read by her. So it's much better to hear her story through her voice. So definitely check it out.

“A Life Force Power of the Universe”, Stroke Survivor, Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor



Kyle 56:23

Maybe it was her, you know when I was in the hospital. And I mean, in front of the campsite, it's okay, it's okay, just go to sleep. Just go to sleep. I don't know, like, but you know, she said everyone is a life force power of the universe. And that just kind of struck me. Like, every person in this world is unique and has something to offer. No matter if you've had a stroke. No matter if you, you know, are crippled, no matter if you're anything, you're still a life force power of this universe. We're made of 98% water, and full of energy. Why not just go out and make whatever they want to make?

Bill 57:29

I agree man. As we get to the end of this podcast episode, I need to ask you one more question.

Kyle 57:39

Oh, shit.

Bill 57:42

Tell me about the nude. celebration.

Kyle 57:45

Oh God! Okay.

Bill 57:48

You thought you were gonna get away with it?

Kyle 57:54

So you can probably go on Instagram and see it. So ESPN magazine, they every year, they have a new magazine and the stars. They like, you know, male and female, get nude, and then they have either a basketball or baseball or whatever, you know, blocking the privates. And so I had a hospital picture, you know when I was a couple of couple days out that I had a ball in my left hand. And so I wanted to mimic that I didn't mimic it, but I stood up and I had a basketball because basketball was a huge part of my recovery. And, you know, I had that in front of my privates. And, it turned out okay, you know, I wish I had, you know, more defined packs. So but, you know, it was liberating, you know, because 20 years, and I titled it something like, you know, In the Raw or something like that. And, you know, because I have not come out to my friends and family for 10 years about my stroke. Of course, when people would, you know, ask me about it, I'd be okay with answering. But that's not one thing that I would lead. And now I'm completely doing just the opposite. Right now. And, it's quite a ride.

Bill 59:53

Yeah, well done. Man. I think it's a pretty cool way to celebrate your 20th stroke anniversary. And a good way to raise awareness. So well done for doing that. Because I know it's a big deal to get naked in front of anybody for any reason, but camera for the world to see. Like, that's a pretty big deal, man. So well done for doing it. Do you know that the main image that I'm going to lead with in this podcast episode is going to be that image? I hope you don't mind.

Kyle 1:00:23

No. I mean, there's one reason why I made it, is because I'm comfortable with my sexuality. And so, we're all humans, like, you know, we have nothing to cover up.

And, and, I was happy to do it. And so, of course, you can copy it and, you know, turn it into a meme or whatever.

Bill 1:00:51

No, I won't turn it into a meme, I'll just use it in its original form, I want to use it just the way that it was intended. And hopefully, with the permission of everybody that's associated with it, right? So I just make sure that everybody's comfortable that we can use it. If somebody's listening and watching, how would be the best way for them to get in contact with you and learn a little bit more about A Stroke of Genius, The Brain Bar, and so on?

Kyle 1:01:26

I, you know, just dm on Instagram, you know, I, would like to be more involved in Facebook, but it's usually me, you know, behind the, the Instagram. And so If I can't I will always get back to you in 24 to 48 hours. You know, because we got like 10 different projects going on right now. But I love to connect with new people, new stroke survivors, thrivers, and, really make something of this community. Its community is where it's at.

Bill 1:02:19

Yeah, I agree, man, I'll do what I can, in my way. And this is how I can do that. So thank you for being on the podcast and letting me do this for you. I appreciate it.

Kyle 1:02:28

Of course.

Bill 1:02:29

Thank you for doing all the work that you do. I appreciate that.

Kyle 1:02:32

I have one question for you.

Bill 1:02:33

Yeah, go ahead.

What is your stroke of genius? - Kyle Mengelkamp

Kyle 1:02:35

What is your stroke of genius?

Bill 1:02:39

So the phrase that, frames it for me, what does that mean? Like, how do I enter that?

Kyle 1:02:45

A stroke of genius is that moment when you choose how to live the rest of your life. For me, I had a conversation. Everyone has that conversation with someone could be your wife, it could be your friend could be your best buddy at the bar, or it could be a kind stranger in a park on a bench. And, but that changes your path in life with an idea or in you know, and it sets off a year later. But that conversation changes you.

Bill 1:03:30

Cool, I've got a really good story then. So I had brain surgery in November 2014. And it took a couple of days, I think, one or two days for me to get out of the hospital and go to rehabilitation to learn how to walk again and use my left arm again. And I am in a bed and they're wheeling me to a lounge, which they call the transit lounge. And the transit lounge is a lounge where you wait to go to rehabilitation through an ambulance, they transport you in an ambulance, it's not lights and sirens and stuff. It's just a regular transportation kind of ambulance.

Bill 1:04:12

And the other transit lounges that I've been in, in life have always been at an airport. And I'm sitting in an airport transit lounge waiting to go on this amazing journey or holiday. And I'm thinking, Well, I'm in a transit lounge again, but I'm not going on a vacation to a lovely destination. I don't know where I'm going. But wherever I'm going, I'm imagining myself that's a cool opportunity for me to get better, and come out a better version of myself. So I'm sitting there, and I have this idea for a podcast right there and then, which was called originally, the Recovery After Stroke podcast was the Transit Lounge podcast. And, the thing that I came up with was helping you go from where you are, which is where I was to where I would rather be, which was where my goals were. And that's it, that came up in my head. And it took me about 12 months to get it up and running. And when I finally got it up and running, the Transit Lounge podcast was born. And I was interviewing people from all backgrounds, who had been through adversity in some health condition and had overcome the odds or recovered, etc.

Bill 1:05:31

And for me, that worked for the first six to 12 months, I kind of felt a little bit strange about it, because I couldn't relate to the other people that had experienced different you know, traumas and health challenges than I had. So what I did was, I had this awareness about 12 months ago. And while I was driving the car, the awareness was my people are stroke people, they're not people who have had cancer, not people who have had something else. I love them as well. So, you know, don't get offended, but I relate to stroke people, I want to hear stroke stories, I want to hear the stories of overcoming the odds, and I want to create my community. And then I rebranded the Transit Lounge podcast, to Recovery After Stroke, helping you go from where you are, to where you'd rather be. So that's my stroke of genius.

Kyle 1:06:32

That's amazing, you know because, you had that moment like the aha moment. And, you know, you had a conversation with yourself.

Bill 1:06:44

And I was completely on another planet, you know, just head freshly stitched up, you know, brain freshly stitched up, like, I wasn't myself at all, but I had this very clear conversation about where I am, where I'm going, how I could relate this in a story and how people could connect to that and benefit from that. And everything else is just coming. As a little bit of icing on the cake all these little extra bits I'm adding courses I'll be adding soon and a membership where people can come and get coached. So all these things are just a little icing on the cake. But at the beginning, I just wanted to share people's stories of overcoming adversity.

Kyle 1:07:24

You know, what are the three questions that are the most difficult questions to have people answer?

Bill 1:07:35

No.

Kyle 1:07:38

Who I am? Where I'm going? And one other question. Shit.

Bill 1:07:49

It's all right man. You've had a stroke.

Kyle 1:07:52

Hey, don't use that as an excuse. I remember, only two.

Kyle 1:08:01

But I think you just wait, where I'm going. And, who I am, and where I'm from. And where I'm going.

Bill 1:08:16

I'm very clear on that man.

Kyle 1:08:18

I know. And I was like, Oh my god, you were answering those questions like with a bandage on your head. That's huge.

Bill 1:08:31

It is huge. It had to happen that way. It's so strange, isn't it? Like you had to wait 22 years to get to that point where you could answer those questions. I had to wait 37 years after brain surgery to be able to answer that. I don't know. How the universe God, whoever. I don't know how it's designed, but whatever. I'm just going to go with it. I accept it. Thank you for the gift. Thank you for telling me what my path is. I'm going to run with it, man. It's fine.

Kyle 1:09:01

You are the life force power of the universe.

Bill 1:09:07

Kyle thanks man,

Kyle 1:09:08

Quote unquote, Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor.

Bill 1:09:11

Man, thank you so much. It's a beautiful way to end the podcast. Thank you so much for being on the Recovery After Stroke podcast.

Kyle 1:09:17

Thank you. Thank you.

Outro 1:09:20

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