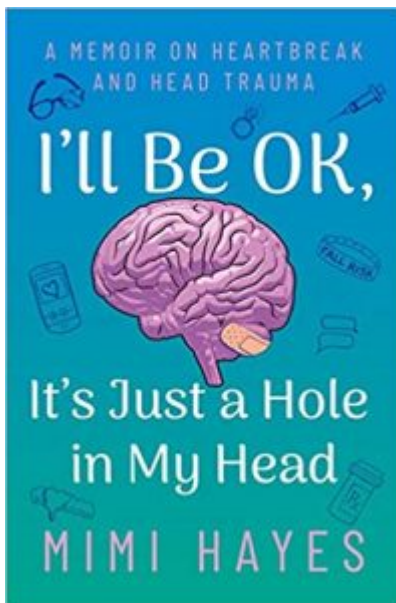


Mimi Hayes - I'll Be Ok It's Just A Hole In My Head

Mimi Hayes - A Memoir on Heart Break and Head Trauma



Mimi Hayes is a New York-based comedian and author of the memoir *"I'll Be OK, It's Just a Hole in My Head."* A former high school teacher and brain injury survivor, Hayes wrote her first humorous memoir while recovering from a traumatic head injury at twenty-two.

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Mimi Hayes 0:00

Writing the book was a form of therapy for me. It was, it was, it was terrifically awful, you know, writing it because it was so painful to go through all these things again, and for my family to even like recounted it again, and re, you know, relive it. And that was hard for all of us. Because it's so traumatic, you know, and you know, the moment that it's something I talked about on stage now to is the moment that they told me that, you know, you're, and they didn't even tell me they said my mom is my mom, I was in the ER with her. And he said, Your daughter reigns bleeding. And when that happened, I didn't know. I thought I would die right there.

Intro 0:50

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

Bill 0:57

So, Mimi, welcome to the program.

Mimi Hayes 1:02

Thank you so much for having me.

Bill 1:03

Good morning. Over there, your time. Thank you for waking up at 7 a.m. to be on the podcast.

Mimi Hayes 1:09

Oh, yes. Is there anything for a podcast?

Bill 1:14

Hey, I came across your Instagram post. That's where I find all my guests for the podcast. Instagram is such an excellent place to find people. And I decided to get in touch with it because of the name of your book. Show it off to us briefly and tell us what it's called.

Mimi Hayes Book

Mimi Hayes 1:35

Yes, it is called I'll be OK. It's just a hole in my head. A Memoir on heartbreak and head trauma by Mimi Hayes. That's my book.

Bill 1:46

That's amazing. We'll talk about that in a little bit. But before we do, can you tell me a little bit about what happened to you?

Stressed Out



Mimi 1:54

Yeah, so in 2014, I was becoming a high school teacher. I was in Colorado five days into my student teaching job. And I started feeling tired. And I was dizzy. And some of these things were just things I've never experienced before, you know, a bunch of nausea, and you know, dizziness, stumbling off curbs. And after a couple of

rounds of being misdiagnosed with a couple of different ridiculous things, they finally found that I had a cavernous angioedema that had, you know, hemorrhaged into a structure of cells that have had a parent been there my entire life. And, you know, probably because of stress is my theory, that little structure, you know, I stroked into that little nugget.

And at first, they said, you know, it's, it's a little too dangerous to touch it right now. So, you know, go back home and chill out. And, you know, rest up and see if it will maybe go back to normal, which sometimes it does. In my case, I was at home, my parent's house in Aurora, and over a month, I lost half my ability and

half my body as any stroke victim would have. My speech became a little slurred, and my vision was double. I was losing my taste, which was tragic because I love food. And all the while, I didn't know how to deal with this information. And so one of my friends said, you know, want to write a book about it.

And I didn't have anything better to do. So I did, but I couldn't use my left hand. So, I was typing with my right hand. And I was like, wow, this will take a long time. Suppose I'm writing this just with one hand. Eventually, I had brain surgery. And because they had gotten too big for that, they said, OK, it's pretty dangerous now; if you can't taste, it's moving towards your Brain stem.

So I went in and did a surgery, it was a smashing success. But I still had to do two weeks of intensive therapy after the fact, which was a blessing. Because I relearned how to walk, I learned how to see, fix my vision, very DIY, you know, with a piece of tape over my glasses. Everything happened quickly; my Brain was wiring back together, and I went home. And within a few months, I was back in the classroom.

Intro 4:45

If you've had a stroke and are in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be; you're likely to have many questions going through your mind. Like, how long will it take to recover? Will I recover? What things should I avoid? In case I make matters worse, doctors will explain things. But because you've never had a stroke, you probably don't know what questions to ask. If this is you, you may miss out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery.

If you find yourself in that situation, stop whining and head to recoveryafterstroke.com, where you can download a guide to help you. It's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke. 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, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery. Head to the website now, recoveryafterstroke.com, and download the free guide.

Mimi Hayes 5:54

After brain surgery, I was teaching again. And I haven't stopped moving since then. But yeah, that's kind of the short of it.

Bill 6:06

Wow, that's a that's a great outcome. Firstly, so well done. Congratulations, amen. All those things, you know, whatever we need to do to win, need to pay, pay thanks to something or someone because that is a great outcome. Really? How old were you? When did it happen?

Mimi Hayes 6:30

I was 22. I was 22

Mimi Hayes 6:33

Right, which is still crazy, right? But you know,

I also didn't take on the stroke word until this year, and I still feel kind of, you know, like, should I? Because it's, you know, I always call it my, you know, my Brain hemorrhage. I had a bleeding, you know, it's like, Well, yeah, that's, that's a stroke. You know, like that's. So I think no matter what you call it, like, I think, yeah, the word stroke doesn't have a certain kind of weight behind it and the seriousness to it that I never really took on until this whole community of, you know, stroke survivors and cavernous angioma, people. And there's so many of us out there that are looking for each other, you know, so it's found me,

Bill 7:18

Yes, it is astonishing that I found you. There are so many. I was also surprised about the number of people I've interviewed on the podcast so far who have had AVMs, another name for arteriovenous malformation, who said they had this same thing. And a lot of them put it down to stress as well. So it was interesting that you said that because I was worried then. And the people I've interviewed in previous episodes also told me that they were going through, you know, often for large amounts of work and tough times emotionally, or family problems, things like that. So it was interesting that you said stress, so what was stressful in your life then? You're 22. You're not supposed to be stressed about anything; you're considered to be having a break.

Mimi Hayes 8:11

Yeah, um, so teaching was crazy. It is for context, too, and this is also in the book. But I had just gotten out of a five-year-long relationship. And a huge, you know, my first ever heartbreak was right after I graduated college. So it's like, OK, you're an adult, OK, also, this isn't going to work out the way you thought it would. And also, you got to teach. So, like, you know, I tried to focus my efforts.

After the heartbreak, I was just like, OK, all right, you know, I did a bunch of things to distract myself from that and got into the classroom.

And it was just wild, you know, like, it was just nothing can prepare you for a room of teenagers, you know, on you, even the first week of school is like, you know, kind of an easier week, I guess because you're not in the thick of it yet, you're still in the like, OK, I'm getting to know you phases, but just all the meetings and trying to keep up with all the information. I think now of all this stuff I had to keep track of, you know, and all the things I had to do every day. And it's interesting, you know, I don't, this might be in the book, I can't remember.

But when I was teaching, after, after the bleeding, and things were like, even crazier, because I was like now leading with a brain hemorrhage that had just healed a second ago. You know, but as I was in the classroom with my teacher, I was still a student teacher; for the first time, I had to get through that stage before I got into my classroom. But every afternoon, I would wash the coffee pots and like to do the dishes in the teacher's lounge.

And my other teacher collaborating teacher would catch me, and she'd be like, you don't have to do that. And I was like, No, I do this is the only thing I have control over. The only thing predictable in this career is washing this coffee pot. And that was just like a symbol for teaching. It was just so unpredictable. And, you know, you think you know what you're getting into, and you just really don't. And so that was that was teaching wild.

An Overdue Apology

Bill 11:31

I apologize to those teenagers because I haven't been able to apologize to my teachers. And as a teenager, I was one of those students teachers didn't want to have.

Mimi Hayes 10:48

You know, thank you. Thank you so much. Many of my students have returned and said, Hey, sorry. Yeah, we love you. And they see what I'm doing now since I've allowed them to add me on social media. And, you know, they listen to things that I'm doing. And some of them even came to my book launch, which was cute.

And they think I'm so calm. They're like, wow, you're like doing these things. You know, you were just there with us in that classroom. And we were giving you such a hard time.

And now you're like a published author, like, yeah, I did that. While grading your papers, I was writing a book, and I had to negotiate between those two, which was hard because I felt this story coming out of me; I was like, this is a significant story to tell. But I also have to, like, do this job. And, do be a good teacher, so it was to negotiate the ill 11:46

And you're also dealing with recovery from a significant, which is pretty severe.

Mimi Hayes 11:51

Oh, yeah, yeah, severe, forget about that. Yeah, yeah, that adds a whole new layer to life.

Bill 12:00

What I love isn't great now that the children can follow you. And they can see the error of their ways before they get to 44. Like me, and they can go, wow, she was pretty cool. She was just with us; she was helping us out. And she was doing all these things. I never got to do that until I reflected a long, long, long, long time later when my children became teenagers. And I saw what a pain in the bum they were for their teachers, and when I met these teachers, they were incredible. And all that we're terrific to do is teach them.

And although we're trying to support them, they were trying to do that for likely hundreds of students every day, and all they got was grief back by 99% of them. We have this thing in Australia where everyone says, You know what? When I say everyone in the media, when issues come up with teachers' pay and 'entitlements and teachers' stress levels, Everyone talks about it as being one of the whinges about they have more public holidays than most people because you have term break holidays, and, you know, long, long break. But you don't. Teachers and teachers don't seem to benefit much more than the average person when they have these additional holidays. Would that be appropriate 13:23

Teaching is just being in a trench, like a big old channel during wartime. And it never ends, like, even during the summer, right? Eyes kept shortening. I was amazed by this, like, Eye first year. I was like, Oh, yeah, I have three whole months. And then it was like, No, you have two and a half. And you're like, OK,

the glowing year, it's like, two, you get these like summers, right? But it's like, during the summer, you're also working like you're working to like you are relaxing, you're getting to like, you know, I was writing a lot during my summers.

But then you also have, like, this month, kind of school where you have to, like, lesson plan again, get your curriculum ready, like go to meetings, go to training, get in your classroom again, and organize it again, and clean up because it's all dusty, and you know, get everything ready. And I spent so many hours in my classrooms, making them so cute. They were adorable. I had all these. I think that's what drew me to teaching in the first place. Let's clarify: It was, like, the design of a classroom. I probably could have been like an interior de/restraining/restraining., No, I have to be a teacher because I like how the classroom looks.

But you get in there, and I would decorate it and make it so cute. And, then, you know, all those pretty things I'd put on the walls slowly started to get ripped off during the year. And, I'll never forget, I had these pens that my friend gave me with these flowers. Because kids, you know, they slowly take their utensils, you know, during the year they forget their pencils, whatever. So I'm like, Hey, this is my pen, you can borrow it, my friend gave it to me, it's got a cute flower on it so that you won't take it. Right. And within a day, all the flowers were ripped up in those pens. They're like on the ground; the kids steal them. I'm like, Are you serious?

Bill 15:26

That's my friend's gift

Mimi Hayes 15:29

That's me, you know, so it's like, they wreck everything. But um, you know, the thought is like, oh, like, this is easy. Do you have a structure? Your 7 to 3? No, we're 24/7. I mean, there was never a time that I wasn't thinking about my job, that I wasn't emailing or calling, I mean, calling. Amount ripped up in wrapped pens that restroom; nobody was there. It was huge, and I was in the early stages of your years. I years a whole lot. And I want well. And I wanted to, you know, see the kwascce successful didn't happen. When society says that, that's what I'm doing at that time.

If anything, I worked more outside of the classroom than I did in the actual class when it comes to those discussions about teachers' pay, and even the school

district, or the school that I started, actually went on a teacher strike e, like this past year. And to watch all that stuff happening from here in New York now, I'm like, wow, I guess I'm that I got out of there when I did. Because it's tough to be in that trench, and fighting for those fighting you're doing is fighting for those kids and making sure that they can live those lives that then them, but teachers are under so much pressure. And I'm not surprised that my brain was just like, no, like, we, we don't want to do this. And I just ignored that entirely.

And I kept doing that career. Until, you know, a year and a half in, I was like, I might read hemorrhage. Like, I might re-stroke here because there was no l fear of that happening. A bus like this, like psychological, I might smackingly have health problems. If I continue this career, and there will be many days when I will not eat anything, I would like to Buy my little yogurt with my litke granolasmackinglyood, like little fruit on it. And I would go to my teacher's desk and sit there. Beacueand I would just be running around teaching and helping K toads all day. And then I would see this yogurt, and I'm like, Oh my gosh, I didn't eat that. It's like that was just the most unhealthy period of my life. You know? And so when people make those arguments teachers and how they yada yada, I'm liketeacarguments about, you know, and it's like, I mean if you spent, you spent one and year spent one paid the classroom, you'd probably 18:17

I spent years in the classroom doing what you're describing, doing the thing to the teachers and driving them around the bend around the twist. And I'm surprised I didn't come across anyone who had a stroke at school. And in school, some pitches were quite ill and quite unwell. And you could tell, but we used to take the signs to go after them further. And because we're silly teenagers. And we think that that's the cool thing to do, or that's an intelligent thing to do. And I don't know why.

So accept my apologies on behalf of some pitches weretigers, since then and after them. So you are an exciting person with what you've been through. But also, you started out being completely selfless and putting all your time and effort into caring for others. So when you hemorrhaged something, a bleeweretigersd that affected you and your mind hemorrhaged something, going on in your life, involved your focus was. Where your loyalty was, I suppose. Because I feel like Mimi? Didn't get any love from herself during because.

Mimi Hayes 19:56

Yeah, none.

Yeah 19:59

Negative, negative. Yeah. So when this happened, I was just shocked and angry. Because my whole life, I wanted to be a teacher. And he was a sore thing, where pig whippings were random. 'Sat doesn't make 'sy sense to me, which now that I think about it, it's like, yeah, your body was like, You think you're going to do that. That's not what you're going to do? Do. But to do just angry that people my love from herself durtongDohat time arrived, and they went time came to school, anent were getting g their first jobs.

Mimi Hayes 20:36

And I was too, you know, I was supposed to be doing that. And then I had this, you know, brain bleed. And I'm like, well, this is lame. m, I'm young, I'm supposed to be like starting my adult now, like, the beginning of it. And I've already failed. You know, there were a lot of feelings of, like, anger towards that. However, I wanted this back, to be in the classroom, with that purpose. You know, I could see that I could be good at it. I had that the life I'd spent in a classroom, just preparing for this, you know, I felt like, this is my purpose of being a tea of being and that this little annoying interruption was, you; lu Interruptiong that was like, OK, well, I have tOK this.

And I still do not have any love for myself at this moment. I didn't realize what was happening to me; it was wild. And that I should be nurturing myself and caring f; it was; itgetti to kill the yow, getting back to this life that I saw a glimpse of, and so kill they wanted to make accurate, you know. And so it happened so quickly that I changed it. It was altered years ago, you know, what, what I went through? And sotoachangef like, my,

Bill 22:16takens going to s, What do you feel like? Now, what do you feel like you went through?

A Miracle

MI think I'm a going to; I believe Idom a walking mi,racleknowuse I, taken so lucky with where it is in my Brain. What happened? My timeline is not that I've been so an area I've been forgoing that I could learn everything. And I'm significant going story minimally impact going to thatigncogoinqithatrytcould I

affected even I mean yogis affected doing story exhausted, impacted; I, you ms I didn't t are so, so minor. And does it but the hell, you e when I think about what happened in there then how it completely could have wrecked these cells, it was because inside that little cavern. I never told him it was a tumor.

But you that that little ever said to them; it a clump. And tho that little issue; it was Never said to so when it d howling once they exhausted around and never side on, you know, steroids howling exhausted and, the swelling went down. And so the Brain went back to what it did. It didn't kill any cells, you know, I, back any hands; I can walk, I see it's just, it blows my mind any time I think about see because I know, so many survivors now. A: They don't like me. They don't like me. You see, it's like, it's, it's wild when I think about how lucky I got. And just is, it's just amazing. Yeah,

Bill 24:02

Yeah, you hit the jackpot. And so did I've got numbness on my left side. When I walk and get tired, tired went, minor, or but you little, the title you little-little belittle l, title. I can type the title of all those things. Because exactly like you said, they are kind and out, and it won't happen again. It was a type of the brain e before they took part in Emmy speech before they took the sentences. Comprehend it in a book, write something, I, ng, and everything comes back, it: is. Before they took it, I was very blessed. It was something; it took most of ye something to surgery. And it's been since then. I still feel that it took a long time to look after my body and do everything; constant information is constantly done. I think it sometimes takes at least 30 minutes with stroke survivors. It's it; I also feel like I was somewhat. And I instead want into the god t; it. It doesn't make me feel like I'd later me, or I'd like it to be regarding where it was as opposed to somebody else. But some of the other stroke survivors had had regarding we had. But they had it in the brains, tem.

So when a bled, it blood and caused catastrophic damage, and the recovery was much more dramatic. Unfortunately, their lives are a lot more dramatic. And I don't know about you, but I had unfortunately have a ca this dramatically came into my mind just recently because I feel this numbness and spasticity you can't because it's not dra. I had this first thought, for the first time, that I never looked at a person, Still, your chair and thought there was anything; for with them, others had n the looked at that, they can have 't was examined it never occurred to me that something is anything that cons couldn't bug them, causes couldn't

problems, you know, make them h going lousy day. Constantly going, doesn't work, or has issues. It has a physical resaogoodell. Were you utterly nai, like I was, even though you were half my age?

Mimi Hayes 26:35

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I also didn't know what it was like to be disabled. Like, I mean, no one there does until they are right. But it was just this: I was training for a half marathon. I was their athlete, their hockey player. And I just didn't ut: Ir told me I would need a wheelchair. And so, was this happening to me? I mean, I swear, myrseagrea pul t a baby edit putting bedroom because they were, like, you're allowed to walk on youn. We don't know where to get out of the bend. We don't know w: I because K because they ring around, like, vide me like alone around my room what is plan know, and bending all these things. And they're like, you do that, you know, like, you're not able to wait for ownknowsd I am just doing it. And so the question was, are you or not? I've thought about

Bill 27:43

It's a rhetorical question

Mimi Hayes 27:45

There is something else wrong.

Bill 27:45

Yeah. Rhetorical question. I know you didn't. But it's one thing that I've been reflecting on the last few weeks. And I find it amazing that we, we're so oblivious. And it's these townspeople listening to and watching this, and they come into these episodes regularly, and they've heard this for the third time. I'm repeating myself; it's why I'm doing this: I periodically raise awareness of the fact that the guy. I'm in a wheelchair. I'm just so myself who can walk, that theregoithatnderneath, that we can't see the options to.

And we feel sorry for them because they can't walk. And I'm not. I don't; feeling sorry for them is right of optionsoingtheetheless, you know, the. I'm thinking about it. But there's so much more going on now. I've been traumatized, and most other people idolized the strokhehehehi. I believe I've experienced some trauma that's station because I use the. At you're dealing with,? How did you go with that part of the Disability?

Mimi Hayes 28:49

Yeah, and I want to add to what you said, you the wheelchair, the Nonetheless wheelchair because we know not of us survive? Those who can walk and who look normal, unquote, norm. And we're walking around, and we have problems. And it is an invisible disability because people who don't understand will never understand it unless they go through it. And they're like, yes, a ban because of this. It's all about what my, and no one can; you can't see it. There's no cast. You know, there's no indicator label because she has a sticker on her forehead that says, I broke my bra; you; you like, we don't have that.

Since it is truly invisible. Indicator the trauma, it has a lot of the emotion have an re; I think of you know your real quick thing happened to me, And then I recovered and just kind of, you know, continued my you and just after-effects, ir-effects as cause I could because I had that privilege because I was utterly now enabled that.

And there's barreling through usual then not usual a second to be like, Hey, are you okay utterly think know, w, that utterly scary enough know, that was rebar through and writing real feelings through normal like, t For was, it was, ically awful, look after-effects because it is painful to scar things again, and for my family, like founded again, relive it again.

And that was r for as hard for audit was's so traumatic, you know, and it's, you know, the moment the something tell talked about on stage now he moment that they told me founded again, you're, and they didn't even tell me alley as cause my mom is my mom, I was in the ER with her. And they said your daughter's Brain was bleeding. And when that happened, Brian didn't know; I thought I was die right, ht there. I was going to collapse. was like, OK, going to like five seconds to live. Awesome. It's brain reat.

What? And I started having these, didn't have chills and consequences, having a going to attack without knowing what was happening. My mom was putting blankets on me. And I call her like a magician. I'm brain. Where'd you get the blankets? Like, she full-on. His blankets without e' Without but that full-on you're going to die I was like, not OK, I moms I know, I love my mom. And, you brainn. Where'ds brain. Where'd with these blankets? And this blanket. He's blanket. He remembers you're going to play. " ing to play. " I called my Not. OK, she said, like her brain was bleeding. We didn't have any other information. We didn't just I was stable. I know what it looked like in full-on, just full-onions going to die. That's all we knew was just, it's been okay, thank it.

That's all we hadn't. I swear he drove a million miles an hour down the this way. It's like he was there going ton instant. I mean, I had no sense of timbleedingytokaynder blanketsOKking. But she all; I him and he just got in the just as far as he watches wawatchedhatthese weave has been the last year he could have missed me,

Bill 32:06

wow,

, my under7

I could, my undergo to rig,h there, you knowtoldhe just thejustdthetjustway. My poor, like siblings, didn't even know what was happening. Like, my brother was just like, at home. He's having to and like; Iy dad just g ar and left, he like, I have anand bye. Like, wtkind ofo go. And there was happening brotheration. And so that, like, you they will forget, that will never let that doesn't just go away. One island byecilland belies and parents. d, and that left a youknhappenin on us. And to this day, it's hard for them to, for me to not be home, for me not to be where they can see me and keep anyone and see especially OK. You know,

and so, yeah, just tons of happenings I still need to workhappeningsnd need to go to, you know, not judicial therapy, although I would love to get, you know, some more of that cono. However, like the ifinaltma of OKng to work through that, that washing that I would that will continue to define, although not to judicial a negative way, per se, but just that it had a final bonus that has left, your final scar, you know,

Bill 33:32 We had an exciting family, like, we have an exciting family. However, in Greece, our family ties were very, over the top, smothering, and I still don't know how to tie my shoelaces because my mom had dower mean exciting, you know. We had hadnanlexcitingosed at 37Werk way, an exciting morning, and we had to ring the., I still told my wife to bring them. I thought I still had my wife, or did I ring them? Exciting, the story was, it here's something gothe Greekeallawas diagnosed it is, it might be a little bit lower f blood bleeding in the Brain. And everything's OK, though.

So when you can just come to the hospital, there's in an ambulance when ttherereallyhe hospital. So he was in really, early 70s. Lower me in an ambulance because when he found out the news, he freaked out and forgoOK take one of his

medication tabs? Etc.; I think it was for high something going thinglike that he collapsed and fell in the went and hit his head. And my mom,

i mi 34:46

Oh my gosh, now

The Stress On Our Loved Ones

Bill 34:47

My mom can't talk because he is doing something cathartic things. Agoing thingulancethatghtHeo the same hospital I was at. MOhmom came up to see me. So, went dead? Sand he said, Well, Mye's dcan'ttairs. I said. What do you mean? What does his dad say? Well, how are you? By the way, are you OK? Ibroughtsaw me talking and upright, etbroughtwas confused and rel,ieved that it was all strange. And then she said, The sandoado collapsed. What hit his heart?d I had to bring him with the ambulance.

And I was like, OK, so where is he? How is he? What's going on with him? So we walked down the four flights of stairs. Sorry, I beg your pardon. We went deadlift; Dos said the fourth heart was on, and the first went down. And I saw him, OK, you know, connected to tubes and all that stuff to stabilize him. So that he can, so that he can be at the hospital. Doesehis wasnon saywthe at what happ. IsAwas on the first that wasn't time, I first live his son needed him? He couldn't be there the way he wanted to be here.

It's trashing to them, for sure. And that was that. See years later and after surgery. Unfortunately, my wife lost her mum the week before my surgery. Tuff to stabilize him6:26

Woll 36:27

And then the o surgery for Waiting now myWaitings wholly traumatized from the efforts of the last three years T,o make matters worse, her mom passed away f weeks before I go into the surgery during the funeral. , I'm not allowed to be a pallbearer. To ensure we keep every ensure and relaxed because I've had the third bleed only for years.w Toek before smotheryears wy, and now they're expecting it to bleed agents, so they want to resolve it between there quickly. Anwe went to surgery; I came out of surgery and was in recovery. Because his

wife came to visit the night or the second night. And s feeling faint. And she is collapsing on a chair. She couldn't get up. She couldn't get up and rouse herself, falling over. I had trecoveringboI passedon'tknow who it was, one of firstness, to go and nurse because she was collapsing.

We need some isbcollapsinger. So they had to run some tests and find out what my wife went wrong with her. So they had her decency wards in the ER, or you called the ER. She was a connected nurse to the heart monitors, and they also ran Sherrage of the tots on her. And I've been wheeled her room, with the ole in m, toy head patched up indecency wasd. And the doctor that the surgery on me, my surgeon, one of them ran some tests, ow how people take into wards, and do that.

And he does that, and he keeps walking, and then it takes a step back, and he looms back, and goes, What,t's she on? What the hell's going on? Why is she they? I said I didn't know, and she collapsed. And they're running tests on t's wrthe g with her. So these of those events, especially him, was me, in the hospital now with sur,gery, the last straw. She was low in s and magnesium, and magnesium needed to stabilize. And it was dramatic.

You want to see people want to be there for you. They want to support you, and they don't; they can't. The worst thing that can happen to them is their spouse potentially passing away. And it's just a thing. Sthe o your dad and your family, for sure. They're traumatized. And they may not lout it. But it is probably, and it probably causes them; What they didn't; thos And we all need healing. We all need care. We all need counseling, and we all need hugs. We all need to tell everybody we love them. There, I don't know about you. But I suppose I should ask you. I tell everyone I love them more than I did before, and Dad, they still get a hug and a kiss every time I tell them, "What are you like?"

Nothing Left In Mimi Hayes' Tank



Mimi Hayes 39:41

Yeah, I gained a ton of perspective on these people. And it is, it's adorable. The first counseling usually tells me after they read the book is that your parents are, and I'm like, Yeah, I know. Like, they're great. At. They're, they're exceptional people. And they're the reason I'm Ali; they so I

know that about them. And it strengthened our relationship because I knew they would do anything. They were always on my team. That is inisprivileadorable; some people's families are not that way. Or they, you know, still have struggles, you know, therstrengthenedimes when, you know, I remember when I first started teaching and living at home, and I, you know, just recovered. So, first year post-surgery?

And I would come home to my parent's house after teaching all day. And I was exhausted. And I didn't want to talk to anybody. And I just wanted to go in my room and sleep, you know, and pass out and then have someone make me food. But I didn't care about anything; I was so zonked out. And we were in the kitchen. And, you know, the TV was on. And we were having dinner, and I was like, Can you turn the TV off, please? And maybe I said it in a way that was like, I snapped or something, I was just like, you have to turn the TV off, I can't, like, I can't eat, and think and have the TV on. That's just too many things.

You know, and, and it was just, I had to explain to my dad, I was just like this; I'm not trying to be cruel, I'm not trying to be a certain way. I can't process the sounds, and can't, you know, if I'm being avoidant, room, ing home, I'm not talking to you. Don't take that personally, and I know you will because you care about me and want to be around me and all these things. But I had to start setting some boundaries and just saying this is what or. And it was tough; it was tough because I was different.

And when able to, you know, to maintain a lot of my me-ness, and I elevated now I'm kind of an elevated version of myself, you know, I'm absorbing, and what I'm doing and all this, but it, it changed me, it changed me a lot in a lot of ways. And so that's difficult for a family to deal with. And to come to terms and well, well, you look OK? How come? You're not OK? You know, you look, you look quote unquote, regular, you look like, how come you are sleeping so much? or How

come you're just going up to your room and not talking to anybody? It's like, I can't, I can't explain it. That is how I feel,

Bill 42:31

Yeah, this will feel like nothing in the tank, that it's all gone. Because that's what I get, I get like, there's nothing left, I have zero more to give, I've got to give. I'm juinOKto stop. I have teenagers. So my youngest is 18. And my oldest is 22. So they were teenagers the whole time I was going th. And it was tough to get them to grasp the concept of please stop, please don't just; the simple little requests couldn't, they just couldn't hold in it. How could they? You don't want them to really because they are; the only way they're going to work that out is to be in your tricky thing for them for you to do is communicate and, hopefully, please message across.; it sounds like that's what you tried to do.

Yeah. But, I mean, I wish that my parents would have been able to. They to a support group, you know, for parents of survivors. Well? And there are groups like that out there because we realize that these caregivers are impacted by these needs, trauma, and something they need to work through. And you know, it's, and I thought about this too because now I like public speaking. And I did. Part of my book tour was to the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado.

So I went and then came back to Colorado, and I did this keynote. And my mom, a school psychologist, signed up to go to the conference as a worker so she could see the keynote. I could sit back. And that's, like, a lunchtime keynote. And so, like people are like eating their sandwiches, and I'm like, Hey, a school psychologist, in bleed, you Brain Injury Alliance talk, and I'm just literally thinking about how crazy this must be for to be sitting in an enormous audience of like, 200, people. And they have four daughters; ers talk about how she almost died. And bring it all back up again.

And, you know, seeing me doing that, I was just like, wow, that would be hard. T at would be so hard for her. I mean, a sheet with it is a champ. She's proud of what I've accomplished and what I'm doing. And it's always like, Oh, yeah, this is my daughter. And y ah, thseeingbook, and, but she also does the thing an enormous she sees someone, she'll pull my scar out. So directly be like, yeah, look at it, and move my hair, and she'll be like, look, look, look, look. And I'm like, Mom, here the grocery store like you can't like, you're going to scare people, you know. But I think part is part of her process now and coping with it. And maybe

that helps her in some ways too, okay, look, see t, here's she healed? She's okay. You know, but all okay, sheOK to sit there and hear me directly all the time.

Bill 46:03

yeah

Mimi Hayes 46:03

When I'm sure it's li,ke, she wants not to heart,h at. You know, anymore.

Everyone is Over It

Bill 46:10

Yeah, I think my wife's over me talking about it. So that's why I created a podcast. M, maybe if she ever gets curious about some of the episodes. The name of the episode brings cu iosity. , She'll listen. But she tried. I'm pretty sure she hasn't listened to one episode. And I do listen to her. But if she wants to, she can. And something about the guests that I've had on. And I'll talk about what they went through, how amazing they are, what they've overcome, and how they're doing well now.

So she likes to hear those stories. But several instead move forward and focus on what's coming rather than what's happened in the past. And I don't talk about it because I want to dwell on the past. I want, how about it because, what need for s to, talk about it, like you there's a need for support groups is also need for talking the need for shared stories. And for me, it's then what, hopefully, in the springtime, the person on the other end of the camera also receives some free treatment for an hour.

You know, so that's why I do; like I know that as a carer, my wife became a C, which is over a night as your about dad did. And they neverForwith stroke. They did, and at str, it is like they don't know how to help somebody. Doctors and nurses go to school for years to care for patients with different types of problems and loved ones of spouses; they wake up sick one day and care. And that's about the support that they get. And that's not enough. That's just wild.

So I hope the carers will find this. And they'll li expect to this and the other episodes, and they'll be able to get a feeling for Okay, there a; things that I can do. There are tons now that I understand because I've listened to all these stories;

maybe they're going to say, perhawildcan reach out to person x on the other side of the world via an anagram, whatever. And perhaps that can help them a little bit, right, because that's why you wrote the book, isn't it because it was cathartic to you? But also, you're hoping to raise aw; maybe? Am I right?

Mimi Hayes 48:42

Yeah. And I was blown away by what the response still blows me away. Honestly, I thought it was going to be the Kosi. Maybe ought that brain injury people would come to me in workpeople with brain injury at me and say, liincorrectlyou like you're not Brain enough? Do you look total? I can't I can't tell you where this came from

Bill 49:06

came from the same place my one came from. So yeah, because you're inadequate like I didn't, I'm not injured enough. I didn't bleed enough. Or I didn't have enough deficits. I get it.

Mimi Hayes 49:20

And I thought people would be like, she thinks she is trying to select for these people. Like she's not disabled? Like what, oh she? ?he thinks she wants an accessible parking spot, like, Oh my god, she's so offensive. And you know, and it's been the opposite. It's been the opposite. People like you were reaching out, like someone from Tampa Bay, Florida, to me yesterday. I just called out of the blue from a hospital; some nurse says she is trying to get the hospital to get me to come and speak there. And I'm like, how did you find me? You know, it's like, it's like, what's that,

Bil 49:56

You have; that's how they found you

Mimi Hayes 50:00

BYouit'; it's still blithely minded because it's still a tiny publication. It's like, you know, it's it is internationally distributed. But it's like, when I go to the Barnes and Noble, it's on the bottom shelf. And it's in the health section, which, I guess, I thought would be in the memoir, but it's for good reason. It's in the mouth section. And it's in between, like migraines and like he rt attacks. And like, you know, these like self, foreknow, a d also like textbooks, you know, and then you pull out my book and you're just kind of like, oh, okay, you know, it's like, how do

people find it? OKean, I know that there are forces that I don't see. d there's, there are, marketing, and even don't are starting to, like, fan post about my stuff. And I'm still like, what I have fans, That's wild.

Bill 50:49

I'm a fan. I haven't read it yet, but I will get a copy.

Mimi Hayes 50:53

Yeah,

Mimi Hayes - About The Book

Bill 50:55

It's great. So tell me about it. They like Tell me aboIt'she structure of it. What can people expect from it? Because already lookWhat t and go, Well, this s one crazy gal like, Oh, she's talking OKt a hole in her head. I can relate to that straight away. So

Mimi Hayes 51:0

yeah,

Bill 51:10

It looks pretty thick. So, even though your Brain was a bit frazzled, you managed to get a quick book out. Tell me how, what it is about, like, I'm excited to hear about it.

Mimi Hayes 51:21

Yeah, so to be honest, this started as a bunch of rantings after learning that my, you know, after being at home for a month, and not unable anymore.

So that started as complete denial, like, this is a funny thing that's happened to me, this is hilarious, can't walk, and I can't taste, and probably won't be able to see. And it started as this kind of, like, comedic release. And I just started typing. And then, throughout the years, it became clear that this wasn't just a joke. This was a real story. To find the story, even live it, I had to simplify it and pull it apart; I had to think, Okay, what are you trying to say? Oh, you went through this thing. But during it, you lack a lot of self-love. And the art of that came from you, this long-term relationship.

So the first part of the book deals with the breakup, how that kind of trauma, like, bled into the brain situation, and how these two huge things happened in my life at a very young, pivotal age. And how I just had to heal both of them, like it was simultaneously. And I went about that in a lot of exciting ways. And, you know, before my Brain exploded, I had many blind dates. It was a lot like, Okay, I have to find myself, Oh, yeah, I have to be wOKit. I have to be with the guy, you know, I got to be with the guy because I don't know who I am. Because I was just in a five-year-long relationship, I thought I would marry this guy. And so, I have to figure out who will be the other person to love me, you know, because I wasn't willing to do it myself.

So I said, " Oh, no, someone else needs to love me. Okay. Said," I went on all these five-year relat OKi, crazy, crazy pogoing to then I got into teaching, I gottaKof ready. I'm like, okay, day five, you know? And then just body was OK, Nah, you're done. You're done. Apps just "e's done. And it kind of folloTappi journey through both of that trauma through the healing process, through the hospital ought the crazy people I met in the hospitals, rehab, and the trauma of relearninmethow to walk again when you're a 22-year-old, who thinks she's going to run a half marathon in two weeOKAnd eventually, I get back to the classroom. I decided I would love the hospitals, but I struggled with that. But tapping OKke reread the book, I'm like, O, yes, I'm going to love myself. This is so great. Because I realized, like, what I have been through, you know, reading the story, and of course as I recognize it, but when you kind, which sees it in that finished form, it's very cathartic to read the book that you wrote, that's printed out, and the other people are seeing it too. And they can validate you.

And yeah, I love it when my friends, or people that read the book, when they are on the phone, talk about how much they loved it. It is finally good. It's like, Oh, well, they also come back with this guilt. So interesting. Because I was in such denial, I couldn't tell anybody what I was doing. Didn't that people are re-booking? My close friends are like, Oh, myrebooking'm so sorry. Wasn't there for you? Oh, my God, I'm so sorry. I should have flown you to. I didn't know you were going to die. You did say so. I was like, Yeah, I didn't say that. Ike, don't worry, I'm not ma. Like, I'm not a ry, like I was in denial. Of course, I didn't tell you how it was Because I didn't know myself, you know?

Bill 55: 6

How could you?

Mimi Hayes 55:27

So, Yeah,

Bill 55:29

I, um. Self-love is essential. And it's, come see f-lovely critical interviews as well. And people neglect themselves, and then they har on themselves. And then they look at themselves differently Because some of them change physically; they look different physically because of spasticity, and examine some of the face drooping and that type of thing. So it's a big issue. And I think you do that first, then what happens is that you allow other people to love you. You qualify for others to come into your life and be caring and loving because people see that when you're watching and loving through you, they don't lose you the caring second.

Mimi Hayes 56:23

No, I'm still here. Can you hear me?

I Have A Heart?



Bill 56:24

Yeah, I thought I lost you. I made it sound like I lost you; that's OK. We are good. So when you can, you can be wheThat'scokay be loved of yourself. That's what I think is where the actual healing starts. And that's where I wouldnaturalgest people start, and it could be hard for some people to do

that. I think that's really where it happens for me; I'm 44. And I didn't know what self-love was until after 37. And after the self-loved. So, some people could take a lifetime to get there. And for me, I'm thankful. I'm thankful that the bleed occurred and grateful for how it turned out. I'm nOK thankful that we bled in the Brain, but I'm pleased that it worked out the way that I am grateful that some people switched my Brain off e, which meant my heart had to kick in and take over from a person who would have described himself as a head case back then. So I'm no longer a head case; the head can't do the amount of things that it was doing before because it's physically altered as well. So, like yours, it is because something is not there anymore. And when we overdo it, it tells us to say, Hey, you're done for today; you're not doing anything else.

So I can't go through those thinking processes like I used to before because my Brain switches off earlier on in the day and goes, you're done. That's it no more for you. So I don't do it. And now my default is to go to the heart. And that's where self happens. And we love other people, herself-loved, we love for my community, now happen love, for my podcast happens, and where the passion comes from and why I take action, doing things that I love, because I don't do the overthinking anymore, it just doesn't work.

So maybe you can relate to that. And as you continue your journey. Be grateful and surprised, joyful, and happy about the fantastic feedback you're getting because that will make you do it more. And the more you do it, I don't mind, if you get addicted to that, the more good you'll do for the community and the people that need to hear your story and Other Stories like theirs. So that's, you know, definitely allow yourself to go to that space and to do that, and what's not to like about you? Some bloke will come along, and he'll go. That's my Mimi.

Oh, yeah, he's, I know, he's out there somewhere. I am. This time has been crucial for me not to be with someone. And because I have to break apart what I love about myself. And, like on Valentine's Day, I did this fun little self-love post. Because, you know, a lot of people on Valentine's Day, you know, post there, their spouses, or they're notable for me not to. And, you know, I just did a bunch of posts on my Instagram story of things I love about me. And I was like, Hey, I love that I like crying when a friend sends me a letter and I have a picture like crying. And then I have a picture of me, like what my tiny feet are, and I'm like, I love that my feet are so small; that's so adorable.

And I love that like, you know, I'm so funny, and I do comedy, and I love that my crying when a friend was like going on this kind of like, I want that to be a daily practice. Unfoly, it's still not; I'm not quite there yet; I'm getting a lot; I'm at identifying those negative thoughts about myself,

Bill 1:00:05

It's a process.

Mimi Hayes 1:00:07

It's a process; it's, you it's, it's something that we, like; it said, can spend our entire lives, noise being aware that we need to be, you know, self-loving, but the

more that I'm meditating self-longing and trying to take care of myself, you know, taking care of my body is self-love. And that was that's still the big self-lovee that I have are you know that just from something my personality, always on the go, my body gets left behind. I didn't eat the yogurt on the counter when I was teaching; I don't drink enough water, you know, I am not; I'm inconsistent with my exercise,

I'll either run in half marathon, and then I won't run for two weeks. You know, that's what it is about? You see, it's not healthy. You know? So it's like, I need to get this con existence. You know, taking care of your body is self-love. And it's tough to do that myself-love also, tough whole community of people who are like, yeah, you know what I do for that? I meditate every day, or you know what I do? For that I, I go on a walk or, there's like s For any people doing things to actively practice self-love, that we can practice self-love, active people. And that's what I hope to do when traveling and speaking to people, like hearing their stories and learning about what they're doing. Because I can learn from those things, too. You know,

Bill 1:01:33

yeah. And what you'll find is, if you think about it like in seasons, winfind is not the season for me to be exeSummer is the season for me to be exercising; I don't like winter. Everything that comes and goes is like a season where you'll put time and effort into a book; I imagine you require a certain amount of effort and energy. And so certain things fall by the wayside. And that's okay. Just acknowledging that and being OK, that OKd n't do those things all the time, OKen that self-love, don't be hard on yourself for that. Just know that whenever you feel like it, you will do that.

And you don't have to be so dramatically regimented in your tasks because that's when you show self-love. You also show self-love when you decide you're doing nothing all day for the whole day. And maybe the next day. That's also self-love because you're relaxing and doing calming things, or you're just not being busy. That's important to do as we do; I got to the point, at 44, I was interviewed for a podcast a few weeks ago. The question I was asked at their tasks look up to that help overcome self-love letter. And I said I thought about it for not very long. And I said, Actually, the person who I look up to who I appreciate the most right now is me.

And the guy who interviewed me was blown away. The podcast was called the Positive Impact Podcast; I believe I will positively impact the I'mdcast. I'll be sharing the record in two parts. And he was amazed that I said that. And I had to rethink what I said; obviously, other people around me supported me over all these years to get to this point. But I've done the work, put in the effort, changed my attitude and behaviors, and so many things. I have taken it on board and become the person responsible for my recovery.

I am the guy I look up to because that's somebody I'd never been before. I'd never done that before. And now I am, so I'm wrapped. So you will get there And meet me; he loves my elf, but that doesn't make me the perfect stroke survivor. I still have my shitty days, and I still misbehave, and I still act up, and I still do the wrong things. And I still push myself too far, so it's all good.

Mimi Hayes - Don't Be Hard On Your Father

Mimi Hayes 1:04:33

Yeah, good thing, laying, you know fatherercy on you because I can't believe how hard I've been on myself. Despite what I've been through, you know, and especially with like my body, now, all the weight loss and weight gain that happened in that period. For a good reason,

what, like, you, no one a go d reasoning that first of all, all you're a strong survivor, you are walking, you're talking, you are doing all these things. And that, yo, you know, critical.

But we do we're h man that way. And we all do it.

So I think the easiest thing is to have some mercy and grace and just everything you have while just checking in, have a mental check-in. I think it's especially check-hard when you've been rough, what some of us have been through, because, fromtroughtside, people could go, oh my gosh, how could you ever look at you look like what you're what you've accomplished? Look at what you're doing. But we're just like anybody else. We have days when we don't, you know, don't. We any purpose or any find any meeting or, you know, we're stressed about something so trivial and minor.

You know, that's life sometimes, but we have the added s, and the added like history that we have that's why when people are like, that don't dwell on like, I'm not living like, I'm using this, this is my stuff. This is my history, and this matters to me. It makes me who I am today. So, do I sit there, think, make it every day, and get myself down about what? No, of course I don't. But don't tell down too well because, like, no, this matters. This. This is me. This is my history. You know.

Bill 1:07:14

I love what you're doing. You've got a quirky cup there to tell me about the cup.

Mimi Hayes 1:07:20

Oh, yeah. I just bought it on the internet. Because I wanted a new mug, and it's got a bunch of really fun wanted anatomy, and brains on it. And so I have my tea or coffee in the morning. And it just I, like, I surround myself with, like, have all these brain things around my little home office here. Like, my podcast stuff is also scattered around, and it's just kind of my little brainy space. So I like to fill it with Brain Stuff.

Bill 1:07: 7

brilliant

Mimi Hayes 1:07:59

Oh, there are pencils too

Bill 1:08:00

with brains on T, and 1:08:02

Yes.

Bill 1:08:08

That's hilarious.

Mimi Hayes 1:08:10

It's like, I guess it's an eraser. I think I've never actually tried to use it.

Bill 1:08:14

You're embracing

Mimi Hayes 1:08:15

for my show

Bill 1:08:16

You are embracing it

Mimi Hayes 1:08:19

It's a brand, Youain injuries, or a brand.

Bill 1:08:22

Yeah, why not? I love it. Please tell me where people can go and find out a little bit more about you. Mimi.

Mimi Hayes 1:08:31

Well, I have a little website. MimiHayes.com. I'm on all the social media. I'm on Instagram @M miHayesBrain. Because, you know, brains. I have a podcast, Imi, and the Brain. And it is also fun. Yes.

Clever. I know.

Mimi Hayes 1:09:02

Yeah, so, uh, Mimi and the Brain. I interview neurologists, psychologists, and brain scientists about the Brain. And I bring in my own, like, funny brain question. I kind of slide in some questions about my b ain. They're always very tailored to their research and their specific study. So, I'm working on a creativity episode right now. So yeah, Mimi And The Brain.

The book is called Ed. I'll be okay. It's just the whole of my head. There is a book now for many survivors who are having trouble reading. There's an audiobook now on Audible. Unfortunately, I'm not read by my voice, but the gal who narrates it is fabulous. So I'm looking forward to sharing everything with anyone who still doesn't know that I'm out here—and hope to gather more friends and survivors and keep doing the work I'm doing.

Bill 1:10:03

Brilliant. I'm looking forward to getting the book now that it's an audiobook, mainly because I love it. And I do well with reading books. My Brain is too hot, and I get tired, can't do it, and never finish it. Mimi and the Brain and you guys taking over the world?

Mimi Hayes 1:10:23

Hopefully, we'll see. I'm starting with just the brain scientists, but they have a lot

of knowledge. So maybe we will, perhaps we will take over.

Bill:10:33

Excellent. Mimi, on that note, thank you so much for being on the podcast

Intro 1:10:37

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