

Long-Term Effects of Brainstem Stroke: The Hidden Deficits No One Talks About

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Ty Hawkins was taking engagement photos with his wife the same day he was admitted to the ICU.

That sentence alone captures something essential about brainstem stroke, and about the particular cruelty of its long-term effects. On the outside, Ty looked like a young man in love, celebrating a milestone. On the inside, his vision was blurring, his balance was failing, and one side of his face had begun to droop. By nightfall, he was in the hospital being told they had found a mass on his brain.

That was June 2019. Ty was in his mid-twenties, working in sales at Verizon, playing competitive basketball, and building a life with the woman he was about to marry. The stroke caused by a bleed from a cavernous malformation in his brainstem carried a 25% survival rate. Of those who survived, only 10% made a significant recovery.

Ty is now approaching year seven. He returned to work. He speaks publicly. He shares his story with a global audience that finds him through social media and reaches out to tell him he helped them keep going.

And every single day, he still wakes up managing deficits that most people around him cannot see.

What the Brainstem Controls — And Why Its Damage Lingers

The brainstem is not a dramatic structure in the way the cortex is. It doesn't govern language, memory, or personality in ways that are immediately visible to

an observer. What it governs is more fundamental: breathing, heart rate, digestion, balance, coordination, and the relay of sensory signals between the brain and the body.

When a bleed occurs in the brainstem, as it did for Ty through a cavernous malformation, a cluster of abnormally formed blood vessels, the damage disrupts those foundational systems. The effects can be wide-ranging, deeply personal, and stubbornly persistent. They can also be almost entirely invisible to anyone who isn't living inside that body.

For Ty, the long-term effects of his brainstem stroke include ataxia, double vision, gastroparesis, CRPS, and left-sided numbness and weakness. None of these are visible when he walks into a room. All of them shape his daily experience in ways that most people, including many in the medical system, never fully appreciate.

Gastroparesis After Stroke: The Deficit Nobody Mentions

Of all the long-term effects Ty lives with, gastroparesis is perhaps the least discussed in stroke recovery conversations and one of the most disruptive to daily life.

Gastroparesis is a condition in which the stomach empties too slowly or incompletely, caused by disrupted communication between the brain and the vagus nerve. For Ty, this means the digestive signals that most people take for granted, hunger, fullness, and discomfort, are unreliable. He can eat three bites and feel as though he has finished a six-course meal. He can go hours without a hunger signal and needs to eat by clock rather than by sensation. When his nervous system is overwhelmed, his digestive system slows or stalls entirely.

Gastroparesis after stroke is not a fringe experience. The brainstem governs the vagus nerve, which in turn governs gut motility. A brainstem stroke can interrupt that pathway in ways that create persistent digestive dysfunction, yet it rarely features in the standard conversations about stroke recovery. Survivors can spend years not understanding why their digestion is erratic, not connecting it back to the stroke, and not receiving targeted support.

Ty found that movement and routine helped regulate his system. A morning

sauna, regular exercise, and starting the day with warm tea and light fruit rather than a heavy meal gave his digestive system conditions in which it could function more predictably. These are not medical solutions, they are adaptive strategies built through seven years of learning his own body.

CRPS and Ataxia: When the Nervous System Won't Stand Down

“My daily pain level is a four or five. Someone not used to chronic pain would call it an eight or a nine.” — Ty Hawkins

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) was misdiagnosed in Ty for several years as neuropathy. It presents as the brain becoming stuck in a fight-or-flight pain loop, sending persistent, amplified pain signals in response to stimuli that should not be painful at all. For Ty, this means clothing fabric can register as pain. Cold bed sheets can spike his discomfort through the roof. Water on his skin can hurt.

Ataxia compounds this by disrupting muscle coordination when his nervous system becomes overwhelmed. His gait changes. His shoulder shakes when lifting overhead. Coordination that was once automatic, honed through years of competitive basketball, becomes unreliable when fatigue, overstimulation, or stress tips his nervous system past a threshold.

Both conditions are neurological in origin. Both are invisible to the outside observer. Both require constant, conscious management.

The Athletic Mindset as Recovery Infrastructure

What gave Ty the internal architecture to manage all of this? He credits his coaches.

Years of athletic training being pushed past comfort, being held to a standard of effort regardless of natural talent, learning that showing up and doing the work was non-negotiable, built in Ty a psychological framework that translated directly into rehabilitation. In the inpatient facility, he was wheeling himself to therapy sessions before the nurses came to collect him. After the first week, they stopped coming. They knew he would already be there.

As the doctors noted during his rehabilitation: he was recovering faster than expected, and they attributed it directly to his athletic background. Not his talent. His work ethic.

The Emotional Cost of Looking Fine

Perhaps the most underappreciated long-term effect of Ty's brainstem stroke is the one least visible of all: the emotional toll of presenting as healthy while carrying a daily invisible burden.

For years, Ty's type-A, athletic identity kept him moving forward, but it also kept him from fully acknowledging what he was carrying. It took until years three or four before he genuinely engaged with psychotherapy. Once he did, the progress he experienced was significant. He now starts every Monday with a therapy session.

The shift that mattered most was learning to honour how he actually felt rather than how he wanted to feel. For male survivors in particular, the cultural conditioning to tough it out is deeply ingrained and actively harmful in the context of long-term stroke recovery. Emotional suppression does not make the load lighter. It makes it invisible to everyone, including the person carrying it.

Recovery Has No Expiry Date

Ty's most direct message to survivors is straightforward: don't limit your recovery to the first year. The brain does not set a deadline on neuroplasticity. He is approaching year seven and still noticing improvements.

The triumph of this story is not that Ty is symptom-free. The triumph is that he has built a life of genuine meaning and contribution around an ongoing physical reality without pretending that reality doesn't exist. He's reached people on every continent with a message that is simple, honest, and badly needed:

You can survive the statistics. You can carry the hidden weight. And you can keep getting better years after everyone else assumes the story is over.

If you are navigating your own stroke recovery early or years in, Bill's book is a practical and honest companion for the journey: recoveryafterstroke.com/book

And if the Recovery After Stroke community has been part of your path, consider supporting the show on Patreon: patreon.com/recoveryafterstroke

This blog is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Please consult your doctor before making any changes to your health or recovery plan.

Ty Hawkins: Six Years After a Brainstem Stroke, Still Fighting the Battles You Can't See

He survived a 25% chance brainstem stroke. Nearly 7 years on, Ty Hawkins reveals the hidden deficits that never made the headlines until now.

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Introduction: Long-Term Effects of Brainstem Stroke



Ty Hawkins (00:00)

as I'm sleep. have a dream and It's just I'm in a dark place and I just hear a voice and it says do you trust me and? I said well Absolutely, it said okay. Well, we have to go and I immediately wake up and I tap my wife and I say hey we should go to the hospital now and Then I go to the hospital so by day I'm taking engagement photos and by night. I'm in ICU

immediately taken to the

for a CAT scan and chest x-rays.

Bill Gasiamis (00:30)

Before we get into today's conversation, I wanna take a moment to acknowledge something that I think a lot of people in this community quietly live with. The feeling that your

looks finished to everyone else, but you know the real story. You're still managing things every single day that nobody around you can see. If that's you, this episode is going to hit home. My guest today is Ty Hawkins. Ty had a brainstem stroke in June, 2019.

caused by a cavernous malformation, a bleed that carries a 25 % survival rate. He made it, he went back to work, he plays basketball, he looks great, and he is still nearly seven years later managing gastroparesis, CRPS, ataxia, and daily chronic pain that he rates at four or five, which he says most people would call an eight or nine. This is a triumphant story, not because every deficit is gone,

but because Ty built a life of purpose and meaning around the ones that stayed. We'll get into all of that in just a moment. Now turn2.ai is your AI health sidekick that keeps you up to date with personalized stroke recovery information each week. There are literally over 800 new things published every week on stroke. Turn2 searches everything new from the past week and sends you what's most relevant, research, patient discussions.

expert comments, trials and events.

You can try for free and get 10 % off by scanning the QR code on the screen or clicking the link in the description below. And if you haven't picked up a copy of my book yet, it's available now at recoveryafterstroke.com/book.

And now let's get into the conversation Ty.

Bill Gasiamis (02:13)

Ty Hawkins, welcome to the podcast.

Ty Hawkins (02:15)

Thank you for having me.

Bill Gasiamis (02:17)

Thank you for being here. This is the second time we've tried to connect and have you on the show. Last time, if I recall correctly, you won an award or you graduated from somewhere.

Ty Hawkins (02:30)

I believe I had one either had a speaking engagement or I won an award where I wasn't able to attend our our interview

Bill Gasiamis (02:42)

Yeah, what was the award? Do you recall?

Ty Hawkins (02:47)

That was a few years back. I don't really recall offhand. I know there was a lot going on with me mentally at that time too. So I don't really recall what it was. drawing a blank right now on that one.

Bill Gasiamis (03:01)

Yeah, fair enough. I do remember it was at least 12, maybe 18 months ago that we tried to connect. But that's cool that you're here now, man. Thanks for reaching out again. I was just going to ask like, what was your life like before the stroke? What were you up to? What was your regular day like?

Ty Hawkins (03:21)

So for me what I was up to both prior to my stroke I was really locked in and focused on my career. So I graduated college or university in 2015 and I was well into my career with Verizon here in the States and So my my day-to-day look pretty much like work and I was spending a lot of time just

playing basketball because I played in college. So I was trying to, you know, ~ still keep up with the athletic side of me while getting my career off the ground.

Bill Gasiamis (04:01)

What kind of work did you do for Verizon?

Ty Hawkins (04:05)

So his Verizon, was at that time while I'm still in sales currently, but at that time I had just started my sales role and immediate like right prior to I was a sales manager, prior immediately prior to my stroke.

Bill Gasiamis (04:21)

huh. What was it like the day of the stroke? Or actually just before you answer that question, was there any signs that you were unwell, that there was potentially something looming, you know, anything give it away before the stroke that now you think that was probably a sign?

Ty Hawkins (04:40)

Absolutely. So looking back and now having the education and the awareness of stroke, know I remember just having numbness in my left foot ~ that started and felt like a little pebble in my left shoe. And I would take my shoe off and shake it out and nothing came out. And I had no idea that it was actually like the feeling in my foot.

and it started to move up my leg and eventually ~ from my foot up to my shin, actually I felt pins and needles ~ and my foot was actually numb and I experienced a lot of headaches ~ immediately prior to the stroke. So for weeks I was having, I would have little headaches that I just thought was stress related from work.

Bill Gasiamis (05:38)

to the, what you just explained about your foot. That's exactly what happened to me. My left, my big left toe went numb and then my entire left leg went numb, but it took me a week to get to the hospital. By then my entire left side had gone numb. So how long was it before you decided to do something about your numb foot and shin?

The Day of the Stroke

Ty Hawkins (05:54)

Mm-hmm.

So ~ it may have been a few weeks, honestly. So I just pushed through and thought it was because of work and just stress related to work. it took about a week or so till it actually moved, till actually my leg went numb. And I remember one day vividly my wife tickled my foot, my feet, I was ticklish. And she went to tickle my, she tickled,

tickle my feet and I jumped when she tickled the right foot but I didn't budge at all when she tickled the left foot and so that was a sign I still pushed through and I went to play basketball and I took a shot that it was routine for me and I missed very bad and there were guys at the gym I thought I had vertigo maybe some something in her ear and the guys at the gym like hey man

Something seems off with you. I want you to get checked out before we play again in a few weeks. And so I decided to make an appointment to see my neurologist or not neurologist, my primary care physician. And I went through a routine checkup and everything kind of cleared. And so I had a decision to make that I want to tell her what was going on with my body though my vitals were good.

And so I told her and she ran some tests like poked poked my foot and just was touching my leg with different ~ textures and eyes open eyes closed and I can only I only knew that she was touching me if I could see her. So when I closed my eyes and she touched me, I didn't I had no idea. And so she sent me to for MRI and before or not for MRI, she sent me to a neurologist.

And the neurologist scheduled me for MRI for the next week and I was in the hospital the very next day.

Bill Gasiamis (08:04)

Wow, man. You had a brainstem stroke from a cavernous malformation. I had a stroke caused by a arteriovenous malformation, which is very similar kind of issue with the way that the blood vessels have formed. My one popped and then started to bleed like really, really slowly. It sounds like yours did something similar. So

Ty Hawkins (08:17)

AVM, correct?

Bill Gasiamis (08:33)

you're going through this for a couple of weeks, you go and see the neurologist and the next day you're in hospital, how dramatically did it escalate between the neurologist appointment and the next day?

Ty Hawkins (08:44)

~ So it escalated very very fast so the next day I woke up and it was that my engagement photo shoot so what a day right and

Bill Gasiamis (08:57)

Wow.

Ty Hawkins (08:58)

I'll go to the bank I take a five-minute drive from my house to the bank and what happened on my way back is just off I couldn't explain what was going on I just had an all feeling so I told my wife I wasn't able to drive to any of the other appointments that I had that day prior to our shoot and on the way to our photo shoot so things progress

by minute by minute hour by hour So I started the day she noticed a facial droop and we had no ideas of the sign She looked at me. She said are you okay? Cuz your face and I looked in the mirror and it was it was slight but So didn't really think much of it and I was excited for our shoot So I just pushed through and on our way the photo shoot location was at our University where we met and that's about

40 minute drive from our house so as we're progressing through the drive my vision starts to get blurry and I can't I can barely make out the vehicles that are around us I can only make out the color and the color of the license plate so I know that something's there but it's so blurry that I can't even couldn't tell you what kind of what kind of vehicle it was we actually get to the location for the shoot

I get out the car and I can barely stand upright so ~ I Remembered trying to move and I was just so all balance and and dizzy and We did the shoot somehow some some way I made it through the shoot and I remember changing my clothes and ~ As I look back now I went into the bathroom to change my clothes and I was alone and I could I kept

Tilted to the right while was trying to put my clothes on and my shoes and as I

think back I'm so lucky I'll say I'm so blessed to have made it out of that bathroom you know I'm back to the group and We finished the shoot and I go we drop home So my wife says do you want to go to the hospital or I said no, I won't go home and I just want to rest ~ so

She goes and picks us up some food. I'm at home. I remember taking maybe two, three bites of the food and just feeling so nauseous. Like, man, I can't even, I'm not even hungry anymore. And so I say, I'm gonna go and take a nap. If I wake up and I feel the same as I do now, we can go to the hospital. And this is where the story really gets.

Hospital Experience and Diagnosis



It's going because in my dream or

as I'm sleep. have a dream and It's just I'm in a dark place and I just hear a voice and it says do you trust me and? I said well Absolutely, it said okay. Well, we have to go and I immediately wake up and I tap my wife and I say hey we should go to the hospital now and Then I go to the hospital so by day I'm taking engagement photos and by night. I'm in ICU

immediately taken to the back with them saying whatever the stroke they felt that the stroke code was or what they call it in the hospital. And I was immediately taken back for a CAT scan and chest x-rays.

Bill Gasiamis (12:31)

Wow, man, that is a crazy story. ~ Firstly, how did the photos turn out?

Ty Hawkins (12:39)

photos they turned out good I would say in spite of the circumstances but if you look at the photos in as you know as well as we understand stroke you can look at my face and see the the facial droop in my top lip so as I'm trying to smile you my smile wasn't wasn't aligned it was it droops slightly so the right side of my face was impacted so I had a juke going to the right

But I would say they turned out well despite the circumstances for what the circumstances were

Bill Gasiamis (13:17)

All things considered. Yeah. That is unbelievable. This dream like who now this is going to get trippy. I know like who was that in your dream that gave you that information.

Ty Hawkins (13:30)

So for me, at that time, I mean even now, I say it was God for me, speaking to me and letting me know that I needed to get to the hospital. And then at the hospital, when the doctor came in to give the news that they found what they thought was a mass on my brain, I remember

hearing seeing a figure in the corner of my room and hearing that same voice say remember that I'm going to protect you and so from there you know I just tied it that that was God with me through through the stroke

Bill Gasiamis (14:12)

I love it that that was God with you, man. Why not? That is amazing. And that the person or that spirit or the being was in the room with you as well. Reassuring you. Wow.

Ty Hawkins (14:22)

Yes.

Yeah, it was was crazy. remember so it's time almost simultaneous the the doctor was coming in to give the news and he was The door was off-center to my left. So I see he he came in and The figure was in the corner to the right So as he comes in my wife is looking like he has bad he looks like he has a face of bad news so he mentions that there's

They found a mess and Simultaneously, heard me remember I'm going to protect you so as the doctor leaves I look at my wife and I say I don't know how to explain this but I'm going to be okay and You know as destroyed as she was You know, that's what I could say to her I couldn't really explain it in that moment But I told her and ~ I knew that I was going to be fine

Bill Gasiamis (15:25)

Wow, man. So I had some moments when they gave me the news. I was at the hospital alone. It was probably 11 p.m. at night. It was a Saturday night. No, it was a Friday night. I'd sent my wife and the kids home because I didn't want

them to wait for hours and hours to find out the news, go home and rest and look after the kids. They were young teenagers, both of them at the time. And I was...

Mindset and Recovery

I got the news it was there's a mass on your brain or a shadow on your brain that appeared in the scan. It could be a brain bleed. It could be a tumor and that tumor could be benign. It could be cancerous. That's the way they broke the news. And I remember being kind of like, ~ okay, whatever. And I was so.

I was so nonchalant about it. He says to me, do you have any questions? And I said, no, not at this stage. And I left it at that. And I basically just took the news, went to bed, had a bit of a sleep because the next morning I was going to wake my wife, her to come to hospital. I had to tell her the news and I did that. She came. And after I told her the look on her face was the first time that I kind of got a little bit scared. And then I had to ring.

my client and tell my client I'm not coming into work today ~ because I'm in hospital and there's something wrong with my brain I don't know what it is and I start crying.

But even through all of the drama, the three brain bleeds over two and a half years, brain surgery, walking, even through all of that and all the problems that it caused us, me, my family, my work, it never crossed my mind that I wouldn't get through this or wouldn't get over it or beyond it. Now I am still dealing with it. I still have a podcast that I have to do.

because if I don't do, I don't get my therapy every week. But do you know, I'm moving through it, beyond it, overcoming it. I never believed for one moment that it would be the thing that stops me, defines me, even though I've had dark days, dark weeks, dark months, I always expected that it would shift and something would come out from the other side. I don't know whether...

~ I would ~ allocate that to God or something else, but I truly deeply believe that like it was within me and maybe it was kind of God like type of experience, but I love how you're in technically like the worst day of your life health wise, it could go one way or another and you're just thinking I'm going to tell my wife everything is going to be fine and ~

We'll just get through this. I think that is something that sort of set the foundation for how you were going to approach the whole entire recovery after that, this experience that you had.

Ty Hawkins (18:40)

Yes, I think that definitely set the tone. Having that experience and not... I never felt in danger. I knew that the journey, this process, wasn't going to be easy. But I never felt that I was in danger. That my life was in jeopardy.

the diagnosis and the statistics that show if you have a bleed in your brain stem that the percentage of survival is 25. So that's one in four people that based on statistics that experience what I do one in four people survive. And then of those that do survive, they say that 10 % just make a significant recovery. And I never felt.

that I was battling against those statistics each day that from the moment I got the news it was a cool calm collected call my mom, my brother and that's what my wife did and you know I just tried to stay as composed as possible ~ because I never felt in danger and I didn't want them to worry too much ~ you know I knew it was going to be difficult because I went from

One day running up and down the basketball court to being bedridden and barely could function. I couldn't write. I lost the perception on size of writing. I couldn't walk. ~ I forgot how to walk, though my body forgot how to walk. I could mentally think, hey, I want to take these steps and get up out of bed, but I needed help. So I spent a week in the hospital.

I spent three weeks in an inpatient rehab facility. So as I mentioned It was the day of our engagement shoot so our wedding was set for three months later And that's all I could really think about was I have to get ready for this wedding I have to get ready for our wedding. I have to get ready for our wedding. So every day I woke up ~ You know my athletic mind is up for the challenge ~

You know, God told me that I was going to be okay. And I knew that I had to show up and do the work when I was taught on the basketball court and just in life, you just have you show up and you, you, you battle back against adversity. And I decided that yes, like you, didn't want this to define me. I didn't feel that this was going to be the end of, of my life. ~ I knew that it was going to be a chapter that I would never forget, but

I knew that I was up for the challenge.

Therapy and Rehabilitation

Bill Gasiamis (21:40)

I love that athletic mindset, right? Your coach probably drilled you for years, know, like get up, get going, keep going, keep moving, push through, overcome, ~ try harder, you know, be more strategic, whatever, like the whole athletic mindset applied to stroke recovery. I reckon it's such a massive, ~ like it's such a massive benefit to have that going into a diversity, like recovering from a significant health.

~ situation because I know that there are players on the field who are not the best players but they are the most impactful because they do the most work and they get given labels like he's a natural or ~ he's gifted or stuff like that and it's like dude I couldn't

I couldn't walk straight when I was a young kid. The only reason why I appear gifted or natural is because I work all day every day. You classic Michael Jordan ~ kind of approach where Jordan talks about being ~ always training, always shooting hoops, always ~ on the basketball court more than anybody, even though he was

Ty Hawkins (22:52)

you

Bill Gasiamis (23:00)

Appearing to be kind of naturally gifted because of his body shape because of his athleticism because of his height But it meant nothing if he didn't do the work every single day

Ty Hawkins (23:12)

Yes, yes, and even you know from a spiritual perspective There's the saying that faith without works is is dead And so for me I had the faith and I knew that I needed that there was work work required of me I think even after ~ my experience of so as I mentioned I spent three weeks in the inpatient facility once I understood the magnitude and how much my

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mindset really helped me through. I reached out to a lot of my coaches and you don't understand when you're young how they're, man they're pushing me so hard, they're pushing me so hard and I'm like well I'm glad that they pushed me this hard because because of that I felt prepared for the adversity that I faced in June of 2019 so you know I remember reaching out and just saying thank you for being

as hard on me as you were because it helped me through this. Who would have known that years later that discipline that you were, that I thought as a young adult would, you know, thinking that you're just being tough on me and it's really building characters, building a mindset. And I grew to appreciate that as I started to reflect back on, you know, on my journey because a lot of the doctors said,

You're I feel that you're recovering so fast because you were an athlete in I wasn't just an athlete I worked hard my I took pride in like you said that Michael being in the gym and Just really working hard. It was one thing I said hey You might be better than me, but it's one thing that you're not gonna you might have more talent than me But you're not going to outwork me and you know, that was my mindset

Bill Gasiamis (25:03)

Hmm.

Ty Hawkins (25:06)

with recovery, it's every day. Once I understood what therapies that I would have to do. ~ So I remember in the inpatient facility, my first week there, the nurses would come clip my schedule to my wheelchair and they would come get me for therapy. After the first week, they would come clip my schedule to the wheelchair and they'd never, they wouldn't come to get me because they knew that

I was going to be wheeling myself down the hallway to get to whatever session, OT, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or speech therapy that I knew what time I needed to be there and I was going to be there because I was determined to get better.

Bill Gasiamis (25:52)

I to ask for permission to walk back to the therapy room ~ on my own because

they were afraid I was going to fall and it was fair enough because my left side wasn't really working well after about two and a half, three weeks I was on my feet but I still was quite unstable and they said, look, we're not gonna let you walk alone. We'll come, but we won't help you like we have been helping you. We'll just watch you walk. I was like, yes, do that.

I felt safe, but also I had the ability to just get myself there. They had handrails down the hallway and everything that I could hold onto. But of course I went near them, tried not to hold on, held on when I needed to. I did everything I could to be on my feet on my own so I can get the brain getting used to being on this weird left side of my body, which is numb, tingly.

and not receiving information that the foot was on the ground. Like the brain wasn't being told your foot's on the ground, man, you know, like step or tension muscle or do the stride or whatever. So I remember going through that and I remember complaining because I was spending too much time in my bed. And I was like, guys, like, what am I doing here? This is boring. And I need to get into a session. I need to do something. And they were, well,

You know, we have to have lunch and we have to have other things that we attend to after I write reports on you and all that kind of stuff. You can't be eight hours a day just in the gym or in the therapy room or whatever. And I'm like, ~ okay. I didn't realize there was other technical things that happened in the background that wasn't that was related to me, but not the as part of the physical stuff. So in, so instead what I did is I

Ty Hawkins (27:38)

Thanks, Ted.

physical, yes.

Bill Gasiamis (27:49)

imagined myself exercising, I imagined myself walking, I imagined what it would look like when I was on my feet, etc. Because it rewires the same part of your brain as if you're actually doing it. So I thought, right, if you're not going to be with me, ~ taking me for the actual therapy, I'm going to imagine myself doing the therapy.

Ty Hawkins (28:11)

No, I was the same so For me, I didn't so I couldn't really Walk in the big the first the first week I spent a lot of a lot of the duration of my three weeks I spent in the in a wheelchair there, but I was able to in The first week I needed a lot of help moving from the bed to the wheelchair But after a while I could get myself out of bed

into the wheelchair, will to therapy. That's why they didn't come because I wasn't necessarily walking. But when I did walk, I would have a walker and they would use, somebody would be with me. And I was the same way. I'm like, man, I'm in bed a lot. I'm only in therapy for an hour and a half each session. neural fatigue really,

could appreciate my breaks because I was so, that hour took a lot out of me. But as my body reacclimated to the workload that it was receiving, ~ I was able to stay awake a lot better and my mom would then take me outside to do extra things. We would play toss for my hand. ~ She would toss the tennis ball. It would help me walk outside a little bit.

Bill Gasiamis (29:11)

Yeah, same.

Ty Hawkins (29:37)

But just, you would help, RMOF would help as much as they could for me to get extra, ~ some extra time and extra movement in outside of just the hour and a half that I was in the therapy session.

Bill Gasiamis (29:52)

Yeah, I love that. My parents came along as well. said to my wife and everyone came past and I spent time outside with them, you know, having some time in the sun, a meal, a coffee, something like that. That was really helpful. I think you and I also both benefited from the fact that the bleeds, although really serious, were not catastrophic bleeds and we had a lot of time to react.

to our situation that we found ourselves in. I took seven days, you took weeks. And I think that was just pure, utter luck that the bleed was a little small enough to start impacting us in a very small way that we thought was not significant and not at risk of our health. And also we both benefit from looking like we haven't had a stroke. No one can tell that you would have or I've had a stroke, but you are.

Ty Hawkins (30:23)

Please hit.

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis (30:47)

also still though like me living with deficits right and you've got a few of them let me just read out the list you've got left-sided numbness and tingling which i have and weakness which i have but you've also got ~ a taxia which you'll tell me about in a minute double vision ~ you're going to also tell me about gastroparesis and crps so for someone that is so upbeat

Ty Hawkins (30:51)

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis (31:16)

looks like you do ~ like you haven't had a strike, etc. You are experiencing some ongoing deficits years out. So first, tell me a little bit about a taxia. What's that?

Ty Hawkins (31:24)

Yes.

So ataxia is, impacts the muscle coordination. So when my nervous system gets overwhelmed, it almost scrambles my coordination. So sometimes it'll impact my gait specifically. It really like impacts.

Again my left side so I was impacted in the brain stem right side of face left side of body So it impacts a lot of and I'm left side dominant. So as I'm trying to lift weights or play basketball ~ I'll have a I'll feel what someone miscoordinated and so my coordination isn't ~ Isn't smooth once I get overwhelmed or

My nervous system isn't sending the signals properly then it impacts my running so then ~ doesn't send the signals for all the muscles to fire in the proper chain and then it impacts Yeah, like my shoulder so we're trying to like lift things overhead ~ then it'll get shaky ~ But yeah, it's pretty much just a lack of coordination for like to simplify things

The Importance of Exercise in Recovery

Bill Gasiamis (32:52)

Okay, cool. Interesting. So I have a very minor version of that. My left side, probably not as coordinated as my right side anyway, because I'm right side dominant. But now my left side is just a little bit out, you know, and when I get tired, my balance goes off. And ~ I find myself leaning in one direction. I lean into the doorway, you know, when I'm really tired, getting out of bed in the morning, I need to make sure that my foot is on the ground so I don't lose my balance.

that kind of stuff. So tell me about gastroparesis. That's one I haven't come across a lot.

Ty Hawkins (33:27)

So, ~ just from having the brain stem is in control ~ of a lot of your, not basic functions, but your essential functions. So breathing, heart rate, digestion. So what gastroparesis is, is there's ~ a lack of communication between my brain and the vagus nerve.

which will then lead to my digestive system either pausing or moving slow, moving a lot more slowly. And so what that can lead to is a lot of stomach discomfort where I can have three bites of food and feel like I had a six or six course meal. ~ you know, and then when that system isn't functioning properly, it leads to issues with like my skin and things like that. But

Gastroparesis from my understanding is just either like a slowdown or paralysis of your digestive system.

Bill Gasiamis (34:33)

I hear you. Unexpected, ~ unexpected side effect of a stroke, right? People hear stroke, they, they know it's associated to the head, but gastrointestinal issues become a massive problem for some people after stroke because the two are linked. And, you know, you can heal your brain by healing your gut. And when I say heal your brain, you can improve how it functions by healing your gut. ~

And like if you stop eating the standard American diet, standard Australian diet, same thing. If you stop eating that, you improve the gut conditions and that improves your brain, but also your other organs. But here you've got like a neurological disconnect sometimes when you're overwhelmed by the vagus nerve

that stops the standard basic functioning of your gut digestion. Like I imagine

Ty Hawkins (35:29)

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis (35:31)

you have a meal and it takes longer to digest or and therefore it causes discomfort therefore you are you avoiding food because of that?

Ty Hawkins (35:41)

Some days some days ~ You know and that it this one really my wife it's you need to have you need to eat you need to have your meals and Like I'm not really hungry. It's ~ is a lot of times I'm confused because I have such a discomfort in my stomach that I don't know if I'm full or if is discomfort from you know, just just everything neurologically

So I'll have to try and guess like hey ~ Am I am I fool what did I eat yesterday? What did I have today already? So some days I found myself avoiding food Just because I think that if I do I'll give my system time to either catch up or slow down ~ So simply put I do as I'm thinking about it. I do avoid foods at times

Bill Gasiamis (36:35)

Hmm. Yeah, it makes sense that you would. And I met a guy many years ago, we're talking about maybe 10 years ago, who had a similar thing to you, but a little more dramatic in that he didn't get hunger messages at all.

So he had to eat only when other people were eating as a reminder that it's time to eat. if he didn't do that, he wouldn't ever get the message that you have to eat. You haven't eaten for four days or five days.

Ty Hawkins (37:15)

I'll get you know I think that sometimes that that may happen where I'm just not getting the signal and but I'm aware that hey I know I need to eat I'm aware that maybe it's been a day or I have a workout coming up that I know I need to eat for and sometimes it can just be I can have a banana and It feels like I had a full a steak

dinner with potatoes and a vegetable and like wow just from a banana and a glass of water and then some days my appetite is normal where I think once I find you

know my routine I found a routine of sitting in a sauna and working out and ~ eating regimen so in the morning I would have I'll have a cup of warm tea

Living with CRPS: A Daily Challenge

And if I'm not overly hungry or have a gym session, I'll just have some fruit like a fruit salad and I'll feel light and my digestive system appreciates that. And then ~ my body responds well to the heat. So I'll try to sit in the sauna or exercise to get myself to sweat. And that seems to help my systems kind of stay in syncing and rhythm.

So when I do that, my appetite is pretty normal, but when I find myself either overwhelmed, just neurologically or from the stresses of the day, then systems just start to go out of whack.

Bill Gasiamis (38:55)

I hear you. Exercise is so important. Like doesn't matter what condition you're in after stroke, you got to find a way to move your body as much as possible. And it causes so many positive cascades in your body that you, the bang for buck by exercising that your brain and body gets, it's just unmeasurable. You cannot measure it. It's so, so important. ~ And I love that you experienced direct benefits that you're aware of.

when you exercise.

Ty Hawkins (39:27)

Yes, and that's that's the physical benefits and it's also been very Beneficial mentally to mentally emotionally because a lot of people don't Really when you hear a stroke and you think a recovery is just hey the physical recovery and hey you look great tie and like I Do look great, but internally some days I don't and mentally some days I don't but I know that

When I get, when I go to the gym and I work out, my mood is, it's night and day when I don't and when I do. And so I committed to, ~ working out as much, even if it's just going outside for a in the neighborhood, getting outside, fresh air, it's, have to move my body because if I don't, that's when things, you know, physically, mentally, and emotionally just start to break down.

Bill Gasiamis (40:23)

Yeah, we are meant to be moving. We're moving creatures, you we're meant to be moving, not sitting down too much, you know, driving desk work, all that kind of stuff is not normal. And we're to be doing the, the physical version of getting somewhere like walking somewhere or, you know, running or, riding a bike. And if you can't get on a bike, get a

one of those sit down three wheeler bikes. If you need a walker, walk with a walker. you know, whatever the situation is, find a way around it because exercising is hard, not exercising is hard, but like far harder.

Ty Hawkins (41:11)

Yes, yes, I just I made a video about that and I posted it Maybe two days ago about the gym and I woke up I was a little tired and I still got up and I went to the gym and after I said that same thing that Though I got the hard work done. The work was hard, but not moving is hard too. It may not

be immediately hard but it's hard on your body not moving it adds up over time and ~ it's what kept me I think not I think I know it's what kept me the movement that I did early on paid off you know the doctors every session it was a lot of movement ~ and even now I'm just conscious of I may reach in the cabinet to get a cup but I'm

You know extending my arm more more than the one time to get the cup because that's that's therapy You know a lot of people have this ~ Miss conception that therapy is just that one hour in the therapy environment I try to find everything to be therapy Reaching for a cup reaching for a plate eating ~ You know the steps that I take around the house ~ even just dancing you know I'm not

I don't have the, I have a little rhythm, but I'm not the best dancer, but music and moving my body just as I feel was something that was very, you know, beneficial for me. And it took me back to think when we were children and we're kids, we just have these, what we think as adults is random movements. We're folding ourselves like pretzels and spinning in circles. And it's like, hey, this is what,

body is meant to be freely moving and we kind of lose track of that once we get to work or school sit at a desk for eight hours sit in a vehicle for long long drives and you know so on and so forth then we forget that we take for granted you know moving the ability to move our bodies until you know our bodies show us like hey you know this is the repercussions sometimes of you not moving your body.

Bill Gasiamis (43:34)

I love that. That's a beautiful way to wrap that up is by saying the repercussions of not moving your body. It's exactly what it is. They occur. Your hips get tight, your joints change in their ability to handle stress. Your bones get ~ thinner. You know, like so many things change in a negative way. You got to move even if you're doing a real, you know, if you have a real challenging stroke experience and stroke.

~ deficits, you just got to move as much as you can. I love I love that ~ that approach. So you also are now dealing with CRPS. Now I've heard of that before, but describe that and what it's like for you.

Ty Hawkins (44:18)

~ So it was misdiagnosed for some years as just neuropathy Which is the numbness and tingling on my left side? So if I if you were to look at me and draw a straight line down My right side feels What do you know the ~ normal person would feel you know? ~ It's just freely flowing it feels normal right and my left side is just

You know, constant daily pain. You know, I feel something, ~ whether it's in, you know, my leg, my arm, ~ you know, ~ it can be even having clothes on like this jacket right now is sending signals to my brain that ~ my arm is in pain and I'm not in pain clearly, but my brain is sending signals that me having this jacket on this material brushing up against my arm.

~ It's painful water hitting my skin painful and my paint but That you know depending on the temperature you know if they're cool at the bed sheets are cold of Pain level rises through the roof. ~ Yeah, it hurts But you know a lot of you know my mindset

Bill Gasiamis (45:23)

What about the big shades? What about big shades?

Yeah.

Ty Hawkins (45:44)

I don't know. just I don't complain about it and it's like hey, you know, this is what I have to deal with So it's constant like times. I feel it deep within my abdomen. I'll feel it in my shoulder ~ You know, but CRPS it attacks ~ It's essentially your

brain just signaling that it is your brain stuck in a fight-or-flight cycle and it's constantly signaling that there's some it's a threat or some kind of pain is happening. So

From putting the sneaker on, it's really been attacking, as of lately, my left ankle and my left foot. certain shoes, I can feel the pain deep in the bones in my foot. And then sometimes I'll just feel like ~ a very deep ache in my shoulder. Or if the temperature gets cold enough, it'll feel like somebody's just grabbing, know, just has a hold on my rib cage.

and ~ you know so that's lightly to put CRPS what I think for me because I'm so used to the pain now is that my I always say daily I have a pain level of ~ four four to five where somebody that's not used to chronic pain would say it's eight or a nine and ~ Some days it's frustrating

Some days it's tiring, know, the sensation varies. It's a numbness and tingling to a deep bone-jarring ache to almost a burning sensation at times, like depending on how much I'm moving. Like, so if I were to move with this jacket right now, as I move my arm, then there's a deep pain in my tricep and then a very deep pain from the wrist to my fingertips.

And sometimes it'll make me, like people, I'll stand and I'll just be squeezing my hands and people may think that I'm just, you know, just holding my hands, but I'm trying to let my body know that it's okay. So I'm, you know, massaging or rubbing and ~ sometimes that helps or sometimes I just have to, you know, take a nap or close off other sensors to calm the brain down.

Bill Gasiamis (48:11)

my wife gets in trouble when she touches my left hand and she's being gentle. If she's being gentle, it's like, dude, do not do that. She's like, what do you mean? I'm being gentle. being rough. Don't just be gentle with it. It hurts too much. It's hurting now. And I'm in an enclosed room with no wind, no anything, but my left arm feels like it's cold.

Ty Hawkins (48:16)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis (48:38)

freezing while my right side is perfectly fine. You know, it's a very mild, beautiful day outside. ~ the wind, when I go outside, if I'm wearing shorts and a t-shirt, the wind makes it hurt. And if I go to the beach, I have to wear, ~ what we call runners, trainers, joggers in the water because the little pebbles of sand, they feel like they're, I just stepped on like a thousand pins.

Ty Hawkins (49:01)

Mm-hmm.

Bill Gasiamis (49:07)

or something, it's just ridiculous. And then I sleep on my left side so that I can, like you do with your hand, you just squeeze it to just let it know like it's okay. I sleep on my left side so the sheets don't rub on my left side and I don't get woken up by my sheets in the middle of the night. That's how I kind of get around it. And I would say that my pain is around a three to a four, mostly.

Ty Hawkins (49:08)

you

Go.

Emotional Resilience and Mental Health



Bill Gasiamis (49:37)

kind of closer to a three. And when we go for a long walk, sometimes I'll go for a long walk with my wife. If we're visiting a city that we've never been to before, we love to see the city on foot the whole time. And we might be walking for four, five, six hours through the whole day after, you know, stopping for a coffee or something to eat or whatever. And my left side will be going, we are not doing this anymore. We're completely done.

And I will have to have a conversation in my head with my left side and say, you're coming along for the ride because you are overreacting. The right side is perfectly fine, which means that I haven't done anything to hurt my body. haven't over exerted ourselves. So you're just overreacting. Be quiet and let's get on with

it. And believe it or not, man, that works. That quietens things down.

and then we just get on with the job of walking and seeing what we need to see.

Ty Hawkins (50:38)

Yes, yes, so the two things my wife, ~ so she likes to pick at my skin sometimes whether she sees a little pimple or something and I'm like, please not today. It's days that I can tolerate it, but it's days where, and in the beginning she didn't understand. I didn't either and I'm like, am I just overreacting? I'm like, no, this really hurts. And so as I started to understand my diagnosis, I explained it to her and she's been.

Bill Gasiamis (50:49)

you

Ty Hawkins (51:07)

you know more aware and I'll let her know if it's like hey I'm fine today it's good so you're good to go and two I remember ~ she loves Disney so we went to Disney World for her birthday and that's a lot of walking a lot of people so ~ and when I get overstimulated then sometimes I get a little irritable

So we're walking and then, you know, I'm like, have to control my emotions. And then like you have a conversation with myself, like, Hey, my right side is not tired at all. My right side, we can go, we can go. And I'm like, Hey, we are, ~ we are okay. We're, we are totally fine. This is a walk in the park. It's a lot of people. Yes, but we are okay. We are safe and I wouldn't do, I let my body know it's nothing that I'm not putting you in any harm's way. We're just walking.

And we may have to slow the pace down a little bit. But then as I get back in rhythm, then I found myself, okay, we're back. We're back to speed. And I really think that, like you say, it's you having that mindset and then telling yourself. So day two in Disney, day one, I didn't know what to expect. But day two is like, hey, we're having this pep talk before we even go outside. We're not, we're cooperating today. We're going for a walk and it's going to be a long day. So.

let's go and as long as I have comfortable shoes and I think you know and I walk take breaks and able to sit down at times and you know my body then it's like starts to trust in a lot that he's going to take care of me so you know I have those conversations too in those same experiences.

Bill Gasiamis (52:58)

I relate to that so much, man. I get stuck. You know that feeling that you get in your hand? I get it in the ball of my left foot. It just becomes really, really tight. Like it feels, it doesn't close up or anything, but it becomes really, really tight. And I can't do anything to...

undo it, you know, so I've got to like sit there, massage it, massage it, just try and get the tendons and all of that stuff to move into work. That's kind of like the only way that I can, that I can get through it, but I have to get regular massages. get a massage every once every about 10 days on my left side to loosen everything up. Otherwise it just puts my right side out as well, because then it starts impacting the other side of my body.

Ty Hawkins (53:35)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah,

because you start to overcompensate. Yeah, I do the same while I start going for those kind of weird here's movement, movement recovery. So I do a lot of things to move my body stretch recovery and things like that. I actually have an appointment tomorrow afternoon to do that.

Bill Gasiamis (53:45)

Hmm.

Yeah, it's so important. ~ Little, little things that kind of help you get through the next 10 days or two weeks or whatever it is, make such a difference if you can make it to a massage or if you can get your body look at that. It really helps. I find it helps me mentally more than anything because it eases all of those ~ discomforts and then my brain can just feel a little bit relaxed, you know, for a few days.

Ty Hawkins (54:20)

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis (54:28)

four days, 10 days, whatever it is, you whatever I get out of it. ~ And some days I feel like, man, need to see that. I need to see somebody right now. And I can't get

an appointment, but then by the time I get to the next day, it's settled.

Ty Hawkins (54:38)

Mm-hmm.

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis (54:45)

So sometimes the cycle

requires me to just sort of stop, rest and not push through and just allow it to settle down.

Ty Hawkins (54:54)

No, yeah, I definitely think that allowing some days for the body to just rest and you know kind of catch up and recover does does the brain and body very well? ~ You know, I think I know for myself I was so Engulfed in I have to do something every day every day and keep my body moving that I wasn't allowing it to rest in

I remember even on the basketball court, had a day off from practice. it's, I have to allow my body time to rest and also my brain. you know, when we're constantly thinking how can I improve, that's actually putting, you know, some stress on our brain. ~ You know, that I started to learn to try to limit and just say, hey, I'm taking a day off. I don't even want to.

think about what I may have to do. I just want to be here in the moment. I just want to enjoy a movie today or just spend time with the family and not think about anything recovery related.

Bill Gasiamis (56:00)

Yeah, it's so important to you. You need time out, man. I hear you. ~ So you're you're being a few through a few tests and you've had some challenges to overcome. You've made it through your generally very positive, upbeat, glass half full kind of guy. But there probably was some dark times and difficult moments. How did you?

Like how did you deal with them? How do you kind of navigate when it gets really tough and challenging emotionally and mentally?

Ty Hawkins (56:34)

Before I used to just try to keep myself busy at first not realizing that that was almost making it worse in a sense because I was never dealing with the emotion of What I experienced I never allowed myself allowed myself to fully understand and feel it until recently and so recently I started Started talk therapy psychotherapy. ~ that's been tremendous. And then also just really

taking time to reflect, I'll do yoga, I'll meditate, and you know, I'll just get more vulnerable about my story I share with people, and I think that allows me to make it through just being honest with myself. I think that the type A athletic mind that I have, it was like, hey, you're fine, you're fine, you're fine, you're okay, and I never allowed myself to say, you're not okay.

Once I did I think that was when I started to see more progress because I was honoring how I truly felt versus how I wanted to feel And it was hey some days I told my just recently maybe maybe two days ago. So my mom, know was it was a rough day and I was like hey this sucks mom and She was like, know, yes you you have to honor and it's okay to say that that it

It does suck, but

know it's you show gratitude that you're still alive to experience have the experience of life But understand you know you have to honor how you feel in the moment, and it's for me. I'm able to Shift quicker out of those moments now because it's like hey I honor it this sucks may have a little cry then immediately after it better then have a little laugh and like hey, okay, you know so I just

Understand that there's the range of emotions in its waves. So instead of going against the tide I just roll with the waves these days and you know is if I'm sad I just sit with it in the moment I talk to whoever I need to talk to and you know, let them know hey today is a bit harder of a day rather than you're okay. You're okay. You're strong and I eliminated that ego and just honored how I feel because I think

especially as men, we're we're taught to, you know, just tough it out, get up and dust it off. And it's like, hey, we're human at the end of the day and we all have

So I think it's better to honor your emotions. You know, we all have them for a reason, ~ you know, so it's okay to cry. It's okay to feel sad, you know, and work through that and you'll eventually, hopefully we'll see happiness, enjoy on the

other side.

Bill Gasiamis (59:30)

Yeah, there is always a, what's it like a reward on the other side of the hard time. Like you might not know when you're going through the hard time, but it always leads to a positive outcome on the other side. You just got to give a time to get there. You know, got to just go through the ride and I'm similar to you talk therapy, man. Well, what a difference that's made in my life. It just is so tremendous that you find somebody by the way, who you like to go and talk to.

~ So you might have to try a couple of different therapists, but like it is next level. You go there, you could talk about anything you want. Nobody's judging you. You know, don't have to share that with your loved ones. You can just be yourself and a different version of yourself in that room. that again, it just takes more weight off your shoulders. It creates more lightness. So I'm fully behind that.

Ty Hawkins (1:00:26)

Yes, yes, it's been, it's made a tremendous difference for me and I see, you know, this is, moving into year seven and early on I refused to go to therapy and, ~ you know, I think it wasn't, it wasn't until year three or four that I really decided to see, really dig in and understand therapy and realize that, it's not just, I talk about the stroke less and less now.

and just about life. It helps me every Monday. It's a great start to my week.

Bill Gasiamis (1:01:03)

Man amazing start to your week. Well done. I love it that it's every Monday Your where are you doing this recording from now, where are you?

Lessons Learned: Recovery Insights for Stroke Survivors

Ty Hawkins (1:01:14)

Actually, I'm actually at work. ~ so I was able to return to work. ~ Fortunately, so I'm back with with Verizon ~ You know Emma in my sales role, so I was able to return to my career and In addition to my career being able to speak and do things like that. But currently I'm at work We're getting ready to close up shop

soon But they gave me the time because they they are very accommodating and understanding how important this is to me

and they support me here on my journey.

Bill Gasiamis (1:01:48)

Wow. This episode is not sponsored by Verizon, but thank you Verizon for allowing this to happen, man. Yeah. We love it. All right. I really appreciate that. ~ sounds like the stroke incident has shaped your life in a meaningful way.

Ty Hawkins (1:02:08)

Yes, yes it has. would say I was a very selfish person before and I don't mean that like ~ in a bad context. was I just thought about myself and my goals and not how my life could impact others. And after the stroke, just being, you know, given this story and seeing how I had no idea that me sharing that I had a stroke and

My recovery would lead to a social media following and people looking to me for, you know, hope and inspiration that it was like, wow, you know, I'm actually am somebody that can impact. now it's, you know, I live to help others. That's why I continue to share almost seven years later and stay in touch with, with people and help try to provide resources that, you know,

You know, just be a resource for people that go through this or loved ones, you know, to anybody who goes through this or any adversity, just to show, my story is a testament that, you know, adversity does hit, but you can make it through. You know, it starts with a mindset and a great community. And, you know, I'm very proud of my story and, know, where I am now and the person that I have become despite, you know, that unfortunate circumstance and event.

Bill Gasiamis (1:03:37)

Yeah, I'm with you, man. I love what you said about like, how you you're impacting, you know, you're aware of how you can impact people, we impact people all the time, negative, positive, whatever it is all the time, you may as well focus the needle towards positive. If you become aware of it, you know, it's way better. You get much more reward than just being about yourself. I mean, what a

Ty Hawkins (1:03:54)

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis (1:04:03)

And I was the same, like we all kind of start there. You know, it's about how do I succeed? How do I make the next dollar? How do I do this? How do I do that? And then at some point you shift. And for me, the catalyst was the strokes for you. It seems like it was the same thing. And the reward that I never thought I would get from shifting the needle towards helping other people has been way, way greater than anything I ever ~ focused on before.

because it's more of a global reward. It's less of a focused, narrow reward, which is, know, money, car, house, you know, vacation. It's now.

a feedback loop from other people and I get messages on the podcast every single day on YouTube, emails, people going this episode really has made a difference to my life or I loved hearing that story from that person, know, the comments make it so worth doing. It is amazing.

Ty Hawkins (1:05:03)

Yes,

yes, yeah, for me the message is hey, you know, your story helped me make it through or it helps me you serve as the inspiration and I don't do it for that but it just helps. You know, it's just good, a good feeling knowing that, you know, this isn't in vain and that I'm able to impact people, especially in places that I've never been. I've received messages from places in the world that I haven't traveled to yet and hope to one day.

And it's like, know, my ~ story is helping people across the world. And I never imagined that I could have that impact, you know, before it was basketball and I need to, you know, attain this and career that. you know, now it's, I hope to open, you know, an app or get an email like, hey, this has been so helpful.

You know, or hey, what advice can you offer? And it's like, man, you know, I don't, can offer you this advice. ~ you know, this is what helped me. ~ and it's just a good feeling knowing that, you know, what the fight that I put up is, you know, then helping somebody, you know, pay it forward. ~ you know, whether it's a stroke survivor directly, or it's a caregiver, ~ or just someone who's having, you know, a tough time, a tough goal at life in the moment to know that.

They draw some sort of inspiration to keep going. And that's what it's really about

for me.

Bill Gasiamis (1:06:35)

I love it. Cross culture, ~ cross country, cross religion. Like it's just human, right? Like it's got nothing to do with any of that other stuff. It's literally just got to do with human. ~ I know that you need to get back because I've seen you looking at your watch right now. So.

Ty Hawkins (1:06:48)

Right.

I

was just saying what time it is 8 15 here

Bill Gasiamis (1:06:57)

Yeah, we've been going for about an hour and a bit. we'll wrap up. I'm near the end anyway, but I do want you to get back to work. I love the Verizon have done this by the way. So I really appreciate that. So I suppose the last question is about like, there are people listening right now, some of them will have just gone through stroke, literally the last week, weeks, months might be into their first year. What would be one lesson from your journey ~ that

you'd like to just share with the people who are listening who are a little bit earlier on in their recovery.

Ty Hawkins (1:07:31)

Early on, ~ I think that it's really, it might be cliché, but it's don't compare your recovery to anyone else's recovery. Your journey is your journey, especially in the stroke community. No one stroke, no two strokes are the same. So no two recoveries are the same. So, you know, and the biggest thing, the biggest misconception that I hear is that

only happens in the first year and I want to say that I'm approaching year seven and I still see improvements and strides in year seven so those are you know two of the biggest things focus on your journey and your mindset and don't believe or limit yourself to think that recovery happens in just one year it's the brain I think the healing just starts in the first year

Bill Gasiamis (1:08:28)

Mm hmm. I completely agree with that. I like to describe it using this analogy. In the first 12 months, you've just walked past the table and banged your knee on the coffee table. That's how early the first year is you just banged it like, my God, you got so much time to heal and recover after that. And if you hear about plateaus, it's all rubbish. If you hear about ~ recovery doesn't happen.

~ later on, or that's the best you can expect to get. That's all not true. Just put it behind you. These people don't know what they're talking about. Keep going after that recovery.

Ty Hawkins (1:09:03)

Exactly.

Yep, I agree.

Bill Gasiamis (1:09:07)

Ty, on that note, thank you so much for joining me on the podcast, reaching out a second time to join me. I really appreciate connecting with you and learning about your story and all the best with the rest of your recovery.

Ty Hawkins (1:09:20)

Thank you for having me. ~ Thank you for ~ allowing me to reschedule and to be here. And I look forward to staying in communication and helping out in any way that I can for our community.

Bill Gasiamis (1:09:35)

Well, a big thank you to Ty for sharing his story. just love his mindset and a huge thank you to you for tuning in every week, supporting the podcast via Patreon, leaving comments on the YouTube channel and sharing this episodes with the people who need them the most. My book is at recoveryafterstroke.com/book. I will see you in the next episode.