Migraine And Stroke – Kristin Brickel

Kristen Brickel always suffered from migraines. Except this one day in March 2020 her headache was actually a hemorrhagic stroke.

Instagram
Beacons

Highlights:

02:12 Introduction – Migraine And Stroke
04:24 My Dogs Sensed Something Was Wrong
06:29 Ignoring The Signs
10:31 The Doctor's Findings
15:29 After Waking Up In The Hospital
20:44 Common Struggle
28:24 Migraine And Stroke
33:30 MRI Induced A Seizure
38:12 The Dramatic Changes
47:28 Living Your Passion
53:44 Emotional Well-being
1:00:36 Dealing With Emotions
1:08:31 The Importance Of Self Compassion

Transcription:

Kristin Brickel 0:00
For about the first couple of days, I had I called it alien arm, my hand just kept kind of spinning in the air. I actually accidentally punched the ER doctor who was very, very kind she was telling me you're going to recover everything, and we're going to go out for steak.

Kristin Brickel 0:16
And as she was talking to me, and I was sitting there crying because I couldn't speak to her, I accidentally punched her in the face. I was like, in my head, at least, I was saying that, it didn't come out, but I was trying.

Intro 0:31
This is the recovery after stroke podcast, with Bill Gasiamis, helping you navigate recovery after stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 0:44
Hello, and welcome to episode 217 of the recovery after stroke podcast if you are a stroke survivor with a story to share about your experience with stroke, and you have been thinking about reaching out to be a guest on the show but we're waiting for the right time, this is it.

Bill Gasiamis 0:58
If you go to recoveryafterstroke.com/contact, you will find a form that you can fill out to apply to be a guest on the show. As soon as I receive it, I will respond with more details on how you can choose a time that works for you for both of us to meet over Zoom.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12
Also, I would love to hear from people that have any stroke-related questions. So if you have had a burning question that you'd like to ask me that's stroke-related, please do feel free to also go to recoveryafterstroke.com/contact and select ask a question from the drop-down.

Bill Gasiamis 1:31
Once you've done that, again, I will receive this notification and I will compile some questions and make some shorter episodes that give you my perspective on your questions. Now, of course they cannot be medical in nature as I'm not a doctor.

Bill Gasiamis 1:45
And I cannot comment on your specific situation with regards to your medical status. But I can give you my thoughts about something that is stroke related. So I would love it if you went ahead and ask me a question.

Bill Gasiamis 1:58
And then I'll compile an episode of say four or five questions that I'm answering and making available to everybody. And hopefully there'll be more people just like you who wanted to know the answer to that specific question.

Introduction – Migraine And Stroke

Bill Gasiamis 2:12
So today's guest is Kristin Brickel, who was 40 When was she thought was another migraine turned out to be a hemorrhagic stroke. Kristin Brickel, welcome to the podcast.

Kristin Brickel 2:24
Thank you. Thank you for having me. I appreciate it.

Bill Gasiamis 2:27
My pleasure. Thank you for being here. Tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

Kristin Brickel 2:32
So I have had migraines since I was a kid, and thought I was just having a really bad migraine for a few days. It kept escalating, and I'm a nurse. And so as nurses, we are terrible patients. And so I ignored the fact that it was getting worse.

Kristin Brickel 2:55
It started on Friday, Saturday, it was worse Sunday, it was worse. Monday, it was exponentially worse. Monday I went to my neurologist, I had an infusion because typically when my migraines would get very bad that can help.

Bill Gasiamis 3:11
What's an infusion?

Kristin Brickel 3:14
I have an infusion of it's was primarily magnesium and fluids. So in that would usually kind of take it back. And it did a little bit, but didn't resolve the headache. And his nurse and I ironically enough that morning, were discussing the fact that with complex migraines, we would never know if we were having an event.

Kristin Brickel 3:38
Talk about ominous. And, you know, if we were to have an event we wouldn't even know. So that was Monday around noon, Tuesday morning, I woke up and struggled to get out of bed. And on Wednesday morning, I really struggled to get out of bed. And my two dogs didn't want to leave my side. And nothing was

getting better.

Bill Gasiamis 4:01
Is that unusual for the dogs to not leave your side? Was there something different about that normally?

Kristin Brickel 4:08
It was different. They always were very kind of they would follow me around and they were big, they're big dogs. They would follow me around but not this closely. And my boy dog, who's the bigger of the two, literally was glued to my side.

My Dogs Sensed Something Was Wrong

Kristin Brickel 4:24
I mean, he didn't even want to go out to go to the bathroom. He didn't want to go down the stairs. He was right next to me, which he was always close to me. But this was very abnormal. And he kind of kept leaning against me when I would sit down it was very, very strange.

Kristin Brickel 4:40
And I just thought he was being extra clingy that day, you know, didn't really think much of it kind of dismissed it because I'd been working 20 Something hour days, you know, 18, 20 hour days because it was the middle of COVID and I was in charge of 12 dialysis clinics and operations and making sure that people were here, there, and everywhere.

Kristin Brickel 5:01
So we had a routine and there was a lot going on, and I had my call with my team that morning. And we asked the same questions every morning, when I went to go start writing the same notes I wrote every morning.

Kristin Brickel 5:16
And I kept writing the second letter instead of the first. I was like, why am I doing that? That's really annoying. And I was like, irritating myself. And I kept thinking, well, that's really annoying, stop it.

Kristin Brickel 5:30
But I just thought, you know, I have a really bad headache, and I haven't slept

much. And that must be it, totally dismissed it. And then after the call, I would always do a summary email. So I started to type.

Kristin Brickel 5:44
And I was mistyping horribly. And when I would go to hit backspace, I kept hitting the equal sign, which is right next to it. And I did it over and over and over and over again, to the point where, just before everything kind of happened, I looked and I had something like 26 emails open because I couldn't finish an email, which is very odd for me.

Kristin Brickel 6:09
But again, I just figured I'm frustrated and tired, and I don't feel good. And I'm pushing. So I got up to get something to drink. And I was on the phone with a colleague, and I said, we have a call in another hour.

Ignoring The Signs – Migraine And Stroke

Kristin Brickel 6:29
So this was around 12:31 – 01:00, I'm gonna go grab something to drink, use the bathroom and get ready for our afternoon calls. And she said, you don't sound right. And I said, well, you know, I don't feel right but what am I going to do?

Kristin Brickel 6:45
We should call the doctor. So what are they going to do? So I dismissed it again. And I hung up with her. And when I went to go get up from my chair in my office, which was across the hall from kind of my master bedroom and my bathroom, I fell.

Kristin Brickel 7:02
And that's when I knew that something was happening. And so my first thought as a nurse was stay calm. And I had a full length mirror in the room kind of leaning against the wall. So I kind of scooched my way over to it to check my face.

Kristin Brickel 7:20
Because I thought, well, if my face isn't drooping, it's not a stroke, it's still just a migraine. That knocked me to the ground and made my hand spin uncontrollably and my foot spin uncontrollably, that makes sense.

Kristin Brickel 7:32
So I crawled over my face look fine, at least it did to me. And so I thought well, I'm going to call my mom was also a nurse, and have her come and take a look at me, not 911 I'm gonna call my mom.

Kristin Brickel 7:47
So I did. Or I tried to I should say, and my phone, I couldn't get my passcode to unlock my phone, my phone wouldn't unlock. So then I started to kind of panic, that's when I started to actually panic.

Kristin Brickel 8:03
And I had a house phone couldn't tell you what the phone number was, we just had it because it was kind of a cheaper bundle with the cable. It was up on my desk. So I managed to get myself up to grab the phone and the phone was the kind of phone where you could dial it and then hit send kind of like a cell phone.

Kristin Brickel 8:24
And I kept dialing and hitting end kind of like I was riding backwards and typing backwards. Same thing was happening with the phone. So I freaked out and put my cell phone on the ground. And I started to cry and I just started kind of shaking my head back and forth.

Kristin Brickel 8:42
And ironically, a little-known fact, if you wiggle your nose in front of your phone, you can swipe your phone open to your last calls. And that's how I opened my phone.

Bill Gasiamis 8:54
Say that again.

Kristin Brickel 8:56
I was kind of like freaking out and going no, no, no, no, no. And my nose was going like this against my phone. And if you swipe on an iPhone, it will actually swipe over to your last call log. And that's how I was able to call my mom.

Bill Gasiamis 9:13
Okay, that's interesting. I'm gonna have to try that and Google it and find out what's going on there. Because that sounds like a bit of a miracle to me.

Kristin Brickel 9:23
And it may have been because I've only been able to duplicate it twice sense. And mind you I had an Apple Watch which after my stroke I realized had I just clicked back on my wrist it would have dialed the emergency number.

Kristin Brickel 9:39
But at the time, I didn't know that. But after my stroke I must do that twice a week where it starts to try to dial and I'm like no, no, no, no, all the time. But at the time I didn't know. So I finally did get my mom on the phone.

Kristin Brickel 9:53
And I thought I was talking to her in full sentences because she was responding to me like I was so she came and was convincing me to call an ambulance and it kind of went from then.

Bill Gasiamis 10:09
And then you went to hospital and what did they discover?

Kristin Brickel 10:16
So I was conscious and cognizant, up until the hospital, I knew by the time I got into the ambulance that I wasn't speaking, because at that point, I realized that I wasn't communicating with anybody but my mom.

The Doctor's Findings

Kristin Brickel 10:31
And the CAT scan because at the time, I actually had a nerve stimulator implanted in the back of my skull, so I couldn't go into an MRI. And so they had to put me in a CAT scan to evaluate anything.

Kristin Brickel 10:48
And it showed that I had a pretty major bleed and stroke. So I had a stroke of my parietal lobe and a bleed in the back of my skull. So it was pretty diffused by then, they think it had started over the weekend and just been progressively growing.

Kristin Brickel 11:06
What I don't remember, but I was told later is that I had very, very low blood pressure normally, and my blood pressure spiked while I was in the ER, and they had to give me multiple doses of medication to bring it back down. So I did pass

out at some point.

Bill Gasiamis 11:24
Yeah, that sounds familiar. So, you know, with the bleed, do they know the underlying cause? What caused the rupture?

Kristin Brickel 11:33
They still don't. As of right now, my neurologist and primary care's theory is that I had COVID, before COVID was kind of known, and that there was some trickle-down effects and some bleeding and coagulation issues that were resulting from that.

Kristin Brickel 11:57
But we've never actually identified because I had no risk factors. So I had low blood pressure, low cholesterol. Because it was a hemorrhagic I had no known reason I had no AVM, there was no known reason for me to have a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 12:15
You just got lucky. So how long did you spend in hospital?

Kristin Brickel 12:22
I was there for six days, probably would have been there longer. But I threatened to leave AMA. Because they weren't helping me. I wasn't getting PT, I wasn't getting any sleep, it was pretty awful. Because it was in the middle of COVID and I was trying to be understanding of that.

Kristin Brickel 12:46
But there came a point where I just wanted to sleep. And so I said, yeah, I can go home and do some of the things that are not happening here. Let me go home, which is what ended up happening after I think I had been transitioned to mostly oral meds because I did start having seizures because of where the bleed had occurred.

Kristin Brickel 13:07
And so once that had transitioned from IV to oral medications, I was able to go home. So I had, I think six CAT scans while I was in there, something like that. They said to me I'll never have another CAT scan in my life.

Bill Gasiamis 13:22

Yeah, CAT scans, MRIs. I don't know how many I had, I can't remember, there would have been so so many, especially MRIs. And my gosh and going into the tube of the MRI machine was always something I had to plan for.

Bill Gasiamis 13:41
Because I couldn't cope with being enclosed in that space, which is something I didn't realize I couldn't cope with until it started happening but that's interesting. So what I do is I can relate to your situation.

Bill Gasiamis 13:58
So my first bleed was small one, and then it kept getting bigger over seven or eight days, and then I ignored it and I was told, you don't look right. And I told them I do. I was told to go get it checked out and I said I'm too busy, I've got work to do.

Bill Gasiamis 14:17
I did everything that I shouldn't have done I did the exact opposite to what I should have done. And then as it bled more and more things went offline. So you know first it was my toe and then it was my foot and then it was my my leg to my knee.

Bill Gasiamis 14:34
And then it was my entire leg and then my entire left side and that's when I finally did something about it even though I didn't want to even though I was told to go to the hospital. I was still arguing with people then.

Bill Gasiamis 14:45
But finally got there and then the second bleed I was at work which I wasn't supposed to be at work I went to work just for one day just to hang out with my team and then I was telling them to take me to hospital, we drove past a hospital, instead of stopping at the hospital, I told them to keep going.

Bill Gasiamis 15:09
And then, I passed out at the hospital when I finally got there the second time, and I did something similar to you like I just blacked out and I didn't know what was happening. And there are other people have filled in the gaps, kind of as to what has happened after I passed out.

Waking Up In The Hospital After Migraine And Stroke

Bill Gasiamis 15:29
One of the things that happened is I didn't recognize my wife. Now, when you woke up from that situation, what were you left with? What were the things that you had to overcome and recover from? And how long did it take? Because for me, it took about 18 months for things to sort of start leveling off and get better before they got worse again, what was it like for you?

Kristin Brickel 15:53
So I thought it was interesting, because I, when I went into the hospital, I had to go alone, because with COVID, they wouldn't let anybody go with me. And so I went not being able to speak, and really not being able to communicate because it was my right side that was affected.

Kristin Brickel 16:14
And I'm right side dominant. So I couldn't write, I couldn't type I couldn't speak, I did recover my speech within about six hours. But I frequently was aphasic in that I wasn't saying the right words, or I couldn't come up with the word I meant.

Kristin Brickel 16:38
I would hear what somebody would say. But it would take me a very long time. And it still happens now when I'm tired trying to process what somebody's saying to me. So and I couldn't stand or control the arm.

Kristin Brickel 16:56
So like the initial period of time for about the first couple of days, I had I call it alien arm, my hand just kept kind of spinning in the air I actually accidentally punched the ER doctor who was very, very kind she was telling me you're going to recover everything and we're going to go out for steak.

Kristin Brickel 17:15
And as she was talking to me, and I was sitting there crying because I couldn't speak to her, I accidentally punched her in the face. I was like, in my head, at least I was saying that it didn't come out but I was trying.

Kristin Brickel 17:27

And I couldn't stop my foot from spinning. So the next day, they did try to get me up to walk like with a gait belt and a couple of people on either side of me to see if even though my foot was still kind of doing its own thing if I could emulate and thankfully, it's ironic I had bought a peloton in the December prior to all of this, so about six months prior.

Bill Gasiamis 18:00
Stationary bike kind of exercise thing, right?

Kristin Brickel 18:03
Yeah. And then we were pretty much in lockdown. So other than when I was working, I made sure if I wasn't commuting in and out of New York, to have to be physically in the clinics, I was making sure that I rode pretty much every day.

Kristin Brickel 18:21
And so I had strengthened my legs and my arms pretty well. So I was in pretty good shape, despite it all. And they said that actually helped me quite a bit because my blood flow was good.

Kristin Brickel 18:34
And it helps from a strength perspective. So even though my foot was sort of doing its own thing, the rest of the muscles were stabilizing. So I could kind of emulate a little bit with two people on either side of me and Walker.

Kristin Brickel 18:49
So they did try to move me around. And eventually by the time I went home, I could I could walk as long as it was fairly flat. And you know, I didn't have to go up or down stairs and that sort of thing. Up and down stairs was a little dicey. I certainly didn't do that alone. And I couldn't be alone for six weeks.

Kristin Brickel 19:11
Because I kept having mild seizures even once I actually had a major seizure three days after the stroke itself where I thought I was having a secondary stroke, because it was actually more severe than the first. The symptoms lasted longer. The speech did not come back for almost, I think 10 or 12 hours that time. And so I thought I was never going to speak again.

Bill Gasiamis 19:38
What's family life like a home. Do you live on your own or do you have people

around you?

Kristin Brickel 19:43
At the time I lived with my boyfriend. We were together for eight years at that point, and our two dogs and he was going out of his mind because he couldn't come to the hospital. And my mom was about 20 minutes away.

Kristin Brickel 19:57
So when I came home I used to joke that I went to daycare every day. Either he would drop me off at my parents before he went to work, or my mom would come down and work at our house when she could, so that somebody was with me all the time.

Kristin Brickel 20:16
But it was tough and actually thankfully, my uncle had done homecare physical therapy his whole career. And so he's the one who tried to help me rehab a lot of things. If not for him, I would not have probably thought to do some of the exercises that I did.

Kristin Brickel 20:34
Because I didn't really get any like, the person who came to evaluate me for OT was like, well, you're already too advanced. I was like, I can't do anything. What do you mean, I'm too advanced?

Common Struggle

Kristin Brickel 20:44
I can't move my hand with any purpose, I can't feed myself. I can't write. I can't brush my hair. I can't do anything he's like, but you can stack coins. Oh, that's helpful. Totally useful in my day to day, because that's what I have to do every day is stack coins.

Bill Gasiamis 21:01
Yeah, I know, it's very interesting. Before we started, I was talking about how we're not supposed to have anything in common you and I, we're from completely different parts of the world, you know, we don't know each other, we have nothing in common except this stroke thing.

Bill Gasiamis 21:19

And yet, we all struggle with the same struggles. The ability for me to get physical therapy, after the first and second bleed was zero. And I couldn't type an email, I didn't remember who came to visit me, I couldn't work, I couldn't drive, I couldn't go to the toilet.

Bill Gasiamis 21:39
Because I was too exhausted by the time I got back. There were so many issues and nobody thought that I needed to have physical therapy, or cognitive therapy, or an evaluation or anything.

Bill Gasiamis 21:54
And I went months and months without anybody saying anything except for my counselor, my psychologist who said to me, have you ever heard of a neuropsych? I said no, what's that? She said go and see a neuropsychologist because they're going to help you work out your cognitive deficits, and will give you some skills to help you improve them or overcome them will get better.

Bill Gasiamis 22:21
And I was like, okay, I'll do that. And we have a public system here, which you can access, but you have to wait for services but there's a long queue, or a lot of people waiting to get through. And again, it didn't occur to me to just go private, and pay whatever it costs, I think it was going to be four or $500 for that evaluation.

Bill Gasiamis 22:42
So I waited nine months to get access to a neuropsychologist through this public system. And in the nine months, things started to improve by themselves. And as the clot that had developed in my head started to get absorbed or dealt with by the head.

Bill Gasiamis 22:58
And it started to decrease in size, more and more of my brain came back online. So by the time I went to this evaluation, they were convinced that there was nothing wrong with me, and that I didn't need anything anyway.

Bill Gasiamis 23:11
And it's like dammit now you guys think that there was nothing wrong with me, like I'm pulling the wool over your eyes, which is not true. So that was interesting, accessing any type of service that was going to support and even

information, you know, being told that do this or look at that, or contact these people or have a look at this organization.

Bill Gasiamis 23:41
There was nothing of that as well. And I had to discover it all on my own. My wife had to help me discover it. It's just like, people with the worst kind of condition like a neurological condition where their brain is not working at the same time. And you're just sending them out there and you're expecting them to pick up the pieces on their own. It's so weird.

Kristin Brickel 24:07
And then you're exhausted.

Bill Gasiamis 24:10
What's even more weird is that I expected that that was unique in Australia, not the entire world.

Kristin Brickel 24:18
No, and I've actually had so many people reach out to me that are within the same age range or that have family members in the same age range that either have TBI or strokes that had similar experiences because we look fine.

Kristin Brickel 24:38
And so if you look fine. The assumption is you are fine. And because I recovered my speech in the hospital, the literally they would come in like I remember saying to my mom at one point, I haven't eaten in days, because they keep bringing in food and putting it on a tray across the room that I can't get to.

Intro 25:02
If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. Like, how long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse?

Intro 25:19
Doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to recoveryafterstroke.com where you

can download a guide that will help you it's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Intro 25:46
These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your condition. And they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery, head to the website. Now, recoveryafterstroke.com and download the guide, it's free.

Kristin Brickel 26:05
And then even when they bring it in front of me, I can't get it into my mouth because I can't feed myself because my hand isn't working and my left hand I was never great with. So you know, I'm trying here, but most of it's on my hospital gown or in my lap.

Kristin Brickel 26:22
So we're not doing so great here. Like I'm hungry and I'm cranky, and I have a headache. And there's a lady down the hall screaming, okay, it's not going well. And then, you know, just trying to get help, even in the hospital setting.

Kristin Brickel 26:37
So like you figure in acute setting, you get assistance. I wasn't so when I went home, forget about it. In fact, I remember they ordered my neurologist is fantastic. And I have to say he's, if not for him and my primary care doctor, I'm not sure I could have progressed the way I did.

Kristin Brickel 26:59
Because they're both very, they're pragmatic, but they're also stay on top of kind of current everything. I don't know when they sleep because they're with me constantly. But they are very, very holistic, and that they stay at the top of their field, but they also look at the whole person, you know, you're not just a 15 minute appointment.

Kristin Brickel 27:21
And so they were very cognizant of making sure that I wasn't getting too depressed, you know, that I was kind of taking care of myself, and how was I doing? And they knew they've known me for years. And so they knew me as a person before, and they could see the difference in me after.

Kristin Brickel 27:41
And so they knew where my deficits were inherently from that thankfully, to say, you know, I know you can't get assistance with this, but I recommend you work on you know, your dexterity or work on your fine motor work on speech, you know, what is working, what isn't working, that sort of thing.

Kristin Brickel 28:03
But if they didn't know me, so well, I'm not sure I would have done that. Or if I wasn't a nurse and hadn't helped other people. I'd seen go through it. I'm not sure I would have known what to do. And I was so tired that the thought of even looking for information. I mean, just getting through the day was exhausting. Nevermind researching.

Migraine And Stroke

Bill Gasiamis 28:24
Yeah, absolutely. So do you link your migraines? Do you personally link your migraines to this underlying condition that you didn't know about Maybe and has the migraines different? Have they changed change now?

Kristin Brickel 28:46
Yes. I actually I just was reading something a couple of weeks ago, ironically, about somebody that they believe was having was the article I was reading that had been having like many bleeds, they actually thought that for years their migraines were were not actually migraines, they were actually almost like small TIAs over time.

Kristin Brickel 29:11
And my neurologist has said that that's really my only risk factor was the migraines. And so because I started with them so young. I don't know. And I had a pretty major head injury in 2006 because I had a pretty bad head on collision. And so I don't know if that was a factor as well.

Kristin Brickel 29:35
Because I certainly you know, I went up and over an airbag with a seatbelt on so that certainly didn't help my brain or my skull. But that's really the only other impetus that could have potentially led to this, at least that I can backtrack to.

Kristin Brickel 29:56

And the migraines have changed such that I had I had a headache for probably the first three and a half to four months without relief. Now I get them more frequently than they did, I had gone almost 10 years where once I had the nerve stimulator implanted, and I had to retrain the nerves.

Kristin Brickel 30:21
I really very rarely got migraines anymore. I had just started getting them again in February of that year of 2020. So I do think there was some correlation there. And again, I they think I probably had COVID in like December, January.

Kristin Brickel 30:38
And so that may have led to all of it. But they've substantially changed in that I get them much more frequently I'm back to pretty much every couple of days. They have some version of a headache, whether it's knocking me out, or I deal with it. It's there.

Intro 30:58
Yeah. Interesting. Are you kind of thinking about any future incident? Do you have those concerns about is it going to happen again, or anything like that? What about that?

Kristin Brickel 31:13
Yeah, I will say it took me it was probably four or five months. Before I made the connection, that every Monday and Tuesday because it happened on a Wednesday, every Monday and Tuesday, I would frenetically try to get things done.

Kristin Brickel 31:34
And it didn't matter if it was cleaning, or when I went back to work if it was getting work done. But I would have this insane anxiety about getting things done on Monday and Tuesday. And it took me almost like five months to connect that I was doing it because I was afraid of having another one on a Wednesday, like Wednesday's started to scare me.

Kristin Brickel 31:55
And to this day, like I still don't always know when it's Wednesday, it's like my brain doesn't want to know that Wednesday's exist anymore. And it's been two years. So it's sort of funny. But I also, I had COVID, after two years, I officially was diagnosed with COVID.

Kristin Brickel 32:11
And I've had something like 35 COVID tests that were all negative in the span of the two years. I actually got COVID at the end of May. And then and I was okay was kind of mild, cold symptoms, actually, I thought I just had allergies, and felt better.

Kristin Brickel 32:30
And then a couple of weeks later felt really horrible. And I felt exactly like I did just prior to the stroke. And I started having the same exact pattern of symptoms that dizziness, the kind of fatigue, the off balance stuff, the mistyping, and I was like, oh, no and I immediately asked for an MRI.

Kristin Brickel 32:52
And I said, I know I'm being overly ridiculous, but I didn't do it last time. And so I don't want to just dismiss it. And my primary care doctor said, Listen, I can tell you, I've looked at your scans over and over again. It wouldn't have mattered if you went to the hospital sooner because I would have told you if you asked me not to get TPA.

Kristin Brickel 33:18
They wouldn't have changed the outcome, it actually would have potentially killed you because of the way the bleed happened. So he said I actually think to some extent that was like a protection for you.

MRI Induced A Seizure

Kristin Brickel 33:30
But he said, I will order the MRI because I know that you're scared. And when I had, the MRI actually induce a seizure it was the weirdest thing. But it did show that everything is in status quo.

Bill Gasiamis 33:49
Is it psychosomatic Did you have a part to play in that?

Kristin Brickel 33:54
No. So apparently, oddly enough, and I was like, did someone really think that might have been important to tell me two years ago, apparently, because of the area where the reason that I have the seizures is because of the area that was impacted because I wasn't epileptic prior even though I guess there's some folks

that believe that migraines are a form of seizure, but never officially.

Kristin Brickel 34:28
Because I had said to him it was the strange thing in the MRI, you know, when the signal sounds change, as it kind of moves around like it sounds strange. And it kind of like changes signal sound.

Kristin Brickel 34:41
So when it got to the third sound, I was like, I've never heard that sound before. And I mean, I've had so many MRIs. It was like, I never heard that sound before. And as soon as that sound changed, and I didn't recognize it, that's when the seizure started and I was like, Oh, come on.

Kristin Brickel 34:56
And then when the next signal sound came on, I recognized it, the seizure stopped. And the next signal sound because it's like five or six signals. The next one came on, I didn't recognize it again, it started again. And then the next one I recognize it stopped.

Kristin Brickel 35:11
It was the like, the creepiest experience, I was like, just no one see that this is happening is the person watching that screen not seeing what is going on. Meanwhile, I'm trying not to have a massive panic attack in this tube. But no one's monitoring my blood pressure or my pulse so they didn't know that I was having a panic check in there.

Kristin Brickel 35:33
But I always worry. What if it were to happen again? Because now I do live alone. And I mean, I was alone that day other than the dogs, because my ex was at work, but he would have come home eventually. So I do get a little bit overly cautious.

Bill Gasiamis 35:54
Yeah, fair enough. Better to be overly cautious than not at all, which we've been. And that doesn't end well. But you don't know what you don't know. So you behave appropriately. And then you learn hopefully you learn from that. And then you become more aware of yourself and your body and you take action quicker, hopefully.

Kristin Brickel 36:22

I won’t live in fear. Let me be clear, like I am afraid. But I also am mindful that I will live my life in fear. Because one of the things that taught me and this is, and I say this to people, and they think I’m crazy when I say it, but I actually feel like the stroke gave me back my life. As strange as that sounds.

Bill Gasiamis 36:41
So tell me about this you feel like the stroke gave you back your life situation. This is interesting.

Kristin Brickel 36:49
Yeah, don’t get me wrong. It’s it’s completely changed my life in that, like my relationship ended I left my job. That wasn’t my career for 20-plus years. It’s changed a lot, I can’t really be a full-time nurse anymore. Because the fatigue level that I have is just not sustainable for a typical 12-hour shift. I can do short shifts, but that’s difficult. I was an administrator, so I was doing really high-level function.

Kristin Brickel 37:21
And I could do it, but it was so taxing that I couldn’t do anything else. But when I say that I say it because it gave me a different perspective. And it took me a year for it to give me a different perspective, because for that first year I dug into, it’s taken everything, I won’t let it take anything else.

Kristin Brickel 37:46
And so I like bowled through like, bullied my way through that first year unsuccessfully, like miserably, unsuccessfully. Just trying to like return to normal. And that wasn’t really normal. I wasn’t me. I wasn’t my old self. But I was trying to be and everybody expected me to be because I looked like me. And I talked like me.

The Dramatic Changes After The Migraine And Stroke

Kristin Brickel 38:12
And if they caught me at the right time, I could think quickly. And like one of my colleagues said to me one day, you’re still quicker than most people. And I said, Well, I think I should say thank you. But not really sure. Because you’re catching

me around 9:30 In the morning, so I'm still pretty good. Ask me that again at 1:00 I probably won't say that.

Kristin Brickel 38:38
But it was because I knew that was kind of my world. Like I knew that environment so well that I could do a lot of responses almost automatically, because it had just been my universe for so long. And a year went by almost well actually a full year went by and I started to realize that I just would not do what I was doing I was just repeating the same pattern that had led to the stroke of this high stress and no downtime and not taking care of myself.

Kristin Brickel 39:19
And so I started to really back off and try to take care of myself, which ultimately led to my leaving the job. And when I did that I took some time to really evaluate the prior year and like look at it and thought, wow, what was I thinking? And so it led me to a path that I'm really grateful for where I was able to really kind of blame myself again that I gotten lost along the way.

Kristin Brickel 39:48
And that I never want to go back to that last person again. And I don't believe that that's if the stroke had happened. If the stroke hadn't happened, I don't believe I would have gotten there because I had just gotten into this, like hamster wheel pattern.

Bill Gasiamis 40:05
That's so powerful. This is exactly my experience. It's so weird, you know, it took me maybe three or four years to get to that point. But something significant happened in the first 12 months, which was that I went in discovered, did this course, you know, first time, you know that I'd ever done a course that was about kind of self help type, of course.

Bill Gasiamis 40:28
But it was about connecting with your heart and discovering how your head operates, and then your gut and all that type of stuff, it was called mBraining multiple brain integration techniques. And what it helped me do was discover that I was on a path previously, that was not sustainable.

Bill Gasiamis 40:49
And it wasn't what led to the bleed in my head, the bleed in my head was as a

result of an AVM. But I had done a lot of things to support the AVM to not be healthy, and to pop and all that type of thing. I was like, Okay, I get it. So. So it's, there's an AVM there. But I'm creating the perfect storm around that for it to do its thing.

Bill Gasiamis 41:12
And I need to stop doing that stuff. And I don't think I ever would have stopped being the guy that I was before stroke, if I hadn't been through that experience. So I really relate to what you're saying. So a lot of things changed for you after stroke, your job changed your relationship status changed. What other things changed? And were all of those of your choosing?

Kristin Brickel 41:50
Most were not of my choosing the I was terrified to go back to work. And at the same time, I felt like it was the only thing that I still knew. Because ironically, I still couldn't write or type. A week before I went, I was due to go back, like when I leave was going to run out. And because of the position that I had, I had full pay for the period of time that I was out.

Kristin Brickel 42:16
And then once that date hit, it was going to drop, like my pay was going to drop my benefits were going to go to to full cost etc. and I was terrified because I thought I can't afford that we can't afford that house I was covering my boyfriend is a domestic partner.

Kristin Brickel 42:33
And so we can't afford this so that Okay, I gotta go back to work. And a week prior, I still couldn't write or type. And I was like, how am I going to do this? Like, what am I gonna do, I'm gonna have to record every meeting and then take the time to do what with it because I still couldn't do anything with those recordings. And I thought, I am not gonna be able to process it.

Kristin Brickel 42:56
And so I got on the phone with my boss to make a plan to kind of step back into my job slowly. And when I got on the phone with her, I sat down like I always did with a notebook and a pen because I'm a compulsive note-taker. And I could write perfectly. And I mean, perfect penmanship and if I showed you like the page before, and the page of notes I wrote with her, I got off the phone and burst into

tears, because it was like, what just happened?

Kristin Brickel 43:27
I felt like I was having an out-of-body experience, it was the most bizarre thing. And the next day, I got a phone call about a doctor's appointment, and I couldn't write the date, and the time that they called to tell me. So it was like I could only write notes, if they were related to work. That would've been my first clue that it was not healthy.

Kristin Brickel 43:50
Because that was all my brain could operate on. Because that's all I had been doing and so my boyfriend at the time, hated my job thought that it was taking up too much time wich it was and I was commuting. And then he really didn't want me to go back to work. But he was also concerned about the financial piece as well because you know, just the reality of that.

Kristin Brickel 44:15
So he was sort of semi-supportive, but concerned and trying to convince me to do something different. And I was just bullheaded about it because I thought well, I just wrote page notes. So what's the problem here like this is obviously going to be good for me.

Kristin Brickel 44:30
Totally irrational, or at least I had convinced myself that was rational at the time. And so when I went back to work, the fatigue and the absolute I mean, the second day that I was back, I literally got to about one o'clock and my full body just shut down. I couldn't even function and I didn't start till nine that day, which is was late for me.

Kristin Brickel 44:54
And by one o'clock I was so exhausted, that I couldn't even formulate a sentence, I had to force myself to go and lay down. And I slept for four and a half hours, because I was just so tired. So fast forward a couple of months to this argument that we had.

Kristin Brickel 45:15
And he said, I'm done, I can't do this, I can't watch you kill yourself, you know, like, I can't do it. And we subsequently made peace with the fact that we needed some time and space because he wasn't dealing with it either. So there was lots of

other factors there. But he had asked me to move out. So I did, and that was devastating. And so then I threw myself further into work.

Kristin Brickel 45:45
Not great. And then work started falling apart, because I really couldn't do it, I really physically couldn't maintain the level that I needed to do what I what I was doing. And so over the course of time, I took a couple of weeks off intersperse to kind of try to decompress.

Kristin Brickel 46:07
And, you know, we went straight from heavy COVID, to COVID vaccinations to this, it was always something, there was always something coming up. And somehow I always ended up, I'm very organized and meticulous. And so I would always end up being the point person, because I didn't ever say no. And very type A, and so people different depended on that. And I jus couldn't maintain it. And so at the end of it, it was a mutual decision to just say, this isn't working.

Bill Gasiamis 46:45
It sounds familiar, a lot of people would relate to that, trying to get back to your old life or your previous life or the same stage you're at, or I'm not sure what the word is, but, and then having a realization that you can't. And then the great part is a lot of people have a realization that they shouldn't, because it wasn't healthy.

Bill Gasiamis 47:08
And because it was leading to serious ill health. And I think the blessing is is that you got away with it, to an extent as in, you know, still above ground. And I'm the same and the people who have been on this podcast are the same. So we've had that second chance, we've had the opportunity to reevaluate.

Living Your Passion

Bill Gasiamis 47:28
And people who are early on in their journey, hopefully are listening to this, and they're going, Oh, okay, here's maybe another sign that I should pay attention to the changes that I need to make in my life. And it is possible to live life similar but in a different way, in a more supportive or more gentle way.

Bill Gasiamis 47:52

And I'm proof of that your proof of that I have every Friday off from my job from work to be here to make sure that I can interview people on my podcast, and do all the admin side that's necessary, that would never have been possible before my old life, it wouldn't have been possible for me to do that.

Bill Gasiamis 48:15
As a result might work an hour or two extra Monday to Thursday, just to fit in all the things that need to be done. But that gives me this amazing opportunity to be here on a Friday, your Thursday, and do these interviews. And then also, sometimes they lead to Saturday.

Bill Gasiamis 48:38
And Saturday might be a half day or full day. But that allows me to live my passion to express myself to meet people that are similar to me from around the world to have amazing conversations. And I didn't realize how much I needed that in my life.

Bill Gasiamis 48:56
And I don't know that I ever would have found that I only would have been hanging out with work people talking work stuff, speaking with clients, spending Saturdays running around for them, and all that type of thing. And I never would have got to experience this side of it. So and you know what's great is it didn't come to me consciously or it wasn't. It wasn't something that I planned out.

Bill Gasiamis 49:25
I fell into a podcast don't ask me how you fall into a podcast whole thing, right? But you do. It kinda was an idea. I tried it out. And it happened and then I kept doing it. And then what I kept doing was looking for ways to solve problems that were related to the podcast little problems like, what microphone should I use? I just solved that problem for the next month or two.

Bill Gasiamis 49:52
I didn't try and solve another one. Then editing was an issue and then uploading that was an issue with all these things. And I kind of just kept rolling with it and found that I had this other skill, I suppose. And I love it. And that's as a result of the stroke. So I know where you're coming from, I totally get it. What is your work life like now? How much of it do you do?

Kristin Brickel 50:23

So I actually right now I'm just doing and I don't say just because it's still a lot of work. But I'm doing network marketing for now. Because it allows me to kind of flex my time and do a lot. And what I didn't realize similar to what you were just talking about, I didn't realize that I had a bunch of sort of random skill sets that I'd picked up over the years, because of some of the different jobs and because I'd always been that go to person that I've always wanted to get things done.

Kristin Brickel 50:55
So if somebody else couldn't do it, I try to figure it out. I'd google it, I'd YouTube it, whatever I'd figure it out. And I had a lot of random skill sets that I have started to refine and build, and I'm actually kind of good at some of them, and I enjoy them.

Kristin Brickel 51:10
So it's been fun to kind of take a lot of the pieces of my job that I used to enjoy, and still do them and take, like, I love taking care of people I love it. And so I can still do that in a different way. So I'm still doing health and wellness, I'm still helping people, but it's just in a different way and that's okay.

Kristin Brickel 51:33
And I've helped a lot of people along the way, just in sharing my story. To understand that you can be okay. You know, I've had people that I work with reach out to me and say, I can't believe you had a stroke, like I didn't know, like, you gap happened. True story.

Kristin Brickel 51:57
Or people that, you know, I went to school with years ago, and a lot of folks have said, you know, I'm grateful that I've heard your story, because at least I know, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. It's not, there isn't, because I think some people assume, and like I did a lot with I tried to do a fair amount of stroke awareness anyway.

Kristin Brickel 52:19
But during May, which is National Stroke Awareness Month, in the US, I did a fair amount of videos where I said, you know, when you think of stroke, what do you think of? I want you to think of me because people don't think of younger people having strokes. And and we actually are a pretty big group. And it's like people always assume it's an older, sicker person. And it's not.

Bill Gasiamis 52:45
Yeah, it's huge. It's huge. I mean, you're 40 and I was 37. And I've interviewed so many people between the ages, who had their stroke between the ages of say 30 and 50. It's just intense. Most of the people on my podcast more than 220 people or something, we're between that age group, I imagine there's a few of them, only a few of them that weren't.

Bill Gasiamis 53:11
And that might just be a sign of the fact that it's Instagram or people, or that aren't on the I don't know, but very, very young thing, that many of us have got a lot of wrinkles on our faces yet. So emotionally, you're what cognitively and you know, mentally it sounds like you're pretty able to commit yourself of everything. And, you know, use your brain to get out of a lot of challenges or problems or things that are going wrong, emotionally.

Emotional Well-being

Bill Gasiamis 53:44
How are you like emotionally? Because you went through not only the emotional rollercoaster of stroke, but also then the emotional rollercoaster of you know, being in a breakup that ended an eight-year relationship. So have you become aware that you need to do some work in that space?

Kristin Brickel 54:08
Yeah, so it's ironic because at the time, I just dove further into work, which was the initial which puts the whole basis of the problem. And then when work was taken away to, I really had to like, look at myself, and which is why I say now I can look at it.

Kristin Brickel 54:28
Now I can be cognizant and more aware of myself, emotionally and mentally because very early on, I was just angry and frustrated all the time. And angry because nobody was understanding that I was just exhausted and getting through my day was like, earth shattering ly exhausting. angry because nobody could understand that.

Kristin Brickel 54:53
Just because I was a week didn't mean I was able to have a full on conversation or

that You know, at six o'clock at night, trying to converse with me, that's probably not going to end well. And so it took, actually having everything removed to dig into all of that.

Kristin Brickel 55:13
And once I started to, I really started to look at, Why did I let work kind of consume me? What was I sort of running away from what was kind of the root of that. And a lot of it was just, you know, we had to like, my ex, and I had stopped communicating.

Kristin Brickel 55:33
And instead of dealing with that, we just both kind of dove into work independently. And so it once I had to start looking at that, I was like, Okay, what was my part in that? You know, I can't speak for him. But, you know, I can identify what pieces I think were his part in it too. And so we've spoken sense about those things and identified kind of where we both went wrong.

Kristin Brickel 55:56
But it took that full year to really be able to do that. And even now, there are times I think to myself, Lord, why? You know, I say to people all the time, if it won't matter in five minutes, five weeks, five days, you know, that whole thing, don't let it bother you.

Kristin Brickel 56:12
But if you said that to me two years ago, I would have been like, yeah, okay, whatever. I'm pissed off right now. But now I really try not to let it bother me. Or I will say it out loud. And I'm like, Okay, I'm moving in. Because it isn't worth my energy. I don't have enough energy to waste. And maybe that's the crux of it is I don't have the energy to to spend on it anymore.

Bill Gasiamis 56:35
Yeah, I noticed how much more emotional dramas drain me. So if I have a fallout with my wife, or if I do the wrong thing, like I do, from time to time. And then it blows up, because I think I'm not wrong, or I think I'm right, and I'm trying to convince her and I'm trying to make her wrong, or whatever I've been doing, I find that I used to have stamina.

Bill Gasiamis 57:03
You know, in the old days, when I was younger, I could go for two weeks, sticking

to my guns and being arrogant and being obnoxious, and being all those things, and then giving her a hard time for two weeks. By the time I got to the end of those two weeks, I actually didn't know what the hell I was upset about, or angry about. It had been such a long time, I'd forgotten what the cause of the argument was.

Bill Gasiamis 57:31
And it was just my 20-year-old self trying to navigate away through not knowing anything about you know, being dumb, pretty much 20-year-old, who doesn't know anything about anything. And then, recently, after all the stroke stuff, it's like, man, I want to resolve it within minutes if I can. Because if I resolve it in minutes, then I don't have to have the low energy that it takes to get through for a week or two. A it's not good for my wife, or me it's not healthy. There's nothing good about it. It's usually always trivial.

Bill Gasiamis 58:14
And I try to just resolve it as quickly as possible. So the other day, I said something stupid. That wasn't derogatory, or that kind of rude. It was just something dumb. And of course, she lost it at me. And then I was shocked why did she lose it at me? And then it was like, Oh, hang on a sec. Did I say something wrong? Did I stuff up? I did. I tried to apologize. But she had an appointment to go to she jumped in the car and stormed off. And then I rang her, and she didn't answer.

Bill Gasiamis 58:51
And then I let it sit for about 10 minutes or 15. And then I rang her back and said, Let me apologize. Just let me apologize. And she said what are you going to apologize for? And then I told her all the things I was going to apologize for and then she accepted it because it was legitimate.

Bill Gasiamis 59:10
My apology was legitimate. I was an idiot. I said the wrong thing. I overreacted I gave her the whole spiel of what I did wrong. And then when she came back, she was still a little bit you know, sniggly, you know, she was kind of not wrapped with me. She wasn't gonna just let me get away with it. And the next day it was completely gone.

Bill Gasiamis 59:10

But that's a skill that I wish I had a long time ago I would have wasted way less time on idiotic things. And now I just try and get it out of the way like within minutes for oh my god, I've done the wrong thing again, okay. Full on into apology mode, and I'm trying to learn not to do it again. I'm not so good at learning not to be an idiot that just happens.

Bill Gasiamis 59:59
But I am really Good at apologizing for my behavior and stopping the drama from spreading to the next day and the day after that. And if we've got a lovely event coming up into the lovely event, you know, that's three or four days down the road.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:17
It just has to be that way. Because energy is so precious and emotionally, like if I have an argument with somebody like that I can't get anything else done, I can't be productive anywhere else really takes away my ability to be productive.

Dealing With Emotions

Kristin Brickel 1:00:36
I used to be able to multitask the anger and something. After the stroke, it was like the anger overtook everything, the frustration overtook everything. So it was, and I still don't multitask well anymore. Not that anyone truly multitasks. I mean, they've proven that over and over, nobody actually multitasks.

Kristin Brickel 1:00:58
But we believe we do. But what I used to be able to do simultaneously even putting like a TV on at the same time, I'm doing something I can't do that. I squirrel, I am easily distracted. And I never was I could I could really focus. And that is I can but I can be easily distracted. So I have to be cognizant of that. And I just don't have the energy to spare.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:31
Yeah, mindful is a word that's overused and comes up. For me when you're saying that it sounds like you have to be mindful on the task. You have to pay attention to the task that you're doing and do that well. And not think about everything else that you're thinking about plus trying to do that task, because then that task doesn't get done well.

Kristin Brickel 1:01:53
Or it takes me four times as long.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:59
Yep. I think a lot of people will relate to this stuff, because it's a very similar conversation that I've had with a lot of other people I've interviewed about in stroke is how, you know, things become there's kind of a level of complexity that stroke creates, but then it teaches you a level of making things not complex, like trying to break them down to basic tasks, and not overdoing it.

Kristin Brickel 1:02:31
Keeping it simple, where I used to be very, I'm still a complex thinker, but I used to, I think, make things harder than they had to be. Sometimes just to layer it and other times, probably just unnecessarily and then I try to keep things as simple as possible, because again, it's from an energy conservation perspective, like I think of that analogy with the the battery.

Kristin Brickel 1:03:02
As a stroke survivor, like you just your battery doesn't recharge as well, it doesn't stay charged as long and it takes longer to recharge. And that's truly the best example. Because it is so difficult to recharge like I had an event this weekend. And I was going going going and so it's Thursday, and I'm still trying to recover from three days ago.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:29
Yes, the whole planning the next two or three days of recovery, when you know you want to go somewhere and do something that you must go and do because you'd love it or it's going to be fun or whatever. And then knowing that I've got to do nothing for the next two or three days to get able to have time periods.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:50
That's so weird. I remember that whole situation, you know, learning about that at the beginning, which was our main or that was such a fun time. Why am I so wiped out for three days. And then it's like, okay, it happened again, and it happened again, a nail, it's, we're gonna have a fun time.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:10
And then we've got nothing planned for the following day at all. And I hate my fun days, I like Fridays or Saturdays so that I've got a day ahead of me where I can

rest and recover. And that amount of days has decreased over time, by the way. So it used to be a whole bunch of days now it's a day or half a day where where I have to have nothing to do so that I can kind of recharge the battery. Yeah, exactly, give it more time to recharge.

Kristin Brickel 1:04:44
And I have seen it shorten even in a couple of years it shortened a little bit. Not quite as much as I'd like it to. But I also really pushed the envelope this past weekend and probably farther than I have in a very long time and I didn't feel good to begin with. So not feeling great. And then pushing it was like, I can do this, I can do this.

Kristin Brickel 1:05:09
And my Sunday night, I was like, I can't do this. I can't do this anymore. I looked at my friend of mine that I was rooming with in the hotel, and I said, I can't keep going. My brain is totally against the wall and sliding down it. And we're gonna fall flat on our face and 10 minutes after I said that I'd like tripped going up the stairs. And I was like, see? See, this is what starts to happen this is not good.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:36
So now looking forward into the future, what do you hope you're going to achieve and overcome? What's the next phase? Have you planned it? Are you planning? Are you just taking it month by month?

Kristin Brickel 1:05:57
Taking it month by month. I mean, I have goals. But I think where I used to have, you know, kind of a three-year and a five-year plan and all of this stuff. Since everything happened, I realized that I mean, I have three months and not to be morbid, I don't mean that I'm going to die in three months. But I kind of tried to chunk things up into quarters to a degree, you know, kind of what am I doing for the next quarter? What am I doing for the next, you know, six months?

Kristin Brickel 1:06:32
And that's probably about as far out as I think right now. Unless it's something that has to be planned further out. Not that I don't have bigger goals, but I sort of keep them very much on the sideline and adapt and adjust as I need to. I'm much more adaptable than I used to be, I was never a very good go with the flow kind of person.

Kristin Brickel 1:06:54
And I still like to plan. Still a planner, but I'm much more adaptable than I used to be out of necessity. And so my biggest level of planning is is kind of what we were just talking about, like, Okay, I know that this is coming up, I need to make sure that I blocked time before and after, so that I can enjoy it. You know, there's a wedding here, I need to make sure that I have you know, a day before and a day after, so that I can really be present.

Kristin Brickel 1:07:22
But I try to make sure I'm really present for things and encourage other people to do the same. So my biggest goal in life, outside of you know, kind of overarching things is just to make sure that I can have a positive impact on the world. And that sounds very lofty. But that's really, that's really it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:43
It sounds like also you've removed deadlines, and therefore you're giving yourself more space to get to somewhere. And that's really helpful, because therefore there's less disappointment and less opportunity to give yourself a hard time. Oh, my gosh, I haven't reached my deadline. And I'm never going to do this and going through all that stuff.

Kristin Brickel 1:08:04
Yeah, I mean, I still set like objectives, you know, like, I want to do this by here, when I used to beat myself up if I didn't, I don't anymore, because I really evaluate, did I not get there because I didn't try hard enough or I didn't do the work? Or did I not get there because something else happened or got in the way or whatever.

The Importance Of Self-Compassion

Kristin Brickel 1:08:31
I'm much more realistic and kind to myself, I was always kind to other people about stuff like that I could give my team's leeway about why they couldn't Oh, well, your child was sick, or your mom was sick, I could do all of that for them. But when it came to me, there was no excuse, there was no leeway. And I was mean to myself, I had no compassion for myself. And I've learned to give myself some grace.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:01
Self-compassion, that is an awesome thing for people to remember. And isn't it interesting, you know, I often help people and support people coach people as well through this. And I say to them, if you were the person coaching and supporting somebody, and you're giving advice to that person about something, you know, what would you say to them, and then they would come up with all these amazing things to say to them and all that type of great, that's the right thing to do.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:32
Now, take some of your own advice. Because you're the same person, you're just as important. You need the same level of understanding and support and you need to give yourself a break at we're our own worst critics. And we can be our own worst enemies. But many people wouldn't speak to their friends the way they speak to themselves.

Kristin Brickel 1:09:59
No. And I say that to people all the time. And that's become kind of my mantra to people is, if you are saying something to yourself, even if it's in your own head, and even not out loud that you wouldn't say to your mother, your father, your best friend, then stop saying it to yourself, because what you think, is exactly how you're gonna feel. And it eats you from the inside out, so don't do it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:30
And on that great piece of advice, thank you so much for reaching out and being on the podcast. Thank you.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:37
This was a pleasure. Thanks for joining us on today's episode to learn more about my guests, including to get their links to their social media and other pages and to download a full transcript of the entire interview. Please go to recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes.

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:52
If you'd like to support this podcast, the best way to do it is to leave a five-star review and a few words about what the show means to you on iTunes, and on Spotify. If you're watching on YouTube, comment below the video like the episode and to get notifications of future episodes, subscribe to the show, and hit the

notification bell.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:11
Sharing the show with family and friends on social media. We'll make it possible for people who may need this type of content to find it easier. And that may make a massive difference to someone that is on the road to recovery after their own experience with stroke. Thanks again for being here and listening. I really appreciate you and see you on the next episode.

Intro 1:11:29
Importantly, we present many podcasts designed to give you an insight and understanding into the experiences of other individuals opinions and treatment protocols discussed during any podcast are the individual's own experience and we do not necessarily share the same opinion nor do we recommend any treatment protocol discussed.

Intro 1:11:46
All content on this website at any length blog, podcast or video material controlled this website or content is created and produced for informational purposes only and is largely based on the personal experience of Bill Gasiamis.

Intro 1:11:59
The content is intended to complement your medical treatment and support healing. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice and should not be relied on as health advice the information is general and may not be suitable for your personal injuries, circumstances or health objectives.

Intro 1:12:14
Do not use our content as a standalone resource to diagnose treat, cure or prevent any disease for therapeutic purposes or as a substitute for the advice of a health professional. Never delay seeking advice or disregard the advice of a medical professional, your doctor or your rehabilitation program based on our content.

Intro 1:12:31
If you have any questions or concerns about your health or medical condition, please seek guidance from a doctor or other medical professional. If you are experiencing a health emergency or think you might be, call 000 if in Australia or your local emergency number immediately for emergency assistance or go to the

nearest hospital emergency department.

Intro 1:12:48
Medical information changes constantly. While we aim to provide current quality information in our content. We did not provide any guarantees and assume no legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, currency or completeness of the content.

Intro 1:13:01
If you choose to rely on any information within our content you do so solely at your own risk. We are careful with links we provide however third-party links from our website are followed at your own risk and we are not responsible for any information you find there.