

# My Husband Had A Stroke - Royce Morales

When Royce's husband (Michael) of almost thirty years suddenly had a massive stroke, Royce's world was turned upside down. As a spiritual teacher and personal development coach, she started diligently applying everything she had been teaching others for decades to help navigate this confusing, terrifying time.

Royce wrote a book about her experience with her husband's stroke [follow the link to find it on Amazon](#)

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Transcript:

Royce Morales 0:00

This thought comes to me a lot. When I'm in the doldrums, shall we say where would it have been easier if you just died? You know because you're kind of being with a person that is not the same person that married or you know it's just that fleeting thought of Ah you know, Ah yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 0:22

look at care of would think that and that's not a bad thing. So whoever is listening, who has thought that you know, do not feel bad about it. Of course, if he had passed away long term, you know, there would have been things that were completely different, but then you would have been going through the emotional pain and trauma of all that kind of stuff. And that wouldn't have been so good so there is no better or worse or anything there's always a situation around stroke

whether somebody lives and passes away amazingly well afterward or not so well you're never going to reconcile it

Intro 0:56

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

Bill Gasiamis 1:04

so Royce welcome to the program. Thank you. Glad to be here. Glad to finally have you here sorry that I forgot our Skype session morning

Royce Morales 1:16

It really is. Okay.

Intro 1:17

Yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 1:18

morning my time. But not your time.

Royce Morales 1:21

Nope. Just about five. almost five o'clock my time.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24

How's the weather in California?

Royce Morales 1:27

Well, I don't know if you can see behind me, but we're having a yet again. Another storm. We live up in the mountains. So we're between the snow in the rain this year. It's just been nonstop. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 1:39

So that's a good thing or a bad thing that it's snowing in raining.

Royce Morales 1:43

Well, my husband loves it because he loves to just sit around and do his jigsaw puzzles all day long. But I go a little crazy

Bill Gasiamis 1:52

as the wife of a stroke survivor, you're entitled to go a little crazy.

Royce Morales 1:58

I feel that way too. Yes.

Bill Gasiamis 2:01

stroke survivors tend to be a little bit needy.

Royce Morales 2:04

Yes. Just a little,

Bill Gasiamis 2:08

Tell me a little bit about what happened to your husband.

## About Michael Morales



Royce Morales 2:12

Well, he was 56 and in perfect health. So we thought and vegetarian for years, very holistic. He was a massage therapist. Very, very active, and athletic, we owned a business together. Everything was fine. And all of a sudden, about a week before the stroke. I noticed that his eye was beet red. That's strange. I noticed that he wasn't. He's a math genius, literally a math genius. And so I noticed that he wasn't able to put sums together real fast. And I thought that really odd, oh well it must be stress because the business we own was a retail shop gallery.

And it was in November. So I just figured, oh, it must be, you know, fourth quarter stress, you know, getting ready for the holidays. And I had gone to bed. It was November 13, I believe something like that. I had just gone to bed. And he

said he was just going to stay in the living room and just kind of work on relaxing and maybe feel a little bit better because he was feeling weird.

At about three in the morning, I felt him poking my leg. And what's going on? He said I feel weird. And I said, Okay, well, what does that mean? And he said I feel weird. And I said, you know, one of those things that kind of comes to when you least expect this will stick out your tongue.

Yeah, I know, stuck out his tongue. And it was, you know, he couldn't do it. So, my God, I think you're having a stroke. And I couldn't say those words. But I knew it, put clothes on, rushed him out the door, got him to the hospital within five minutes, and they said yeah he's having a stroke. And I was I knew nothing about strokes. All I knew was, oh, he'll be better in a couple of hours.

So they started, you know, they hooked him up to all the machines and did all the things that doctors did. And nobody, you know, nobody said anything to me. Really. They asked me a lot of questions. But you know, and at that point, he couldn't talk and he couldn't move. You know, it was a mess. And

Bill Gasiamis 4:26

So we are recording in March 2019. When did the stroke happen?

Royce Morales 4:33

It's been a little over four years. So yeah, 2014 November?

Bill Gasiamis 4:39

Well,

Royce Morales 4:40

yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 4:40

So in November 2014, I had surgery to remove the blood vessel that was damaged in my head.

Royce Morales 4:47

Oh, wow.

Bill Gasiamis 4:48

And I kept bleeding. So I'm curious, what type of stroke did your husband have?

Didn't you know?

Royce Morales 4:53

Yes, it's ischaemic or ischemic?

Yes. Yeah. And it's affected his right side. So he has no movement in his hand his arm, he's sort of able to walk and he lost speech.

Bill Gasiamis 5:08

Okay,

Royce Morales 5:09

we've been going to a zillion therapies for four years. And it's, you know, things are slowly getting better, but not at all like it used to be yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 5:17

Yeah, so, what caused the blockage, in the particular vessel that was affected?

Royce Morales 5:24

There, they have no idea. It's just one of those things. His dad had a stroke. So they think it might be genetic, she had high blood pressure, which we didn't really know about. He was type two diabetic, which we kind of knew, we were, you know, he had eliminated sugar from his diet. So we knew that was under control, but everything else was very holistic and very anti-Western medicine, shall we say? So, you know, it was just a complete and utter shock. It really was.

Bill Gasiamis 5:55

Yeah, so, Royce, your, your comment, was interesting that you thought that he'd be okay, in a few days, or something along

Royce Morales 6:06

Oh, I thought, a few hours,

Bill Gasiamis 6:09

Isn't it interesting? We, no one really know almost anything about strokes into what happens to them. And I remember having a bleed in my brain and the people that I knew my family and friends who are concerned said the same kind of thing to me, I, you know, it's no big deal. You know, it'll pass it's just a small bleed, this thing happens from time to time. And it's like they knew about this bleed, that happens from time to time.

I don't know how they knew about that. And they were really confident I don't know whether they were trying to make me feel good or what? they're really confident that you know, this will pass it won't be it won't be a big deal, we're seven years later and we're I wouldn't call it past yet. You know, we're still in the thick of it, and I'm a lot better and feeling better. But there are some things that I have that are ongoing, that are not going away in a hurry. By the same you know, by the looks of things. So, how long did your husband stay in the hospital?

Royce Morales 7:02

He was in regular acute care he was in, he moved, he moved into ICU, which was my first clue that there was something big going on, and he was there for a couple of days. And then they moved him into acute care. He was there for 10 days. And then I found out about an amazing rehab hospital in Downey, which is about half an hour from us miraculously I got in I must admit, I had a contact there that got me in and got us in, he was there for almost six weeks. Yeah, and he's been an outpatient there ever since. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 7:42

And when he woke up from the stroke he immediately lost the use of the right side of his body. And then was there a time of rehabilitation or what happened after that?

Royce Morales 7:55

Yeah, there was a ton of rehab. Um looking back on it they didn't do as much rehab in the acute care hospital that they started to do in the rehab hospital, that they did a few things, you know, it wasn't their specialty. But once he was moved into the rehab hospital, he had probably at least five or six hours of rehab a day. So it was very intense. And I guess they say, in the first six months, that's when the most change happens. So yeah, yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 8:30

So at the moment, is able to walk? Let's um let me first ask you, what's your husband's name?

Royce Morales 8:36

Michael.

Bill Gasiamis 8:37

Let's just call him Michael. Instead of he and him and his.

Royce Morales 8:40

Okay.

Bill Gasiamis 8:43

So, um, so Michael is not able to walk at the moment, is he able to stand independently or do anything like that is he walking with a walker, how does he get around?

Royce Morales 8:55

he's walking with a quad cane, and he can walk for maybe five minutes.

But I think the most effect that the stroke had on him was in the frontal lobe area. I just thought that he had gotten lazy from this. And many of his therapists finally said, you know, Royce, he's not lazy. He just doesn't care because it affected his frontal lobe. So he's not motivated to get better, which was so bizarre because he was so active. And so he was a huge participant in so many different things. And for him not to care is just like living with a stranger. So yes, very bizarre.

Bill Gasiamis 9:38

Yeah. So it would be very difficult for you. Because in the beginning, you don't know how the stroke impacting his brain affects him, and how it changes in he just sees something that's different. You think, come on, don't, you really want to get better? Aren't you motivated? And what I don't realize is that there is a part of the brain that causes or supports motivation. And when that goes away, it goes away.

Royce Morales 10:06

Yes. And so it's become my job. And I tell him this several times a day, sometimes nicely, it's my job to remind him. Well, you know, the old Michael will be very upset to see how this new Michael is so you know. Why don't we do some more physical therapy? And why don't we try harder and what, you know, and I have a home program that I do with him all the time, you know, but it's really, I'm the one behind all of it. He, If it were up to him, he would just sit around all day and do jigsaw puzzles, really, and truly,

Bill Gasiamis 10:40

How does that affect you personally? How do you feel about that? Now you're living in a home with a person who doesn't appear to have the same personality as the person who you really looked up to and admired, although you probably

look up to Michael and admire him now, still, you know, there's this massive comparison that you, that people make and see the difference of. I went through it with my partner. She noticed some changes in me that she wasn't pleased with, but it wasn't my fault. How does that make you feel?

Royce Morales 11:13

I'll tell you is a roller coaster that's for sure. Think I have gone I've really run the gamut of every emotion in the book, from complete and utter sadness, to hopelessness, to anger, to guilt to sort of acceptance.

Yeah, I think it just depends on the minute. You know, there are some times that I just go, I can't believe this, this is my life, you know, and there are other times that you are still the same person who I fell in love with, you know, we've been together for 33 years. And that hasn't changed, you know, and he's in there years in there. And it comes out once in a while, not verbally, but it comes out in another way. So, yeah, it's been I must say, this is probably the biggest challenge I've ever experienced in my life ever.

Bill Gasiamis 12:10

Yeah,

Royce Morales 12:11

yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 12:11

So what's interesting, and what I'd like to do is try to paint a picture for people about you know what carers go through, because I imagine now you've become his carer. So how has that impacted your life as well, I imagine the two of you would have been actively working, bringing an income in and now this is a completely different situation four years later. So I imagined that Michale is no longer able to earn an income and now you're his carer, how has that shifted everything?

Royce Morales 12:43

it has shifted everything? Yes, well, like I said, we owned our own business and he was a massage therapist as well. And so we have to close the business. Needless to say, at first I thought, all just take them to the shop with me, and you can just sit there all day. And that didn't work. So close the business. And in California, there's a program called in-home support services where if you're on Medical, you



can qualify to be somebody's caregiver through this in-home Support Service Program, which is great.

So that's how we live, you know, he gets a little bit of disability, I get social security and I get in the IHSS payments every month. So we moved up to the mountains and we love it here. You know, we're away from the hustle and bustle of LA and it's actually quite peaceful. And I do you know, freelance writing, and I do all kinds of other stuff on the side as well. So, yeah, it literally changed everything.

Bill Gasiamis 13:54

Yeah. So you had to find a way to reinvent yourselves so that you can still continue to support yourselves and do things differently because everything is different now.

Royce Morales 14:06

Yes, definitely.

Bill Gasiamis 14:08

Yeah it's an experience that I think every stroke survivor and care goes through and I know that a lot of the things that I wanted to do that I was motivated to get back to work to do and I was lucky because the damage that happened to me wasn't so dramatic that I couldn't walk for months and months it was a number of months where I had to regain my ability to walk and use of my left arm

I really wanted to get back to work because, you know, we had two kids, you know, we have a lot of outgoings, you know, just like any other person and it was not being able to go back to work made it feel really like I was no, I was no good. I was not able to contribute i. You know, it makes you can consider your self-worth, and you're your manhood you know even all that kind of stuff. So it's really bizarre, this thing that you experienced, and it's not your fault, but you still blame yourself for those things that have happened, and so on.

So what about you? Did you have any kind of guilt or regret or anything like that that you experienced?

## **Feeling guilty after witnessing a stroke**

Royce Morales 15:18

Did you peg it? Yep, guilt is my middle name. Yeah. Because I kept thinking I should have known what about that red eye, how could I have ignored that he was so stressed? And he wasn't the same person for two weeks before the stroke, and I kept sensing it. I intuitively feel it. But I didn't do anything about it, because I just chalked it all off. So that's taken me a long time to get past, you know, and I've had to really work hard now, to alleviate that sense of responsibility, which is also known as guilt. Yeah. But you know, the truth is he wasn't responsible as well, you know, it was both of us. So, yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 16:05

Yeah, I would say that there's no such thing as responsibility in that situation. When you noticed something was wrong. When you really knew you actually did something about it, both of you. He said I'm feeling weird you said, what does that mean? OK poke your tongue out. You did all the right things. But how does a red eye ever mean it's a stroke?

Royce Morales 16:26

Yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah. In fact, I've told many doctors that story. And they all kind of say, well, I've never heard of a red eye meaning a stroke, you know, but looking at it now, It's like, Oh, yeah, well, something was bleeding in there. And it was causing his client to get red. So that was just his way of manifesting the symptoms.

Bill Gasiamis 16:46

Yeah, and the other thing is, you're not aware of what type two diabetes means, even though he was on the verge of being on a type two diabetic or not, you're not really aware of what that means, because, you know, how does it mean stroke, and all this kind of stuff. And he also had high blood pressure. So even that doesn't necessarily compute people that that can lead to stroke. But they're two of the main risk factors. Looking back, you know, and now that we're aware are, high blood pressure and type two diabetes for stroke.

And this is the challenge this is the challenge of trying to raise awareness for people is they don't connect the dots between stroke and you know, what seemed to be benign conditions like type two diabetes, which can take a tablet four or high blood pressure, which you could take a tablet for.

So this medical system that you, you know, find it difficult to be kind of a part of

like I was initially and is that they teach people that you can take a tablet, you'll sort out the high blood pressure. And if you take a tablet, you'll sort out your type two diabetes.

They don't give you enough information in order to affect your life in a positive way. So you're not needing to take a tablet for type two diabetes, and you're not needing to take a tablet for high blood pressure, but you find natural ways to heal and remedy that which is potentially dealing with emotional, you know, distress, high levels of stress at work, eating better, you know, there's a whole bunch of things we can do. But they're not keen on us doing that. So I get your, you know, your issue with the medical methodology or system. But let's face it, without it, I wouldn't be here and Michael wouldn't be here.

Royce Morales 18:41

Exactly, yes.

Bill Gasiamis 18:43

So they're good at getting you back out of the hospital and at home, which I think is where the real talent of the medical profession exists. And they're good at dealing with symptoms at a small moment in time, but they're not good at dealing with ongoing recovery. And that's where we have to take responsibility for that. And you're left alone to do that anyway. So if you don't take responsibility for it, you really struggle and you suffer more than you need to. So that's the way I see it.

So you took to writing to share your story. And that's, I think, how I came across your specific post on Instagram. I saw your post and I looked into it and found that you had written a book about your experience. Tell me a little bit about what motivated you to write this book.

Royce Morales 19:40

Well, there I was sitting in the hospital with Michael, and not really knowing what to do. We had a lot of friends, a lot of clients, a lot of customers that didn't know what was going on. So I put this little tiny post telling everybody that Michael had a stroke, and we're at the hospital and, you know, I would keep them posted.

Morales Well, within minutes, I had hundreds of responses, literally hundreds of responses. And I just thought, Okay, well, that's interesting. And I just started doing longer and longer posts and at one point, several people all at the same

time, said to me, you know, these posts are really not only informative, but you're like, sharing from your, your, your heart, you know. I am a spiritual teacher, also.

And, I decided to just be very authentic in my posts. But each time I would, I would share something it would be, I would share what was going on, but I would talk about it in sort of a sort of spiritual way, I would say this is going on, but this is the lesson I'm learning from it, or this is what Michael is doing and this is how I'm seeing it in the spiritual viewpoint. And so, so many people said that I needed to put these thoughts together and turn them into a book because it would be very helpful for other people, you know, going through similar things.

So when I took Michael home, every time I would have a spare minute I would, I would do another post and send it out. And then I started putting them all together. And within about a year, I had, you know, a 350-page book, and low and behold, there it was

Bill Gasiamis 21:22

Wow

Royce Morales 21:23

and I self-published and the rest is history.

Bill Gasiamis 21:27

What's the book called?

Royce Morales 21:30

Yeah, so it's called back, and then whatever it's called, semi-colon, rebirth after stroke. And when I started writing it I was thinking, Well, you know, I'll just write it until he gets better. That's where the rebirth after a stroke came from. And at the end of the book, I said, Well, this is the end of our first year, and he's, we're still working at it.

So I'm hoping that I transmit the idea, that strokes do take a long time, and to never give up hope. There are so many people at the rehab hospital that we go to as an outpatient that stop us in the hall and just take me by the shoulders and say, Don't give up, just don't ever give up. And these people have been coming in for 10 years, 20 years, and they still make progress so you know, I've taken that to heart.

# Negative Neuroplasticity as a stroke side effect

Bill Gasiamis 22:24

Yeah, that's fair enough, that's a good thing to take to heart. One of the things with a stroke that people don't realize is that the recovery continues. And sometimes there's ah, we talk about neuroplasticity, you know, the ability for the brain to change itself into, but there's also another form of neuroplasticity that people aren't aware of. And that's negative neural plasticity, which is neuroplasticity. But you can unlearn stuff as well.

So you can sit there and decide that you're not going to get better. And in fact, you're going to grow the neurons that support you're not going to get better and you won't get better. Or you can sit there and go, Well, I'm going to continue to try and get better, and you will continue to try and get better. I definitely say that what I feel is always there never goes away, but I am better every day, than it was the day before.

And that makes me feel emotionally, better at least, and then if my emotions kept buoyant, then that makes me forget about what I'm experiencing in my hand, or in my leg, or, you know when I'm tired. And that kind of creates a better version of me ongoing, even though that experience is still the same, the way I deal with it rationalizes that it's better, and therefore, I am a better version of myself. You know

Royce Morales 23:50

absolutely yeah

Bill Gasiamis 23:51

And the other thing that's interesting is that I recently read a study from a book by Dr. Norman Doidge, who talks about the brain's way of healing is the topic of the book. And that particular book talks about how, after many, many years of getting people who can't move limbs and retraining them, you know, with different versions of training they gain improvements in the limbs that haven't been able to use.

And one of the things is for people who have, you know, paralysis on one side is, especially with arms is to, they do an exercise, I'm not sure if it's called restriction, it's a restriction exercise or something like that, where they tie a tie

the good arm, you know, to the body with a sling just for a few hours so that if that person needs to go and get a glass of water, they have no choice but to use the arm that doesn't work as well.

Royce Morales 24:56

Yeah, I've heard about that

Bill Gasiamis 24:57

Yeah. And what that does is that creates a level of a different version of retraining that because you can't do with your other arm and if you can't do with your other arm at all, well, then you have to start getting movement back in the arm that is, not supposed, you know, is not really working to its fullest extent. So something to consider, perhaps, I'm not sure if you've heard of that, or what other exercises people have told you guys to do. But that was something that I read about just recently, I thought I'd share.

Royce Morales 25:29

Yeah, I've had several therapists mentioned that to me. And every time they mentioned it, they say, they're not really sure if they use it, or if it still using it actually works or not that they have talked to me about it. So it just sounds so I don't know. Scary torturess!

Bill Gasiamis 25:50

Well, yeah, if you experience torturous, then it would be torturous if the way that you, however, if you're the kind of person who thinks about a bit of tough love, or hard love, whatever you want,

Royce Morales 26:08

right?

Bill Gasiamis 26:08

Then it's not so bad, you know, it's a loving thing. And what it does, it doesn't really restrict the terribly so that the person is in pain or anything, it just stops them from being able to lift up at the elbow and out, you know, to get that movement just for a few hours, or even 10 minutes or 15 minutes at the beginning. And it is just to see whether or not that person can get motivated to move now, I know that Michael has been challenged with being motivated,

Royce Morales 26:36

yes,

Bill Gasiamis 26:37

and that's not his fault, but something that was caused, by the injury that he experienced. So that might be a little bit more challenging for you guys to set that up. But something to consider at least. And for people listening, perhaps, who haven't considered that yet. Maybe they can also consider that.

Royce Morales 26:57

Yes, very interesting. It really is I'll have to talk to his therapist about that, yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 27:02

So tell me a little bit about how it carer, go about becoming educated in the space that you needed to? Not formally I imagine, but you're one day before the stroke you're just a normal person, you're going about your things running a business, and all of a sudden, you need to be a carer. I imagined it as a steep learning curve. How did you find yourself dealing with what you needed to know?

Royce Morales 27:27

Well, I started observing every single therapist that worked with him, and they would all say to me, you have to participate. You have to do this, you have to learn this. And I really resisted at first, because of course, he was going to be better in just a matter of a week or so. So I didn't really need to learn it. But I also found and I would say this to all of the people that were working with him, he had a stroke with my brain turned to mush.

I couldn't I couldn't comprehend what people were saying to me to have, can you repeat this, I'd have to write it down. They would put little signs up in his room. For me, it was horrible. I mean, I literally couldn't keep anything I couldn't retain any information, even to the point of, you know, where they would kind of teach me how to walk with him to be on his right side, and, you know, raised his leg and do all that stuff. I couldn't do it. You know. And so finally, when it was time to leave the hospital his wonderful physical therapist said, okay, you're on your own.

And he had never taught me how to get into a car. And I was like, freaking out, what do I do? How do I get them in the car, you know, says well, you'll figure it out. And I did. And I had to, you know, but I think a lot of it was, was bad. And it just slowly started to come back to me and took him home. And he fell a couple of times, I had to figure out how to get them up. And all that stuff. And all the

training that I had witnessed for six weeks came back to me, but I know a lot of it was me resisting. I didn't want this role. So I didn't I didn't want to hear it. A La la la.

But yeah, it was really tough

Bill Gasiamis 29:10

And fair enough! Why would you want that role? Why would anyone want that role,

Royce Morales 29:13

yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 29:14

and I can understand why you would resist it. You know, your whole identity is being challenged. Now, you know, you were a wife, now you've got to be a carer. And now you've got to learn all these skills that, you know, quite frankly, no one wants to know these skills because no one wants their loved one to be on. Well, so you need to know this feels true.

Royce Morales 29:33

Yes, absolutely. Yeah. And I think I guess for me, you know, because he's, he's become kind of childlike to he is sort of he does silly, goofy things that he never would do as an adult. You know, he's a very funny guy. He has a very funny sense of humor. But now he does things that are something a three-year-old would do, you know? and so I have to have to say, no Michael, we don't burp like that in public, or, you know, things like that. Like, now I have to be his mom to Oh, my God. So, yeah, this is pretty interesting.

Bill Gasiamis 30:12

Yeah. Wow. So, you know, this is the thing that people don't get about people with stroke. And why I needed to do this podcast was to raise awareness, and give people an insight into how challenging it is, you know, our community needs to band together in any way that we can to support each other. How do you go about supporting yourself now? So we're talking about emotionally because your well-being would have been, you know, tested as well. So, how do you go about trying to be well,

Royce Morales 30:48



I have some very dear friends who very lovingly allow me to express my emotions, which is just thank you. But Michael, you know, my husband really does he, he and I have always had a relationship where there was not a drop that was ever withheld between the two of us. You know, if somebody if he was upset, we would talk about it. If I was scared, he would listen to me, you know, there was never any barrier between us at all.

So now, you know, if I'm feeling the slightest bit annoyed or scared, or whatever it is, I'm feeling he knows it. And he'll just say, you know, Come on, tell me what's going on. And he just listens, you know, and I know, he understands, you know, because he is in there, that that's been the greatest blessing of all the fact that that I'm able to just still talk to him and express what I'm going through and take care of myself in that way. Um, but yeah, I think that's, that's basically all I need somebody to really listen.

Bill Gasiamis 31:55

Yeah, Royce are you comfortable discussing intimacy?

Royce Morales 32:01

Sure! there is none.

Bill Gasiamis 32:06

So how is that? How do you come? You know, how do you deal with that as well, because, you know, that's something that happens, the stroke survivor often can't be intimate and wants to be is Michael in that space, where he's missing that wondering where that went, how we can get it back

Royce Morales 32:29

he does even know, it's the weirdest thing he doesn't know, body parts. In fact, one of our friends came to visit him and the rehab hospital. And I was telling him, you know, you asked Michael, where his head is, he has no idea. You know, where's your hand? He has no idea. He still is that way. And my friend said I will. I bet I know. A body part that he'd know where it is. And to go ahead. Ask him and he had no clue. So yeah, that's, that's sad. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 33:01

Well, I met a man who many years ago had experienced a stroke. And he didn't have the concept of hunger, zero. So I'm not sure if he was overweight when he had his stroke. But he was much larger, he told me to know what it was when I

met him. And when you met him, he was just a very thin man. And he only came to realize that he had to eat when other people were eating, otherwise,

Royce Morales 33:33

Does that happen?

Bill Gasiamis 33:34

Is that something that you have experienced with Michael?

Royce Morales 33:37

Yes, I have to say to him, Are you hungry? And he'll stop and think about it and ponder it for a minute. And he'll say, yes. So yeah, I've never heard that. I thought it was just him. That's very interesting,

Bill Gasiamis 33:52

It's fascinating. When I looked at him, and then saw him eating, he said, "Well I now understand that I have to eat, I don't feel like eating so I just say when other people are eating, and that way I won't become unwell". So that's very interesting, bizarre to me, and makes me feel continuously think about how lucky I was to get away with it, you know, so lightly, is the way I put it, of course, I have my challenges, but I didn't miss any of those major, cognitive, you know, things that are so important to well being and life and emotional well being and intimacy, I didn't miss any of that stuff. And I know that intimacy is a massive issue for especially partners of people. In your book, you cover any of these topics, what are the things that people can expect to read about when they get a copy of the book?

Royce Morales 34:55

I probably go into every, every intimate detail, any gruesome thing that we experienced any interesting thing that we experienced. They're very short chapters because they were posted originally, I go into everything a lot of what I talked about, like I said about my posting, as I will talk about something that went on. And then I talked about the lesson that I learned from the spiritual lesson that I learned from it or the realization that I would have from it. So there's always some kind of, you know, a lesson or teaching or something behind whatever it is that I talked about.

But there are some, you know, a lot of it is done with humor, you know, because I, he's able to laugh at everything. And so I'm able to laugh at it, or eventually get to

the point where I can laugh at it. You know, there was one day that we have just gotten home from somewhere, and he started pointing frantically outside and see what? what? what? go go go and I said but we just got home for hours. He sat by the door and wanted to go somewhere. And I then, I would ask him all these questions. Is it life or death?

“Yes”.

You know, really bizarre, you know, and finally, I just said, I don't know, it's dinner time. Now. It's dark. We're not going anywhere. I have no idea where you want to go. And I finally just had to drop it. So there are things like that, that, you know, sort of left me shaking my head you know that, yeah, it's very interesting very fun, fun little stories, that you can laugh at now.

## Laugh about it



Bill Gasiamis 36:39

Yeah, you have to laugh at them. If you don't laugh at them, it's a way too serious topic, and it could get you down. I remember being in the hospital. And I had not been to the toilet after surgery. And of course, one of the first things that they want you to do is move your bowels and I didn't feel like it. But it's a big, big deal. So, you know, they gave me oral chocolate or something that creates, you know, bowel movements, and it didn't work the first day.

So they gave me a bunch of the second day and then it worked really quickly and well. And I was in bed and I couldn't walk and I was calling the nurses to come in to help me they wouldn't come because they were busy. And I dragged myself into

the wheelchair that was next to my bed. And I rolled myself into the bathroom, which was just at the end of my bed. And as I was going to try and get myself out of the wheelchair, they managed to come in and said, What are you doing?

"I've got to go to the loo, you know, really, really have to go right now. You know, get me on there". And they said, "Why did you get out of your bed?" And I said, "Because you guys have given me this stuff for two days it's finally working. You don't understand where I'm coming from. And I need to be there and stop talking. Just get me in there" You know,

They finally got me on the seat. And then they wouldn't leave. And I'm like, "What are you guys doing"? "Well, we can leave the room". I said, "What do you mean you can't leave the room" and they say, "Well, we need to be here because you fall over and hurt yourself". I said, "I am not going anywhere. I will be sitting here. I'm not going away. You must leave the room and close the door. If you don't leave the room is going to be really bad".

And it took me for what seemed like ages for me to like, get them out of the room. Of course, it was you know, it was life and death for me. You know, it was ages before I finally got them out of the room. And then I just could relax and do the things that I needed to do without anyone watching. And it was so stressful at the time. But then when I look back at it now as well. Like, what would we possibly go to talk about in the toilet while I was doing my business?

Royce Morales 39:00

Oh my gosh. Yeah. I have a whole chapter on the various bathroom things that happened with Michael, Yes, I think I call it golden showers or something like that. Because it was, you know, out of control. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 39:16

Wow. So this is the interesting thing for me is like, you know, we must laugh out of it. I'm glad that you're at the stage where you can because it must help with that underlying, you know, pain and suffering that you do go through the people go through, you know, in your waves of emotions, you know, so I'm glad that you can overcome that as well. And laugh

# Death would have been easier than suffering from a stroke



Royce Morales 39:37

Yeah, can I kind of compare it with this thought that comes to me a lot? When I'm in the doldrums, shall we say, where would it have been easier if he just died, you know, because you're kind of being with a person that is not the same person that you married or, you know, it's just that fleeting thought of, you know, aah!

Bill Gasiamis 40:01

Look at carer of would think that and that's not a bad thing. So whoever's listening out here who's thought that you know, do not feel bad about it. Of course, if he had passed away long term, you know, there would have been things that were completely different. But then you would have been going through the emotional pain and trauma of all that kind of stuff.

And that wouldn't have been so good. So there is no better or worse or anything, there's always a situation around stroke, whether somebody lives passes away is amazingly well afterward or not so well, you're never going to reconcile it, you know, people are never going to we are we never going to go oh yeah that was great that you know, this happened or we got the best outcome or whatever, there is no such thing there is you do what you can with the, with what you've been given.

And, you know, you make the most of the experiences and you suffer more or less depending on who you are. So it's just not knowing and not a terrible thing for

people to think that I really, truly don't believe that. I know in the past, many years ago, 20 years ago, we lost one of our loved ones to cancer, you know, he was 31 and the feeling that we felt after the suffering that he experienced, which was way more extreme than I've ever seen anybody suffer was relief.

But I had to reconcile that with myself. And I had to understand why I'm feeling relief and it wasn't because I never lived with him. I wasn't his main career. So even during that experience, when somebody else passed away, it was a relief, and I felt bad about that. But that's not really something to feel bad about. Neither is what your thoughts were, it's just what it is. And we're human. And those things are logical thought processes, and I don't see, I wouldn't like to think that people beating up themselves about having that thought enter their mind once in a while.

So it just is what it is. It's tough, you're not, it wasn't your task on this planet, to be the person who was going to learn all these skills to one day go into this because you can't foresee that when you're in there, you're dealing with somebody, you know, you're, carer tend to be the type of people who are lacking resources more than anybody else because it happens overnight.

Royce Morales 42:29

It's very true. And, you know, and I don't beat myself up for having that thought. It's just kind of an odd juxtaposition to think he's here, but he's not really here. You know, he's a different person. I don't, I can't even really put it into words, just those fleeting thoughts, yeah?

Bill Gasiamis 42:48

What does Michael like to do other than jigsaws? other than puzzles? does he have anything that he appreciates doing? Or

Royce Morales 42:58

He does, they have art classes, at his rehab hospital, and he's always been artsy. You know, we owned a shop gallery place, and she has this wonderful teacher. And this teacher has brought out this talent, like, you just wouldn't believe he's doing this amazing painting. And he loves who's passionate about it, and recently started doing this little, he takes a pen, and he does these little dots all over the paper. And he does these drawings out of dots, and he'll spend 20 hours doing these, these things emerge, and he doesn't plan and they just emerged it just

amazing.

Bill Gasiamis 43:39

Wow.

Royce Morales 43:39

So he loves that. Yeah, he really does.

Bill Gasiamis 43:42

And this is the strange thing, you know, I don't know, you know what other people experience it one by one. As I talked to people yourself, as an example, you hear about these new things that emerged from people. And isn't that amazing how the brain even though it's missing, missing that part that allows him to pay attention or to be aware of certain things, or to have passion or focus for the old stuff that he used to do here is something that is coming on for this new task.

Royce Morales 44:15

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 44:17

And he's got a really good talent. And we wouldn't have seen it if he hadn't had this crazy experience,

Royce Morales 44:27

I know it's so bizarre. Yes, yeah. Yeah, I think about that a lot, too. It's like, Well, you know, everything happens for a reason, as the cliché goes, but, you know, this is really bringing out some amazing talent.

Bill Gasiamis 44:40

Tell me about the book and the way that it's been received by the people that have got a copy of it, what has been some of the feedback that you've had about the book?

Royce Morales 44:50

Well, everybody loves it, they, the comments basically have been that you know, the level of authentic city level of depth that I get into the spiritual lessons that I explain, you know, there's so many different levels that people are reading it in or on. So yeah, it's getting very well received, you know,

Bill Gasiamis 45:16

where can people buy the book is available online, or the hard copy? How do they get it?

Royce Morales 45:22

it's on Amazon, you can get either the ebook or paperback version of it yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 45:27

Well, that's amazing. So even that is an amazing thing, that of all the challenges that people face, you know, you've been able to go, Well, how can I share this and make it better for other people as well, as I imagined for you. Was it a little bit cathartic for you to write the book and get it out there?

Royce Morales 45:46

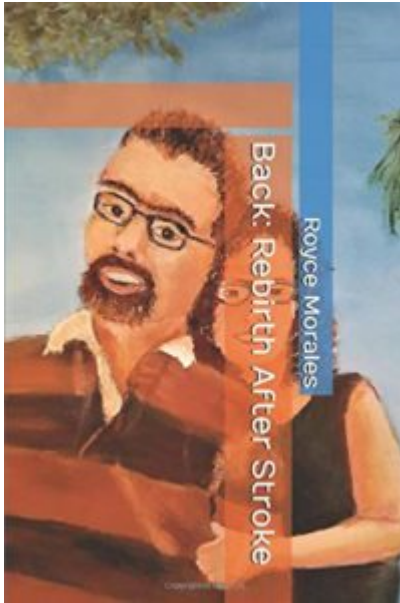
Definitely. Yeah, especially like I said, people reacting to them that way. I just thought I was posting some cute little, you know, heart-wrenching or, or open silly posts telling people about what's going on to have the reactions that I have, or was just phenomenal to me. Yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 46:05

Yeah. Well, it's a really bright thing that you did. And it's really important that you did it obviously, for yourself, but for other people going through that, how did you feel knowing that you've impacted somebody? Well, I'm not sure how you impacted them. But obviously, people get impacted, how does that feel, to know that again, from this crazy experience, this has come from it,

## **Impact on other people**





Royce Morales 46:33

it feels it's hard to put it into words. But I've always felt like I'm here to make some kind of a difference. You know, the classes that I would keep the spiritual classes that I teach were always very small, intimate moments. I've been doing it for 40 years. But I've always felt like there's something that I'm supposed to bring here, this going to help people in a bigger way. And maybe that's maybe what this book will do. I don't know. I hope so.

Bill Gasiamis 47:21

The books that I read that are about stroke, healing, and recovery experiences have really brought me to tears, you know, sometimes they've made me feel like, I'm not alone. They've made me feel like someone else understands me, you know, so, that thing that you're talking about, that you did about, you know, somehow serving and supporting others, you know, is really massive blessing for us, you know, so I want to thank you for doing that for the community at large. But you know, specifically for you know, my community, our community, you know, which wasn't one that I chose which chose me and I imagined, do you feel like that kind of way as well where this thing has chosen you and now let's do something positive with it?

Royce Morales 48:01

Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah, in fact, everything that I've gone through my life I felt that way about the particularly this Yeah, yeah, I don't you know, I don't think that is an accident that with my awareness and with you know, the purposefulness that I feel about my life, I know that this was given to me to do something with so

yeah, absolutely.

Bill Gasiamis 48:27

I'm so glad you are doing something with it. How do you see the next few months of years rolling out for you? What do you hope to achieve? And how do you hope to grow from this, you know, even more as you go forward?

Royce Morales 48:41

ah, well, because he's not making huge leaps and bounds, with his progress I'm kind of taking it one day at a time, as they say. Trying to put together the courses that I used to give in person. I'm trying to turn them into online seminars. So that's been my project lately. I've never wanted to do it that way. I've always wanted to have a one-on-one intimate level of teaching that I give because it's really pretty intense. But I've decided to do it. So I'm doing it

Bill Gasiamis 49:19

Yeah great.

Royce Morales 49:22

Yeah, I don't know. I'm just kind of taking it day by day. Really,

Bill Gasiamis 49:28

There's no better way to take it day by day, sometimes minute by minute, sometimes hour by hour.

Royce Morales 49:34

Yes, yeah, definitely.

Bill Gasiamis 49:37

I think you're being really brave. And I say that, you know, from the true meaning of the word brave not from the, you know, brave and brave, that you're able to take this experience, look at it, observe it, and make something out of it, and turn it into at least part of it into a positive experience for people I really am grateful to have come across your work and your book, I'll be very keen to download a copy and have a look at it as well and read it,

I found that the more I do that, the more it helps. So I'm so grateful for the people that have done that I've considered writing a book myself, but I don't have the mental capacity and the energy to do that yet. I think that's a little bit in the

future for me. So I'm just glad that there are people like you that, you know, take on this thing that was thrust upon them and find a way to turn it into a positive experience. It makes a massive difference to me. I know, to all the other people that have read the book that has given feedback, and definitely to Michael even though I don't know, Michael, I know that it's made a huge difference in his life.

Royce Morales 50:55

Yes, it has to. Yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 50:59

So thank you. On that note, where can somebody go and find a copy of your book or download a copy of the book? Is there a website that you have? Tell us about that,

Royce Morales 51:10

um, I do have it on my personal website. And my website is [aperfectlifeawakening.com](http://aperfectlifeawakening.com) and it's also available on Amazon. Actually, I've got two other books that are all of them. They're all of them on my website and on Amazon. you know, the first book that I wrote was about my relationship. It's actually a fictionalized story about my relationship with my husband. And went from that, and wrote a book about my teachings, and then wrote a book about his stroke. So it's been kind of a series actually.

Bill Gasiamis 51:45

Well lovely and they're all available to purchase from your website, or only from Amazon

Royce Morales 51:53

From Amazon. Yeah, but you can click on them on my website, or just go directly to Amazon. .

Bill Gasiamis 52:00

Excellent. Well, I really appreciate you spending some time with me on the podcast. It's a real pleasure to get to know you a little bit

Royce Morales 52:07

Yeah you too

Bill Gasiamis 52:08

Thank you for the work that you do and I look forward to keeping in touch with you and just following whatever it is that you do going forward.

Royce Morales 52:16

Great. Thank you so much. And you just don't ever lose hope either.

Bill Gasiamis 52:20

Yeah, work leisure will definitely not have got people like you that encouraged me every day as well. And the feedback from the podcast is the same as well, you know, it's amazing. I started out as a little bit of a selfish thing. I can't write a book. So I talk in words, and I do like that and create episodes instead of chapters instead of posts. I do episodes it's my way of doing it. And it's been great. I really got more back from the feedback and I'm not I'm sure of your experiences than I did from actually writing it. So yeah, I'm so grateful for the feedback. Everyone else out there who's listening and wants to send either me or Royce feedback, please, please.

Royce Morales 53:01

Definitely. Yeah, yeah, yeah, because I don't think I've seen I was going to mention this before. I don't, I haven't seen any books written by caregivers. I've seen books written by stroke survivors, but nothing really from the caregiver's viewpoint. So I think it's kind of an important thing to support people that are doing what I'm doing

Bill Gasiamis 53:20

absolutely and I think there's more work in that for you going forward in that the caregivers are the ones I believe sometimes doing a tougher than the stroke survivor because like Michale if he is unaware he's doing tough but he's not doing it that tough perhaps.

But the caregivers gotta change everything and this thing that has happened has happened to them, it's happened to somebody else and they've got to change. Like it's a big deal. You know, my wife went through the same thing. And I was able to, later on, understand how it impacted her life negatively, initially negatively, but then also positively, but the awareness of how I impacted their life negatively made me feel like I need to share more stories about more caregivers about what they go through and create a community for caregivers.

So part of the work that I'm doing on the website is I'm creating a membership

section which is almost ready to go live, which enables people to come in and learn from my teachings, the stuff that I have learned about healing stroke, healing the brain recovering from that, you know, from studies that other people have done in nutrition and in meditation and in all those types of things, but there's going to be a special section there for carers to get together and hopefully find some common ground and support each other as well as, as well as you know, raise awareness so suppose I have a real desire to my carers lives easier I suppose.

Royce Morales 55:06

Yeah, yeah. Even even even at Michael's rehab hospital, they have a stroke survivors group they have you know every group in the world they don't have a caregiver support group which I think is a real shame I've suggested it several times know

Bill Gasiamis 55:24

Royce!

Royce Morales 55:25

Nope

Bill Gasiamis 55:25

might be something that you need to just start off yourself

Royce Morales 55:27

I know I know people who said that to me, I'm pondering it Yeah,

Bill Gasiamis 55:33

well, maybe just squeeze that in until you know all the empty slots in your day

Royce Morales 55:42

I am definitely considering it. Thank you.

Bill Gasiamis 55:46

Well, thanks so much for being on the podcast. I really, really appreciate it.

Royce Morales 55:51

Thank you.

Outro 55:53

Discover how to support your recovery after a stroke. Go to  
[recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com)