

Muscular Dystrophy And Stroke - Courtney Gabrus

Muscular Dystrophy And Stroke. Muscular dystrophy is a degenerative condition that increases the risk of ischemic stroke. Courtney Gabrus was living with muscular dystrophy when at age 22 she also experienced an ischemic stroke.

Socials:

www.instagram.com/courtneygabrus/

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Courtney 0:00

Absolutely. Just knowing that you know, you can talk to a million, not a million but you know, thousands of people that I thought I was the youngest that had a stroke. And now I was like, oh, okay, I'm not the youngest, I was just like, so surprised though I was so young. And I thought, you know, old people have a stroke, not young people.

Intro 0:31

This is the recovery after stroke podcast, with Bill Gasiamis, helping you navigate recovery after stroke.

Introduction



Bill 0:44

Bill from recoveryafterstroke.com This is Episode 123. And my guest today is disability advocate, Courtney Gabrus. Courtney was already living with Muscular Dystrophy when at age 22, she also experienced an ischemic stroke.

Bill 1:00

Now just before we get started, if you have ever wondered what else I can do to help you with your stroke recovery, you should know that you can now get recovery after stroke coaching right from the comfort of your own home.

Bill 1:11

I too am a three-time stroke survivor and a brain injury survivor. And I have built for you what I was missing when I was sent home from the hospital in the hope that you don't have to do stroke recovery as tough as I did.

Bill 1:24

Support packages give you access to a variety of tools 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so that you can also work on other areas of stroke recovery that you don't get the chance to at physical therapy or rehabilitation.

Bill 1:37

With tailored support available for less than \$8.50 per week. All recovery after stroke packages bring stroke recovery to you in the comfort of your own home. to try out a recovery after stroke support and see if it is right for you.

Bill 1:51

You will get the first seven days free as well as a 30-day money-back guarantee no questions asked. As a bonus, you will also get to face to face zoom support calls with myself to help take your recovery to the next level.

Bill 2:05

Go to recoveryafterstroke.com/support to sign up now. It won't cost you anything for the first seven days. And you will get a full refund. If you're not happy after 30 days. You have nothing to lose and everything's again. And now it's off the show. Courtney Gabrus welcome to the podcast.

Courtney 2:26

Thank you so much. I'm so happy to be here.

Bill 2:30

Oh, happy to have you here. It looks like you're just chillin kicking back lying down. Is that on your bed or your couch there?

Courtney 2:37

My bed. I handled my room this week. So I'm just soaking it up.

Bill 2:45

Well done. Hey, Courtney, tell us a little bit about what happened to you.

Muscular Dystrophy and Stroke



Courtney 2:49

So, first of all, I have Muscular Dystrophy. Basically, Muscular Dystrophy

weakens your muscles, progressive. I have a rare gene that only 50 people have this Muscular Dystrophy that I have.

Bill 3:12

In the whole world?

Courtney 3:14

Yeah, the whole world.

Bill 3:18

50 people that you know.

Courtney 3:19

Yeah, yeah. Like in studies, yeah. So I'm a rare one. So yeah, I went to college. In Florida. I'm originally from New York. And my family. My mom moved with me because I had to get caregivers. I'm in a wheelchair. So, I started school. And I was a year in as a junior, I went to community college for two years, and I was a junior.

Courtney 4:03

I went home Thanksgiving, kind of caught like a cold or a flu. So it was a stressful semester and I'm sick and doing all things that I shouldn't have done. And so yeah, I finished that semester. I was so happy. It was such a tough semester with stats and all things.

Courtney 4:35

And I was hanging out with my girlfriend and we had a nice time. And my mom is a nurse so she was in the room next to my room. And I thought I was having a party pack. So I called my mom and I have never seen this and feel this you know, pain luckily like the hospital was, like 10 minutes.

Courtney 5:03

So my mom works from that hospital. And we got in and it was just, it was gone. And we did x-rays and CAT scans. And I was like, okay, like, yeah, I'm just gonna go home and they're like, no, you have to stay.

Courtney 5:20

And I'm like, why? Like, no, like, I have plans tomorrow. And mom's like, no, Courtney you have to stay. And I was so mad. So mad, I'm like, okay, fine. So the

next day, I had Chinese food, with my brother and my friend in the room just chilling.

Courtney 5:41

I'm like, Okay, I'll be out like, the next day. And they're like, okay, like, It's weird. Like, you're here. I'm like, Yeah, whatever. I'm gonna not think about it. So my mom worked from that hospital. So she had to go to work at like, 5am the next day. So she was like, checking with me, and I was having a stroke.

Courtney 6:10

And I don't remember that part. But my mom obviously was a nurse, and she was like, you're having a stroke. So they take me into CAT scan MRI, and I had a large, clot on my left brain. So they took it out. But, the damages were pretty difficult to think about.

Courtney 6:46

And, you know, we're flushing about that. I was in a coma for four days. And I woke up with my family that are in New York, in Florida. I was like, I was just so confused. And my aunt was like, you had a stroke. And I'm like, I don't even know what is a stroke, I was only 22, and now I'm 26.

Bill 7:22

Is someone who has muscular dystrophy, more likely to have a stroke, or is that unrelated?

Courtney 7:28

Yes. Because my heart weakens when I get older.

Bill 7:35

Okay, so Muscular Dystrophy affects everything in the body, every muscle.

Birth control pills

Courtney 7:41

Yep. And we don't really know, how my genetic like issue that, you know, that rare gene that like, we have no clue about, they don't really know if it was the Muscular Dystrophy or the birth control. And I have no clue for four years later.

Bill 8:11

Okay so the birth control is coming up more and more often in conversations.

Courtney 8:17

I listened to that podcast about the birth control. And I'm like, that's the same, like issue that I had.

Bill 8:29

Well, what it's so common, and I've never heard about it before. And now I'm hearing about it all the time. People who are on birth control, getting symptoms of stroke, and they don't know whether it's linked to it or not, but they all have been told briefly by the doctor.

Bill 8:48

There's a small increased risk of stroke when you're on the birth control. And that episode was Episode 118 with Priya Sharma. And Priya was, you know, very young as well.

Courtney 9:02

I listened to it like an hour ago.

Bill 9:06

So you're not on the birth control.

Courtney 9:09

So, in muscular dystrophy, I got my period so heavy that I was sick for like two weeks. So now I'm not on the whole pill that has estrogen, I think. So I'm on the mini pill that doesn't have the estrogen.

Bill 9:36

So Muscular Dystrophy causes complications with the menstrual cycle and therefore many people who have Muscular Dystrophy also have a requirement to take the pill to help them.

Courtney 9:51

Yeah, exactly. It just easier. You know, I was just after the stroke. So I lost the ability to talk and my right body is paralyzed. My right arm doesn't move. So, when that happened, I was just so taken back, I was just, only 22 I woke up with my, you know, my family, I didn't speak and I love to talk.

Courtney 10:29

So I went to, you know, I think rehab for a month in Tampa. And, you know, they were okay, but not New York standards. And, I just had to relearn everything, pretty much by myself or friends and family.

Bill 10:56

Yeah, it's interesting to hear from somebody who's so young, who has had a stroke and had some other health issues, like yourself, does muscular dystrophy, kind of make you more resilient when it comes to now dealing with a stroke as well, because you've had Muscular Dystrophy all your life, you're a tougher person than most of us anyway.

Courtney 11:24

Yeah. Yeah.

Resilience after Muscular Dystrophy And Stroke

Bill 11:26

How does it help to have that understanding of how do I overcome challenges when now you've faced with a stroke as well?

Courtney 11:37

So when the stroke happened, I remember that I had a ticket to go to the Red Hot Chili Peppers conference concert with my best friend. And I was like, I'm gonna go like, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity like I'm gonna go.

Courtney 12:00

So I really think that like my resilience is like, just going day, like, you know, really, day after day, just bringing a positive attitude. I mean, trust me, there are cries daily. But my mom is really resilient. And really awesome mom, and a nurse and that's really like, that's why I'm alive because she had so much more education.

Courtney 12:40

That really no one else, but because my mom literally studied like Muscular Dystrophy when I was growing up, because there were not really research about muscular dystrophy. So my mom literally taught the doctors.

Bill 12:59

So what you're saying is that a combination of your mom, and also Muscular

Dystrophy is possibly something that can get in the way of everything.

Bill 13:13

You've got this concert coming up once in a lifetime. And what you're gonna, you just got to find a way to get there rather than not to go.

Courtney 13:22

Exactly. Yeah so resilience and getting through. And I think, once I got through, I was like, that was a long ride. But like I'm speaking, so that's like, an accomplishment that I'm grateful for.

Bill 13:50

When you went to the Red Hot Chili Peppers concert what was it like?

Courtney 13:54

Oh my god, I cried. I was just like, I made it, I think it was, February in March. So it's like, three months at the stroke. And I'm like, I made it like, I was just so I feel like, my brother and me went together, and we're just crying because that was just like, the only thing that like, pushed me to get out of rehab in the hospital. And I had school. I was like, Oh, I'm gonna go to school in summer. My mom's like, um hm I didn't go back.

Bill 14:00

But you went to the Red Hot Chili Peppers concert?

Courtney 14:42

Of course.

Bill 14:44

Is it easy for somebody who's in a wheelchair to get to a concert and to sit in a good location and all that kind of thing?

Courtney 14:51

Yeah, that's the perks.

Bill 14:54

Is there a special place for people who have

Courtney 15:01

It's hard. But now I think now like, two years ago, now they're like, okay, we have

special seating, blah, blah, blah. And it was really awesome. Because I had so much events at that Marina, and they love me and they're like, Oh my God, Courtney love you like, right here. So it was just a really awesome experience.

Bill 15:31

Isn't it amazing how a concert can be the motivation why somebody needs to get better from stroke or from whatever they're going through. Because if we can have something to aim for, that we're passionate about, that we're really going to enjoy that we're really going to love.

Bill 15:50

Maybe that's going to be the key to making recovery happen a bit quicker, or put us in a mindset where we don't have to think about what we can't do we have to think about how we can get there.

Courtney 16:05

Absolutely, I think just powering through it and then coming out and like you are just so mesmerize because you went out, you know, you got through it.

Bill 16:19

Many people listening and watching on YouTube will be saying, I was gonna go to that concert, but it would have been not worth the trouble. Or it would have been too hard. What would you say to people like that? Who are thinking of canceling an event because they look different, they feel different, they had a stroke, whatever. What would you say to them?

Courtney 16:42

Oh, so I don't know, just go don't care about people. You know, when I was younger, I really was insecure about my, braces and my wheelchair. And now like, I have like the best perks, like you're gonna go in a general admission like Stand. I'm you know, sitting and having like, the greatest time, but it just, you have to be present and just go, I think people are now or thinking Oh, like, I just had, you know, put makeup on.

Courtney 17:29

Actually, so after the show they took me off of birth control. And I had literally severe acne that I never had. It was cysts on my like face like, literally hurt so much. And I went, I was like, fuck it like, and that acne stayed for years. And I was so insecure. But now, I'm like, you did so much things that you like, couldn't

have done without the stroke.

Bill 18:15

I find that fascinating that some things you're able to find within yourself strength and resilience and all these things that you found were inside of you. But you had to have a stroke to find it. I mean, it's such a crazy thing, but you found it.

Courtney 18:33

Yep. And it's hard to tell people don't worry it. You know, because they don't have the stroke experience.

Bill 18:48

When you're at the concert, are you like me when I go to a concert? I just forget about everything.

Courtney 18:53

Yep. That was me. I was just so in awe because I've heard and like play the albums. I mean, probably like 15 years with my dad and he was obsessed with the Red Hot Chili Peppers. So that was like my childhood and I was just this is so worth it. It was just so amazing. Because I you know, I heard them for years just to see them and like after the show and got me through that was just amazing.

Bill 19:37

Who's your favorite Chili Pepper?

Courtney 19:42

I think like the whole group it just.

Bill 19:45

Choose one come on choose one.

Courtney 19:50

I don't know, I just love all them. I actually have this book Scar Tissue you and I want to read it, this Quarantine so it's on my bucket list. Audiobooks and books got me through also.

Reading difficulty after stroke

Bill 20:13

Yeah, I love audiobooks, I can't really focus on reading too much, especially after

the stroke, it's a bit of a pain to sit there and look at words, I think the words on the page kind of make my brain more tired than normally. I love audiobooks. And they make it possible for me to keep up to date with the latest book that I love, which I may have bought it previously just left it on the bookshelf, and it's a real difficult thing for me to have books on the bookshelf that I haven't read. I don't enjoy that.

Courtney 20:47

Me too. But yeah, my mom was really, she loves books. And after the stroke, I was depressed in the hospital and she was like, let's like listen to music and music was honestly the best source of just keeping me positive in the hospital and rehab. I played Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, and, you know, everything that, you know, I grew up with, you know, and I think music and audiobooks was the key.

Bill 21:29

Yeah, music. Coldplay, you mentioned is one of my favorite bands as well. They're awesome. I can see why you would listen to that. They're inspiring. And they really, the music really, sort of reaches a lot further into your soul, than, you know, external experience. Tell me what your days are like day to day. What do you get up to? How do you start your day? And how do you move through the day?

Courtney 21:57

Now in quarantine?

Bill 21:59

Well, that's boring. No, not in quarantine, because we're all doing the same thing in quarantine nothing.

Courtney 22:05

Um, I'm just, yeah, so now, after the stroke. I'm originally from New York. So we actually moved back to Long Island three years ago, after the stroke. And so I go to PT two times a week. I go to speech two times a week. I travel I love to travel. I'm missing traveling. I'm, I just missed being at work. I know people love it. But you know.

Bill 23:06

It's because of the people that you're with. Not because of the work.

Courtney 23:17

I love to go to the beach. Long Island has like all the beaches, 15 minutes like, away. Now I'm doing crafting signing I take classes on Skillshare and YouTube, because I have to do anything about like, the time, and I'm really enjoying it.

Courtney 23:42

I think. If there's not quarantine, I actually would not, do it. And now like so happy. I'm like, I'm creating like pieces that my friends love my family love. And I'm doing holiday cards. So I don't know, I'm just really content now.

Bill 24:07

So you're creative. You're trying to find a way to express your creativity.

Bill 24:14

So when you're a kid, and you have muscular dystrophy, do you know that you're somehow a little different than other kids? Is there a point in time when you go hey hang on a second? I'm a bit different here.

Bill 24:31

And how does that play out in your life? What I'm trying to demonstrate to stroke survivors is that we, at some point in our lives, we get made aware that we are now different than that other person. And a lot of us in especially me at the beginning kind of struggle with why am I different? How am I different? Why did this happen to me? How does a little kid growing up with Muscular Dystrophy deal with the fact that They are different, because I know most of us just want to blend in.

Courtney 25:06

So I remember. So till middle school, I was walking, like, full time. And I can do like, pretty much everything in elementary school, but I had an aide and braces. So I was very sick, like insecure about my braces and the aid because people like, we're not bully me, but they were there, they were like, staring in the grocery store, like a mall like why are they looking at me, I'm like a normal, you know, kid in the grocery store.

Courtney 25:52

Until I think I was just like, I had so many doctors and braces, um, but I didn't know that it was progressive until Middle School think that middle school was so large that I didn't have the capability of, you know, walking and not getting sick every day because my muscles were tired.

Courtney 26:27

And I was just so embarrassed about the scooter. And, you know, every, obviously kids stared at me. And I think I was embarrassed and insecure for a long time until I moved to a new high school that was so small. And the kids really loved me, and they're my actually best friends now. So I think until high school, that was just a really tough time to blend in with braces and scooters.

Bill 27:13

So when the school was really large, it's very easy to kind of, not create strong relationships with people, but when it's small and intimate, you have an opportunity to create really strong relationships.

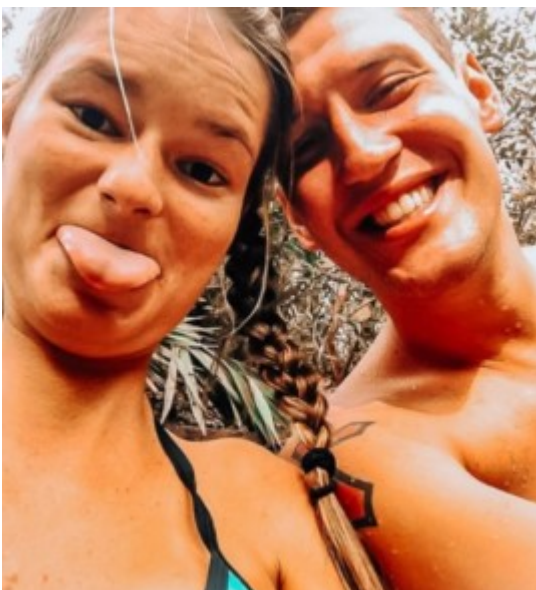
Courtney 27:28

Yeah. Until now, they're my best friends. And I'm lucky that my mom moved. And my mom, you know, the last school for high school was four floors, and an elevator. And I did freshman school, freshman year of that school, in high school, and I was just, like, so tired.

Courtney 28:01

I had no friends. I was just tired of that life. And my mom sister had a house 30 minutes from me. And my cousin went to North Shore. And you know, they had a really small school that like, I graduated with 125. And so it was so small, and one level no elevator. So I was really independent with that school.

Connecting with someone with a disability



Bill 28:43

Interesting. You're independent. So what do you think it is with kids that are the same age as you but in school who don't have a disability who doesn't understand what disability is like? What do you think is the issue with them connecting to somebody and making friends with somebody that has a disability? I'm thinking back to my days when I was a kid, I never knew anybody that had a disability.

Courtney 29:12

Yeah, that's what I was gonna say. Representation because I really had no one to really share this Muscular Dystrophy experience because I was around so much normal people. And we didn't get educated about disabilities. Like they had like the autism like, room and we know like autism, but not really Muscular Dystrophy or physical disabilities.

Bill 29:55

So Autism is more of something that is Visible like muscular dystrophy. But if you speak to somebody, you might become aware that they have a different way of communicating with autism. But the fact that you are in a school where nobody knows anyone else with a disability, perhaps those other children don't know how to approach you how to behave. They don't know how to be friends with somebody who is in a wheelchair.

Courtney 30:31

Yeah, I think now, social media has a very component of representation, because I was actually speaking with my girlfriend that has muscular dystrophy. In Michigan, she's 29. And we don't really have that representation until Facebook and groups and just Instagram and tik tok.

Courtney 31:04

I mean, it's all over now. And I'm so happy about it. But I think me, you know, me and my friend we're talking. Like we didn't even know about social security or disability checks until we're like, 25. You know, so we had. So minimal education about having a disease, when you're an adult, and going to college.

Bill 31:39

So even you who had muscular dystrophy, you didn't really know a lot about it.

Courtney 31:45

No, until three years ago, because my best friend, her mom is a disability lawyer, and she was like, you didn't know about Medicaid or getting aid for free. My mom

was spending her money to get aid, we didn't even know that New York pays for aids until I was 25.

Bill 32:09

That's nuts. That does remind me of stroke survivors. Stroke survivors have a stroke, and they don't know why it happened, what kind of stroke they had, what it affected, how to recover, what to eat, what not to eat, whether they should drink alcohol, or not drink alcohol.

Bill 32:27

And it's so strange, isn't it that we have this thing, and we don't know anything about it. And we hoping that somebody else will tell us about it. But they don't, no one really wakes up one day and says, these are all the things you need to know about stroke. Unless you get curious. You're not going to become educated about it.

Courtney 32:46

Yeah, I was like, after the stroke, really no one told me like after the stroke, like what's gonna happen. So I literally googled it and YouTubed it. And I taught myself and my mom and the groups on Facebook.

Bill 33:05

Isn't it amazing, we can do that. Now I remember my first blood vessel bleed, the first bleed in my brain happened in 2012. And that's not that long ago. But even then there was no information. And it was so difficult to get help. And I had to do it all myself. But now, I'm finding people have had a stroke maybe a month or two or three ago.

Intro 33:47

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, doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 34:16

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 34:35

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 guide. It's free.

Courtney 34:55

Absolutely just knowing that you know you can talk to us million, not a million but you know, thousands of people. And that I thought I was the youngest that had a stroke. And I was like, oh, okay, I'm not the youngest, like, I was just so I was just like, so surprised though. I was so young. And I thought, you know, old people have a stroke, not young people.

Bill 35:24

Yeah, it's crazy. People have stroke at every age, and we don't hear about it. We don't know about it. It's not spoken about. But it's good that we can find people. But it's terrible shit that people have had a strike a young age or any age. But it's kind of good that we can find them if they have had one so that we can relate to somebody, right?

Courtney 35:47

Yep, absolutely.

Bill 35:51

It's a best time I know this sounds weird, right. But it's probably the best time if you're going to have a stroke, it's the best time to have one because the Help is better than ever. The connection to other communities around the world is better than ever.

Bill 36:11

So many positives. But it's a crap way to find people. I mean, because of stroke or because of muscular dystrophy. It's so bizarre yeah, I remember speaking to a lot of other stroke survivors on my podcast, that have had a stroke many, many years ago, say, you know, 10, or 20 years ago, and even 30 years ago, where for maybe a decade, they didn't meet anyone else who had a stroke or didn't speak to anyone else about their stroke.

Bill 36:44

It just something that happened. And that was it, they never spoke about it. Because to find the group was a lot harder than it used to be. So imagine having 10 years of this stuff happened to you and build up in you and you haven't got anyone to talk with about .

Courtney 37:02

They don't really give you a life coach. Like after the stroke. Like you're all doing it on yourself like bye, see ya. Like thank God my mom is a nurse, thank God, you know, because I was just so uneducated about strokes.

Reasons to reach out after a stroke



Bill 37:30

It's one of the reasons why I also coach stroke survivors. It's exactly what you said. We need people that are going to help us get over the line in those really tough times when we don't know how to navigate it. And it's difficult. It was very difficult for me, but I'm very curious kind of guy.

Bill 37:49

So I reached out to people everywhere all over the place. But and then I started the podcast to meet other stroke survivors. That's why I started it. But what I realized was people needed guidance. Questions answered. And they needed their concerns to be heard.

Bill 38:08

And that's kind of what my coaching helps people do. It helps people feel better at a time when things are difficult. And also gives them ideas about where they can start looking for solutions. Because if you don't know where to start looking for solutions that could be out there, but you might not know how to get there.

Courtney 38:29

Lost for example, I was in Tampa, I had homecare for six months, I had a really good speech pathologists loved her. But you know, after I was like, okay, like, I'm doing well, but you know, like, I'm not like hundred percent. So I called every place in Tampa they were like, Oh, no, we can't see you. I was like, why? They're like, well, you're kind of good.

Courtney 39:08

Like, they don't really, like have the techniques to teach you like, okay, I was just so surprised. So I moved back to New York, and I called the speech pathologist, and I was like, I'll just go back. And she was like, yeah, I don't know why they didn't teach you in Tampa like, you can be here forever. I was like, thank you.

Bill 39:42

So they kind of maybe didn't have the resources to support somebody like you who is kind of good. Like, that's so weird. You're so well done. Courtney you're kind of good.

Courtney 39:57

Yeah, it's just so weird. I was like, ok. But you know, I had to learn it myself. And that's like, you know, not easy when you're 22 in college, and I had a plan, you know, I was gonna go to grad school and, you know, have my doctorate and therapy, and I was just so dumbfounded that 22 that I had a stroke.

Bill 40:24

I don't blame you at all. Courtney. Tell me about the times that you've spent in hospital, your muscular dystrophy. Does that make it so that you're at the hospital with doctors all the time?

Courtney 40:45

Yeah. So after the stroke, my mom was literally like, they're just not dumbfounded. But like, they kind of put me on muscular dystrophy, not the stroke. And they're like, Oh, you know, your arm's not going really, you know, come back. I was like, wow, that's like, a negative comment, like, 22 college girl,

it was just very upsetting that they saw me as a muscular dystrophy, not a stroke survivor.

Bill 41:29

Right. So they had always seen you as Courtney, who always had muscular dystrophy. She's had stroke, and they didn't adjust the way that they approached your health and well being?

Courtney 41:44

Absolutely.

Bill 41:49

So do you still have regular appointments now? Extra appointments for both Muscular Dystrophy and stroke?

Courtney 41:57

Yes, I do. So unfortunately, in July, I had another clot, a blood clot in my kidney. And I went to the hospital for seven days, and they don't know why the clot was there. I'm on Coumadin. And it was honestly like a scary situation. It was a pandemic COVID I'm in the hospital. I'm just freaked out like, Oh my god, I have COVID blah, blah, blah. And they're like, Yeah, I don't really know why that happen. Like, probably 10 doctors? they don't know.

Bill 42:53

I'm gonna read a couple of the posts that you've got on your Instagram first one I'm going to read is you've survived 100% of your bad days. What's that about for you?

Courtney 43:10

I think what I told you, just riding the waves and getting out and you know, you don't know how much you have in life. And that stroke taught me like, you don't even know if you're even gonna wake up tomorrow. So after the hospital or the stroke Yes, I was angry and frustrated and I have a muscular dystrophy. That's so rare that no one knows about. But I think I'm not gonna be sad and angry because I'm wasting a day.

Bill 44:00

So is a bad day still a good day? Can a bad day be a good day?

Courtney 44:07

Yep, I had a bad day like two weeks ago, and I cried to my therapist. My best friend came over and I was laughing. And I'm like, I just thank God. I was like, I'm just so blessed that my best friend called me. I had a bad day and I'm laughing two hours later of the crying session.

Bill 44:36

That's so cool. That a bad day can still be a good day. At some point, we can turn that around, even if it's just for a laugh, or a friend or something.

Courtney 44:48

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that lesson taught me too. I have bad days, but I'm not gonna weep for my bad days, because I don't know what happened and no one knows what happened. I can't change it.

Bill 45:15

Can you have a good days that become bad days? And then does that muck you up? Or is that just one of those waves? I'm going to wait until the good comes back into my life.

Courtney 45:32

So me yeah, waves, I'm not like a, I have a bad day forever. I have a bad moment for probably like two hours or three, whatever it should be. But I can't, like keep up with madness and frustration and blaming myself. Because I party and in college and I had a stroke. It, just, it's a risk for my anxiety and my body to have my so much. And it's just like, I have to just stay calm. And it's hard. But you know, you said it. I survived the hardest days.

You don't grow when you're comfortable

Bill 46:30

Yeah, you said it's hard. But you also say in another one of your posts, you said, you don't grow when you're comfortable?

Courtney 46:39

Yeah. I mean, the stroke taught me, I was just I think I didn't see myself as a disability advocate. Because I was just so around normal people, and I just forgot about my disability. And I think I was just Oh, that's good. Like, just don't, you know, don't think about it, like the future. But now I'm just so advocacy. And I

talk about and I FaceTime, my, you know, friends that had a stroke, and I'm just so like, amped up to just, like, have this conversation and just change one person or just the thought.

Bill 47:32

You know, some people who have a stroke think that it's not growth, they think I had a stroke, I'm experiencing a disability, I'm in a wheelchair, that's not growth. That's going backwards. So what is growth during that time, because there's this idea that growth, look has to look a certain way, like, how do you grow? What is the growth that happens?

Courtney 48:00

So moving back to New York, because I had to, after the stroke was a really hard lesson, because I obviously love my college and my friends, and, you know, in Tampa, but and I thought, and it did, you know, New York is a blessing because they have Medicaid, and they pay my aides and, you know, we're having the not a normal life.

Courtney 48:37

But, yeah, and moving was quite of a challenge, because I had to not forget about what happened in Tampa. But I had to love myself to start a new one here. And I think that took several months, I think the summer that, okay, you had the stroke, and you move, this is your home, and you have to get accustomed, you know, to go to a new doctor and explained the whole thing, you know, like, I think, to love myself and not blame myself for that stroke up now. It's a good lesson.

Bill 49:30

So there's growth there because instead of blaming yourself, to finding a way to just accept what happened, kind of, and then allow yourself to just love yourself. I mean, that's growth. Is that weird? Have you not loved yourself until now?

Courtney 49:49

Yeah, because I, I think what, you know, I had caregivers in elementary and middle school and high school and college and I was just codependent for so long. And I was just so codependent for my friends in Tampa. And I had to move home and just create a new, you know, no personality, but I had to, you know, talk to my high school friends and, you know, tell them the story and what happened and I'm okay, just, you know, remember, like, I had a stroke.

Courtney 50:31

But yeah, it was hard. But now I'm just so thankful that I have my high school friends that love me so much and have such an amazing support system here. And I accepted it and I think, to accept that, you know, you have a disability, and you had a stroke. And it's okay, you know, to cry because I miss my arm, like I you know, I have daily crying because I miss texting, you know, but when I, cry and, and then the next day, I'm so happy and I don't think about my arm. I'm just okay. I'm okay. Like I have my family. My friends, my dog, a roof over my head food. You know? I'm okay.

Medical Marijuana helps with Muscular Dystrophy And Stroke



Bill 51:35

You have a lot. Yeah. Now, in couple of the photos on Instagram on your Instagram page. You are doing the Snoop Doggy Dog, got a joint in your mouth. Smoking weed. And your comment says under the influence above the ignorance. Tell me about weed and how you use it and how it's helped you?

Courtney 52:04

Yeah. So, freshman year of college before the show, I had a stomach issue. Basically, I was so skinny that my stomach were not moving. And I would throw up every hour. And it was a very, very hard to accept that. And I had food I forgot the thing, the feeding tube.

Courtney 52:44

And I was just so embarrassed, like, Oh my god, I was actually 20. And my mom is a she loves organic food. She's like, you know, whole foods nut. And the formula then was not organic, and I hated it. And my brother was a stoner in, high school, and he hated it. And he was like, just smoke.

Courtney 53:19

You'll get the munchies and so I'm like, oh my God. Oh, so my mom's like, okay, I'll buy her a vaporizer because we didn't have like the carts you know now. Yeah. So I was just like, okay, fine, like, all right, that vaporizer was my best friend. Because I didn't throw up. I tolerated yogurt. The feeding tube came out. I was like, fuck it.

Courtney 53:49

Me and my mom went to my nutritionist and he was like, just instapot, the soup, you know, instapot everything, just like blended blah, blah, blah. And I smoked weed for like, probably like two months. And I was well, I literally went to the doctor. And he was like, how, how?

Courtney 54:17

I was like medical marijuana. And he was like, Are you kidding? I was like, No, I'm, honestly I'm eating a smokin steak. And he's like, a steak. And he was just like, so dumbfounded. And I'm like, yeah, and then I was like, I love weed. And I really didn't have like the education of medical marijuana because there was like, my brothers, you know, buy and like, you know, whatever.

Courtney 54:50

But when I got better and moved to Tampa, I was like, Oh my god, this magical you know, leaf helped me to move to Tampa like tolerate steak and you know everything I was just so fascinated that like I was hungry every day because in muscular dystrophy we're thin because we don't really tolerate like, whole meals.

Courtney 55:20

I was eating like three pizzas like three full-size slices like anything and I was like it was like a miracle and after the stroke, it was just I ate edibles for a while because my mom didn't want me to smoke for a while and the edibles I take them daily every day. And it really it actually works for anxiousness. But why I really love it is it relaxes my muscles.

Bill 56:05

Wow there are so many benefits so does it make you stoned the edibles?

Courtney 56:11

Oh yeah, I just watch TV, and movies. Yeah, we watched the Grinch last night.

Bill 56:19

Okay, cool. So the edibles make you stoned because they're basically just an edible version of the extract from the marijuana leaf. But medical marijuana doesn't make you stoned.

Courtney 56:32

No, it does.

Bill 56:34

It does too.

Courtney 56:35

I just you have to get a card and then in New York, you have to get a card. It's like \$200 and then you have to go to the dispensary. But like the dispensary really pricey. And my brother has a friend in Colorado so he just really hooks me up. And really it just the benefit of smoking. I mean and edibles. I love edibles. I'm like a fan of edibles. Anytime, any type. I love edibles. I went to California last year. Oh my god, I was like, in a candy store. It was insane.

Bill 57:24

And so many benefits. I've had weed plenty of times before the stroke. Not so much after the stroke. But I did like the way that it does. You know chill me out put me in a really cool wiped out zone, the munchies. I never really needed it to weight or anything but the munchies was something fun to experience, you know, just going nuts and eating everything and anything.

Bill 57:51

But I can see how it's really beneficial for people who have appetite issues, and how much and how much a simple thing like having an edible can change somebody's life from being really unwell because they can't eat because of muscular dystrophy and really needs improvement.

Courtney 58:14

Yeah. Oh my god, damn, like 20 pounds. My batteries were like, you've been at 60

for 10 years. And now you're, like 75 pounds. Like how? Like, wait, I just thought we'd go. Is it?

Bill 58:34

Isn't it sad that so many people have missed out the opportunity to experience the benefits of that because of some crazy rules around what are what it is?

Courtney 58:45

Oh, and you know, I said that the judgement so like now I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna smoke. Like, they'll judge me. Okay, people drink all the time. All the time. So I just say that. I'm like, yeah, It's not gonna be judged.

Bill 59:08

So 75 pounds is really like those still, isn't it?

Courtney 59:13

Yeah, and I'm still adding pounds, but it's so hard. And my girlfriend Maria that has muscular dystrophy. She said the same thing. She was like, so thin and she just, like, got a cart of the pen. And she's been smoking for probably like five years. And she's got, like, gained weight and has munchies every day.

Bill 59:45

That's fascinating. I just love hearing stories like that where, you know, before people would judge somebody having a joint or a smoke, and they have no idea what they're really judging and why people do what they do or not and now here we go. There's so much again, conversation about the benefits of something that's been so badly treated by governments all around the planet, making it illegal putting people in jail for destroying people's lives.

Bill 1:00:17

And the benefits are so huge and the people who are interfering in our lives with making something illegal, have never had muscular dystrophy, they've never had a stroke, they've never had issues. And now, they're the ones making decisions on whether somebody that's got a condition should or shouldn't use something.

Courtney 1:00:46

Right? And the prices are just jacked up, like, thank God, my mom has the salary to pay, like 85 of like a gram for a pen. But like, there's poor people that can't get \$90 to get a pen. That's wild.

Bill 1:01:11

Yeah.

Courtney 1:01:14

Like \$1 like, that's just it doesn't make sense.

Bill 1:01:20

So people like that would get their own supply through regular so in California.

Courtney 1:01:31

Right, and California and Colorado.

Bill 1:01:35

So the other states haven't made it legal yet. So if you live in California and Colorado, it doesn't cost \$90?

Courtney 1:01:44

No, oh my god, When I saw that while I went to California, LA and I went to the dispensary, the first one, and they're like, Okay, this is like, gonna be like 100 bucks. I had like, four pansy edibles. I was like, Oh, that's like \$400. Yeah. And it's crazy. Because like here, they only sell the oils not the bud in the like dispensary. And that's like, not there. You know, I don't know why governments, obviously not smoke, you know, place the rules.

Bill 1:02:29

I think it's a flawed system. But anyhow, look, it's a decent system. It works most of the time. I don't know. It's a big conversation. It's not for me to have I'm not really that interested in that. But what I'm interested in is just things that are helpful and beneficial, should be made available to people.

Bill 1:02:48

And that's it. And it shouldn't be up to me who's never had a stroke before to decide whether you who has had a stroke or has had muscular dystrophy. It's not. I shouldn't be deciding on what you should or shouldn't do. Like, in that situation. I think it's crazy. But I kind of see that. It may be started with supposedly doing the right thing and helping people and I don't know what but it seems like the decision to ban marijuana going back however many years ago, 100 years ago, was maybe good for the time, and it's definitely flawed now. It's not necessary.

Courtney 1:03:31

And we have like the study and the research I mean, it helps so much people.

Bill 1:03:41

Courtney, I've had such a pleasure chatting and, getting to know you. It's been such fun. Thank you so much for being on the podcast. I really appreciate it. If people want to get in touch with you. Where would be the best place to find you.

Courtney 1:03:56

Actually, my Instagram is easiest place. It's @courtneygabus.

Bill 1:04:20

It's all good. I'm gonna post the link anyway, I just thought I'd give you a bit of a hard time by letting you spell it out. Don't stress our part, I'll post the link. I'm glad to have found you on. I'm glad to have you on the podcast. You're an amazing person. You're a fascinating person and just thank you and keep doing what you're doing and I love what you're doing. And that's why I needed to share your story.

Courtney 1:05:05

Thank you and I had so much fun, I can't believe it's up.

Intro 1:05:14

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Intro 1:05:41

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Intro 1:05:58

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Intro 1:06:19

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Intro 1:06:32

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Intro 1:06:48

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