

# Neuroplasticity & Sensory Substitution - Cheryl Shiltz

**Cheryl Shiltz regained her balance using a device developed by neuroplasticity pioneer Paul Bach-y-Rita that substituted her catastrophically damaged inner ear and vestibular system with her tongue.**

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Cheryl Shiltz 0:00

So then we did that. And the more and more I did it Bill, the better and better I became. Because I learned how to center myself with that little buzz in the middle of my tongue.

Bill Gasiamis 0:13

Little device that they had connected to some probes that was sitting on your tongue. And when you leaned forward through the gyroscope on your head it buzzed your tongue to say you're moving forward, and when you move back, it buzzed your tongue at the back of your tongue.

Bill Gasiamis 0:30

And when you move to the left, it buzzed your tongue on the left, and when you move to the right it buzzed your tongue on the right, and that buzzing of the tongue left, right, backwards and forwards was enough to rewire your brain to use the tongue to replace the lost vestibular system, which was originally responsible for your balance.

Intro 0:56

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

## **The Recovery After Stroke Milestone**

Bill Gasiamis 1:09

Hello, and welcome to this milestone episode of the recovery after stroke podcast. This is episode 200. Now, first things first, thanks to everyone for liking, sharing and commenting on my episodes, and those leaving a review on iTunes and on Spotify. And thanks to everyone tuning in and listening every week, all your interactions are making a huge difference to how the show is being found by other stroke survivors looking for this type of content.

Bill Gasiamis 1:38

I started this podcast way back in 2015, under a different name. And it took a few years for me to get clear on who my audience was, and who I was doing it for. And it was slow-going at the beginning, I finally got some help and learned what I needed to learn to get better at recording and interviewing, editing and production. And I enlisted the help of someone that does the transcription work and posting of each episode every week.

Bill Gasiamis 2:06

And without Lance, the show wouldn't have been as good as it is today. And there certainly wouldn't be as many episodes available. So a big shout out to Lance

Garcia for all your help. It really means a lot. Thank you. Also a huge thank you must go out to every guest that has said yes so far, when a complete stranger from Down Under asked you to come on the show and share sometimes intimate details of your journey with the world about your stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 2:35

You should be proud of yourself. And you're making someone's life a little easier by doing so. And I hope that sharing your story has helped ease your burden of stroke a little as well. This show is being listened to in 66 countries and has over 5000 downloads each month. It is a massive thing for me to be able to read that out to you because it didn't start out that way.

Bill Gasiamis 3:01

And it's because of all of you that the show has had the success that it's had. And it's because of you that I continue to put this show out, there clearly is a need. And I am very happy to fulfill that need. And hopefully, this will inspire other people to get vocal about stroke recovery and make a massive difference to all the people in the stroke community who are looking for this kind of content and doing it difficult from time to time.

## **Introduction - Cheryl Shiltz**



Bill Gasiamis 3:35

Now my guest today is Cheryl Schiltz and Cheryl was the first person in the world to have her balance restored, using neuroplasticity way back in the 1990s when research in neuroplasticity was still in its infancy. What's unique about Cheryl is

that her balance was restored by training her tongue to take over the role of the inner ear, which was obliterated by a medical intervention gone wrong, which left her with chronic vertigo for years before she came across the World Renowned Neuroscientist, Paul Bach-y-Rita and his team from the University of Madison, Wisconsin.

Bill Gasiamis 4:19

This was such a fun and insightful episode and you will see and hear how excited I was to have Cheryl on my show when it begins shortly and you will hear how Cheryl's story played a key role in my own journey to learning how to walk again. Anyhow. Enough from me for now. It's on with the show. Hello, Cheryl.

Cheryl Shiltz 4:45

Hi Bill.

Bill Gasiamis 4:46

Oh my gosh, I am so thrilled to be chatting with you.

Cheryl Shiltz 4:50

Oh, same here, same here. I'll be darned.

Bill Gasiamis 4:56

I just cannot believe it. I'll tell you why. I can't believe it. Because you're the kind of person who just comes up in a book or in a video and you, you think that that person is not reachable, therefore you can't get to them right? And you don't know what they're like and how they're going to respond. But the reason I'm so excited because I was watching your videos with Paul Bach-y-Rita on YouTube when I was in rehabilitation, waiting for my first session to learn how to walk again.

Cheryl Shiltz 5:33

Oh, my goodness, wow. That's Wow. Yeah, you know, I can't even explain how this all came about, and how fortunate that I was to even be connected with Paul. And that happened actually through my doctor, like Dr. Pyle, who I just found is retiring next week, because that's such a great guy.

Cheryl Shiltz 6:04

But he was working with Paul in regards to the research. And so he tell Paul, I think I have a good candidate for you for the ballance, the sensory substitution.

And I'm like, sure, what do I have to lose right? Like, just do it. Because yeah, I had to relearn how to walk. And learning how to do the sensory substitution also have a lot to do with the thinking process.

Cheryl Shiltz 6:41

But you know, Bill, people ask me, how did I do it? And I think I did a discussion about resilience the other day. And what I figured out, I didn't have a lot of support throughout the whole process. And so I did all the stuff on my own. And I credit, I guess, the things that already happened to me prior life, and my mom, because she was super tenacious. And so what I think resilience and how this marries up with these things, is that every time you make a progress, like there's a little smidgen, and every time you keep going and going and going. I think that's how you build resilience.

Bill Gasiamis 7:39

I agree.

Cheryl Shiltz 7:40

Yeah. You know, and it's really hard to explain it to folks. But that's my, that's my ideas and thoughts. But what do you think?

Bill Gasiamis 7:51

So I'm quite resilient, but I have days of being really negative. And nobody who listens to the podcast or sees any of my comments sees that, because I'm not trying to hide it. I'm not trying to pretend that it doesn't happen. It just happens in very small bursts. And then I get over it, and I move on.

Bill Gasiamis 8:18

And a lot of what has helped me to get over and move on is a lot of self work, a lot of internal work coaching, counseling with a psychologist, personal development courses. And then, to a point, practicing what I preach and being authentic in that way, so that when I say something, I'm saying it from a place of having been there, and having done that, and I wouldn't expect you to do something that I wouldn't do myself.

Bill Gasiamis 8:50

And when I got to 37, and had the stroke, the first one, I think I was quite resilient. But what was interfering and making it difficult for me to practice resilience was my stubbornness, and my lack of willingness to try to solve

problems in a different way. I was trying to solve problems the same way.

Bill Gasiamis 9:19

And then that just eats away at your resilience, because that's the definition of insanity. And at the same time, you're going how can I be resilient when I keep getting to the brick wall, I kept getting to the brick wall? Not realizing that I am the one who's causing the same result because I'm taking the same approach. And I'm not going around the brick wall or over the brick wall or under the brick wall. So I think I was resilient, but then I didn't allow my resilience to shine through.

## **Cheryl Shiltz Recognizing Progress**

Cheryl Shiltz 9:51

Hmm, yeah. Prior to that happening, where they're like little steps of progress that perhaps you didn't recognize that there were things happening? One of the things that I wrote in my book was that I got out of bed, right? went downstairs made the coffee, I'm sitting at the kitchen table. Almost spring, you're checking things out.

Cheryl Shiltz 10:22

And all of a sudden, I went, I just got out of bed, without sitting on the edge of it wondering how in the world was I going to get through this day? Is it going to be another crappy day? And I sat there and I went, what other things have I missed, even if the tiny little thing, and that's hard I think for a lot of individuals, maybe my opinion is that they're not recognized, because you're so caught up in your head is so stuck into what happened.

Cheryl Shiltz 11:01

And it's hard to make that difference in patterns, because we're always thinking about how we used to be able to do things, right? All of a sudden, you're like this, and this is the great part, nothing was wrong. And you're stuck here because you're scared to death to go over here.

Cheryl Shiltz 11:29

And what happened with me, Bill was all of a sudden, I recognize so little tiny things, right? And I went, you know what, all of those experiences, every single thing that happened to me is still me. It's still in me. So how can I take that and

incorporate it with what I need to do now?

Bill Gasiamis 12:01

To answer your question, yes, I definitely had a lot of success, that I wasn't celebrating. Overcoming myself, and my challenges and all those things. And I wasn't aware that I needed to celebrate it, I wasn't aware that I needed to reflect and look back.

Bill Gasiamis 12:24

I was just aware that something wasn't right. And I needed to change something. So I did put a lot of time and effort into changing things. I just hadn't uncovered. The one thing that I didn't know, I needed to know, which was try a different approach. I know it sounds weird.

Bill Gasiamis 12:42

But I hadn't gone there yet. That aha moment hadn't come to me. And you know, the ancient Greeks say, they say know thyself. And I didn't know myself, I didn't really know, I had never done work that allows you to reflect on who you are, how you behave, how you identify, where you fit in the world, how you go about your life, how you go about the labels that you give yourself or other people give you.

Bill Gasiamis 13:17

And, as a result, I struggled to solve my problems. Now when I had the stroke, and then I had the second stroke it's six weeks apart very close together, I still hadn't changed, I was still the same guy, I was just experiencing these illnesses that were quite serious. And after the second one, I was very much out of my head.

Bill Gasiamis 13:50

I couldn't connect with my head, I couldn't make decisions. It just wasn't online. It was like it was just switched off for a little moment, quite a long moment, months. And then what happened was my heart came online. And I started to express myself via my heart so emotionally, and from this more compassionate side of me, and as always being more compassionate to others, and appreciating the challenges that other people are facing because now I was able to see life through this new lens of being unwell.

Bill Gasiamis 14:32

I started to feel a little bit more compassion towards myself and realize how much

I don't know myself and how much I'm lacking my own understanding. And then I just continued the personal development or personal development sort of training in all different levels. And then I came to have an awareness that I was responsible for my own health and well being and recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 15:07

And that didn't just start and end with the stroke, it needed to be an emotional recovery as well as psychological recovery, and it needed to be a physical recovery. And then my whole world changed, everything just started to appear as, here's another solution, or here's another thing you can try, or here's a new person you can learn from, or here's a new teacher to teach you and it never ended.

Bill Gasiamis 15:33

And it just keeps going and going. And a lot of it comes from me taking action in areas that I never had taken action before. And you and I are a classic example the fact that we're together now and chatting, I never would have reached out to somebody that I saw on a video, you know, in a setting such as a book or anything like that, I never would have reached out to that person in the past because I had preconceived fears and ideas about how I'm not worthy enough, or good enough to connect with that person, even though they're a normal person.

Cheryl Shiltz 16:12

Yeah, well, I'm glad that you did, because of, you know, reading through your things and learning about what you do. And I've watched the videos and checked out all these things. And I'm like some of the coaching and certifying stuff, I was blown away that it had things to do with neuroscience, and positive psychology, and all those things, because I love that kind of stuff.

Cheryl Shiltz 16:47

And I returned to college and got a degree in Rehabilitation Psychology. So that's working with individuals that have, you know, disabilities and you try to help them through it and get back to work and whatnot. And the whole psychology stuff, I've been into that, I think, since I was a kid, not even knowing that I was.

Cheryl Shiltz 17:15

And so that really gave me, I actually, I went back to school after that. But I truly don't know how this happened prior to getting involved in the research. And that



was the last thing on my mind, I was just for probably three years. I'm like, Are you kidding, I have to go from this spot to that spot. And I can't freakin walk in a way that, you know, I can't walk straight, I had to map out where I'm gonna go, what can I touch?

Cheryl Shiltz 18:06

And so, you know, all that stuff was constantly going through my head. And physical therapy was you know, the one thing I remember is feel your feet. So in lines of coming up with your own type of thing, I developed my own kind of therapy. Because we know our bodies, and we know what works best as far as what's going to help us. So yeah, I pushed my way through a lot of those things. And then you start getting your aha moments. Right? Those little pieces that that come to you.

Bill Gasiamis 18:54

Let me ask you a question, because we started this interview just with the premise that we're going to have a chat, but I think there's some goal in here. And if it's okay with you, do you mind if I share this as a podcast episode?

Cheryl Shiltz 19:09

Oh, sure. Why not? You know, I think things like this Bill is important for people to see especially someone that has gone through something like we have, because there's always this little bit of hope that I hope and I'm sure you hope helps somebody, maybe have their own aha moment. Recognize the things that they have done. Because for healing, I think that is really, really important obviously, to believe in yourself and to I remember that you've always had these skills and you still do how do you bundle it? You know?

Bill Gasiamis 20:09

Would you mind now that we're going to share this with other people sharing a little bit about the part of your story where Cheryl is perfectly fine one day, and then something happens. You go and get some help from a doctor, and then that takes you down a completely different path. And then your life changes. Can you give me a bit of an insight into the lead up to what it was that made you seek out help in the first place?

# Cheryl Shiltz Post-Operative Infection

Cheryl Shiltz 20:33

Okay, sure. I developed the post-operative infection really bad after having a hysterectomy. Really bad. So I ended up in the hospital for 10 days, on really high powered antibiotics, one being Gentamicin.

Cheryl Shiltz 20:53

So I was really on the edge of losing my life. That's how bad it was. And then I was released after the 10 days, given the antibiotics to administer to myself for another seven days. So I was on this antibiotic for seven days. And during the time, like I was on it, I started getting really sick and vomiting, my ears felt weird, like they have water in it.

Cheryl Shiltz 21:27

And finally, I was given a anti nausea kind of medicine, give you horrible nightmares. But finally I was able to stop and then went home, I spent time with my mom. And then I finally get home. It was a Sunday, I got up on Wednesday and literally fell to the floor. I could not walk, I couldn't even like crawl. I thought to myself, is this what it's like when your dead? Am I dead?

Cheryl Shiltz 22:02

And so going, how to go from there just to go to the bathroom, and had to crawl to get there. And everything blurred and bounced with any movement of mind body. And I mean, literally, if he were to take video camera or your phone and put it on your chest, and just walk around, that's what it looks like.

Cheryl Shiltz 22:34

So then, you know the whole process and you know, getting down the stairs, because that's where I left the phone. I had to Bumble down on my butt, go upstairs and go through all of these things, just getting to the phone. And my address book is in the kitchen like who does that. So I had to crawl literally on my hands and knees falling over.

Cheryl Shiltz 22:59

And finally got to the point where I could call a doctor. And of all things. I don't know why it did not occur to me to call 911 I drove myself to the doctor, and it's like a 45 mile drive it was the stupidest thing, I did that three times. And finally

we're having some tests.

Cheryl Shiltz 23:25

Initially thought it was an ear infection. And I questioned that I was on some pretty high powered antibiotics. So they gave me meclizine which is like if you go on a cruise ship, you know those who get kind of seasick, so finally we went in, went to go see an ear, nose and throat and they did these tests.

Cheryl Shiltz 23:49

Really weird tests like cold and hot water and air, kind of weird. But finally what it was it's, you know, I'm sorry, Cheryl, but your vestibular system has been damaged. Meaning it's just not working. And like what do you mean? And I had googled it before I went to the doctor. That's where I got really, really pretty forceful that I need to do this because I'm reading through this.

Cheryl Shiltz 24:30

Oh my gosh, it's every single symptom, every one of them. So I go to the doctor and we do these tests. And that's pretty much where my life as I knew it, died. It just went away died. And the doctor said to me, you know, most people get used to it within 20 years. And I went 20 years? And so I spent a good three years just trying to, I can't even say live with it deal with it.

Cheryl Shiltz 25:16

Because every single waking moment was a fear of all that was going on in my head was what I call it noise, constant noise. And, you know, do I go here? What about this? What can I do, I can never do that again.

Cheryl Shiltz 25:37

And it's just like, my life literally stopped, as I knew it. So that is kind of the short version of, you know, what, you know, getting sick and having the damage done to now and what I had to do with, you know, physical therapy? I don't know, if your experience was like, can I just go outside and do this? You know?

Bill Gasiamis 26:07

Oh, absolutely. I'll tell you what, there's a lot of similarities. So you said that you drove yourself to the hospital, that is so common that stroke survivors, so many of us, including me, will be experiencing a stroke and make the decision to get in the car and drive to the hospital. That's so common. And they afterwards on the interviews on the podcast, we know what's the wrong thing to do.

Bill Gasiamis 26:36

But it we didn't know then. And that description of life just stopping completely is very familiar. That's exactly what it's like, everything just gets put on hold. And then you remain in this holding pattern for quite some time.

Bill Gasiamis 26:36

And then you're trying to discover the exit of this holding pattern. Is there a way out? Am I going to resume some kind of a life? So that's very common. How did you get around for those three years? And what are the things that stopped for you? Did everything stop? Driving? Working? Every single thing Stop? And how did you move? How did you get to your appointment? How did you do anything?

Cheryl Shiltz 27:31

Once I was diagnosed, though, just I didn't have to go back anymore. Now, this is what it's like for you. And there were times that I just sat on the couch and sobbed. I was afraid to move, because every time I moved, I had no sense of where I was in space. I had to constantly touch something, even if it was just my finger.

Cheryl Shiltz 28:03

Because that gave me a grounding. You know, as weird as that is, you know, just to touch. And it was every day was fearful. Every day, I was afraid. And I am truly not a person like that at all. And, so when that happened, I'm like, Well, wait a minute, I'm not going to lose that part of me. So a lot of times, I just made light of it.

Cheryl Shiltz 28:45

I didn't lose it. And I think that really helped with my recovery as well. So yeah, I discovered the Division of Vocational Rehab. And so I went to them trying to figure out I had to quit the job of my life. God, I loved that job. And it would have given me a great retirement, all that stuff I'd still be working with them. And I'm just the best thing.

Cheryl Shiltz 29:28

So when I left that I was devastated. absolutely devastated that I could no longer work. And so I tried here and there and then it came to the realization that that's not going to happen and be in my life anymore. So the most difficult thing was to apply for Social Security Disability. And, man that was just the I don't want that.

Cheryl Shiltz 29:59

So then So you're not only this, you got to go, how am I going to pay no bills? How am I going to do this? How am I going to do that. And I don't even know how I get connected to DVR, but I got myself and found out that I can get, you know, financial aid to go to back to college and like, well, I've already been driving, so drove to getting my classes and getting like prereqs to go to the UW Madison, and then go off to my other degree.

## Taking Chances



Cheryl Shiltz 30:37

And I did it. And it was during when I was at the tech school, that I was connected with Paul Bach-y-Rita

. And so yeah, laying out in the backyard, took my phone, I realized I'm always gonna have my phone. That was before cell phones. And he told me about the research. And he said, Would you like to take part? And I'm like, What have I got to lose? Right?

Bill Gasiamis 31:13

The inspiring part. And I know, your intention was not to be inspirational, but inspiring part is that you had no balance, you didn't know where your body existed in the world, you were fearful. Your life was completely changed and different, and it was out of your control. And yet, you found a way somehow to push through all of that, overcome all those obstacles and get to university.

Bill Gasiamis 31:45

And begin your studies again, and learn something new and open new doors and see what happens. And in spite of all the junk that you had to live with and put up with, you still found a way to make it happen. And there you discover the solution

to your problem. You just hadn't known about how much of a solution it would be yet. And you don't know anything about anyone who's at this place. But somehow you managed to attract or direct yourself to the exact place where the exact solution for you was.

Cheryl Shiltz 32:26

Yeah, that still is like wow, how did that happen? And I think you're right. It's just when something like this happens, and it's difficult, but when you do these things, and you get better you too attract things to you and I mean, I just still can't believe I did what I did. And I had to be very inventive because I couldn't wear a backpack with my books because it really messed me up.

Cheryl Shiltz 33:06

I couldn't carry it. And I was using a cane so that I can you know, sort of kind of get around, never walk in a straight line. But so I took like, little what luggage carry is just a little tiny one and I bungee cord it in my backpack. So I have that to drag and my cane. And it's just a matter of you know, I just got, what am I gonna do here? I can't do it.

## **Neuroplasticity & Sensory Substitution - Paul Bach-y-Rita**



Cheryl Shiltz 33:36

So we come up with our own solution. There is that extra level that is something that I just did and recognized. So during that time, I was just okay, when Paul was talking about sensory substitution, and that it's going to be this thing that's on my tongue and it gets a little buzz and it's going to help me with my balance.

Cheryl Shiltz 34:08

I mean, that was the thing is that you got to be kidding me. How is that gonna work? And so he explained sensory substitution to me taking one sense to take

over the sense that you lost. So yeah, I was blown away to be in it. And it was just incredible to go through that whole process. And working with the researchers I became literally became a co investigator. So we all worked together on how about this, let's do that. And it was just the most incredible experience of my life.

Bill Gasiamis 34:51

I love it. So substituting, we're going to talk about that like this substituting of the senses, one sense gets swapped or substituted or is used to achieve something else like balance. We'll talk about in a minute, but first I want to talk about Paul. Because I've never met this guy. I've never met Paul. I've had the pleasure of meeting. Michael Merzenich in person, Michael Merzenich and Paul Paul Bach-y-Rita

were kind of connected in that Michael Merzenich, they call him one of the godfathers of neuroplasticity.

Bill Gasiamis 35:31

And I interviewed him on the Podcast. And he runs an organization called Posit Science, which does a lot of work around neuroplasticity and helping people overcome all sorts of challenges. And the person who I learned about Michael Merzenich, from and Paul Paul Bach-y-Rita

from and therefore you from was Dr. Norman Doidge, The Brain's Way of Healing and The Brain That Changes Itself speaks about your exploits and Paul's exploits and everybody's exploits.

Bill Gasiamis 36:07

And it's just an amazing thing. That in that book, there's so much richness of people who have overcome, like, there's examples of people who have overcome things they weren't meant to overcome, especially back in the day when you became unwell, which was in the late 80s. I believe.

Cheryl Shiltz 36:26

This happened in 1997.

Bill Gasiamis 36:35

Ah, okay.

Cheryl Shiltz 36:40

How many years don't make me do the math.

Bill Gasiamis 36:51

It was before I knew I needed Paul Bach-y-Rita

. It was before I knew I needed Michael Merzenich and Norman Doidge. And before I needed to know anything about stroke recovery, it was you know, when I was quite healthy and well, and anyhow, Paul Bach-y-Rita, according to Wikipedia, was an American neuroscientist whose most notable work was in the field of neuroplasticity. Bach-y-Rita was one of the first to seriously study the idea of neuroplasticity and to introduce sensory substitution as a tool to treat patients with neurological disorders.

Bill Gasiamis 37:29

So you've met Paul, they were doing this crazy research that we're helping blind people see again. Okay, and then they said to you, because of one of the challenges that one of Paul's co-workers had, with his balance due to an ear infection briefly. He kind of threw it out there and said to Paul, would we be able to swap the senses of the tongue and help somebody regain their balance with their tongue and learn how to balance with their tongue? And Paul kind of just said, Yeah, probably. And then they started to try and research that space. Now. How quickly after that, did you become involved? Were you the first person to try putting that thing on your tongue? Or was there other people before you?

Cheryl Shiltz 38:29

I think there's like one person but not as involved in getting it going. And like, let's let's do this. Now, when I first met Paul, and Mitch and Uri, and Kurt, I got there. And here I am sitting in front of a computer with a joystick, and this thing on my tongue, and what I was supposed to do, is using the sensations I was supposed to take the joystick and going through this maze, and seeing, you know, seeing where I am, so to go forward, I feel the sensation go like this, if I had to go around the corner, I feel it going like this.

Cheryl Shiltz 39:19

If I was going down the stairs, it would pulsate. And then it will come up if I have to go upstairs. And it was just fascinating to go through the maze. And so I did it. And so they're gonna change the maze. And so I couldn't have any memory of it. And then they blindfolded me and said, Okay, now you get how this sensation is. Now, let's see. Excuse me if you can do this blindfolded, and I did it. Wow, it happened Bill and it was like that can help someone who is blind or some visual impairment? See? It was fascinating. So then I was like, okay, sensory



substitution. Right? So it's like, Okay, let's try this with balance problems.

Cheryl Shiltz 40:22

So we started out with 100, 200, and 300 seconds, sitting down at the edge of the chair, my hands down, which was almost impossible for me to do. And with and without the device. So with it, it's like, okay, it took a while to get into it. And so it was a process, it took a while for me to actually get it and do it. And there was this box and a box. And my goal was to get that one box inside of the other box. And that time, it was really frustrating. But we had a lot of laughs on it. But finally, we were able to do it. And it ended up taking the ribbon from my mouth. And there was a residual, just a little bit and more at the 100, 200, and 300 seconds.

Cheryl Shiltz 41:20

So we started going. This is indeed getting the sense of ballots in going into back into my brain using my tongue. And Now eventually, we just kept going and going. And we're doing all these things sitting down. And one day, you and I work together. And I'm like, we should do this standing it's like, you know, we're not supposed to do the standing. Let's do it. And we did it. And oh my goodness. I mean, it worked. And it was just amazing that it have the residual so I could stay in their eyes open, eyes closed, where that's the other thing that we had to do. And it worked. And the more and more I did it, the better and better and better. And we came up during some presentation. With what if she does it for 20 minutes? We pull the, wait, no, we started it little by little get up to 30. But what we discovered 20 minutes was kind of like the sweet spot.

Intro 42:46

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, and doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to [recovery after stroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) where you can download a guide that will help you it's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke. These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your

condition, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery, head to the website. Now, [recovery after stroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) and download the guide. It's free.

Cheryl Shiltz 43:49

So then we did that. And the more and more I did it feel, the better and better I became because I've learned how to center myself with that little buzz in the middle of my tongue

Bill Gasiamis 44:03

little device that they had connected to some probes that was sitting on your tongue. And when you lean forward through the gyroscope on your head as your tongue to say you're moving forward and when you move back, it buzzed your tongue at the back of your tongue. And when you bust when you move to the left ear buds, your tongue on the left and when you move to the right it buzzed on the right. And that buzzing of the tongue left right backwards and forwards was enough to rewire your brain to use the tongue to replace the lost vestibular system which was originally responsible for your balance.

Cheryl Shiltz 44:44

Right and when the movements occurred, it was actually what I had to do was bring the sensation back to the middle of my tongue. So because that is, you know, if I over here, whatever, I am not in balance. So it would throw me way off. So it's like, Okay, bring it back to the center. You know, first I really overshot. But I had to learn to really focus on it. So, that, bringing myself back into a centered position, and knowing to focus on it, and focusing in a way that just almost like a meditative sort of state, that the more I use it, the more that happened.

Cheryl Shiltz 45:42

So eventually, using that sensation just prompt me more and more and more buying life back, the thing that died, was it came back to life in a much better exciting way too, and kept doing it, gosh, I use that for a good two plus years. And came to the point where I didn't need to use it anymore. And I don't use it now. And, I have to make a claim here, is that I'm not healed. I always damage all the stuff is still with me. I just learned how to deal with it.

Cheryl Shiltz 46:26

And I have crappy days, it was it was really rainy and yucky yesterday. So when the pressure goes down, then I'll have some difficulty, you know, uneven surfaces

there. I mean, like really bad. I love hiking. So if you get, like rocks, and whatever, I need a little extra help doing that, I tried doing it myself. And the key I thought for me is just don't think about it. Don't think about it, just do it. And sometimes they can go really fast. Just don't think about it just okay, there's a rock, there's a rock, and I'll stay on and I'll map myself out. And I'll go with that. And afterwards, it's kind of fun. It's like, I did it, yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 47:21

That's interesting to hear that you also still have your bad days. And that the damage done to the brain is still there, that's a damage, it can't be restored. But you have bypassed to an extent where you're still living full life. And as a result of that,

Bill Gasiamis 47:42

you just found again, a way to continuously overcome, which is not to think about it at all, which is just speed up a little so that you're more, I'm not sure what speeding up does. But it's similar to riding a bike isn't it when, when you're going slow on the bike, you're more likely to be off-balance, when you go faster, somehow, you become more balanced. And it's interesting that the barometric pressure influences how you're feeling on a particular day, because that's interesting, because a lot of stroke survivors will experience challenges on different weather days, you know, depending on whether it's too hot or too cold, I certainly don't like the cold. And I notice when the weather gets colder, that I struggle more.

Bill Gasiamis 48:37

And my left side is a little less responsive, and it's a little sleepier, and therefore my balance is affected a little more on those days. But again, it's people look at me and they think that are normal or look normal, like there's nothing wrong with you, but they don't see the internal thing, the damage is still there, wasn't removed, they removed the blood vessel and operated on my head. But whatever they left behind is still there, it's not going away, that part of the brain is no longer there. So that's interesting, because there's so many similarities that I can just recall of the interviews that I've done where people are describing what you're describing, balance after stroke becomes a big challenge whether that person has a challenge with their cerebellum, or whether the brain is impacted near the vestibular system, etc.

Bill Gasiamis 49:42

And they're learning how to walk again, or whether they just had what I had which is sensory impact to my left side. So it's the skin, that can't sense where my leg is on the ground and it's not getting enough feedback. To transfer to the brain to tell the brain, that's like your right leg, your left leg is in the same position. But on the other side of it, it's not doing that it's going, there's something different about your left leg, we're not sure where it is, and intensifies the body on the right side and that overcompensates. And then things get out of whack, because I'm always trying to compensate for the loss of sensation on my left side.

Bill Gasiamis 50:30

So it's fascinating. And, you know, I was so amazed by your story, as I said, earlier, I was watching your video on YouTube, and then the grin on your face when you're riding the bike, and you're being interviewed by some reporter. And I just thought, wow, I mean, look at this, anything is possible, I critically understood the importance of the inner ear, and the balance, that helps all people achieve.

Bill Gasiamis 51:09

And I related to you when you couldn't stand up and balance and walk and do all those things. But I was so early on in my recovery, I couldn't yet relate to you being back on the bike, and I was thinking, wow, this could be a possibility for me, if I do this neuroplasticity stuff. That might be something that I can get back. And that was the next part to my recovery. It was like, oh, okay, I'm going to walk, then I'm going to run not marathons, but just run across the road or something like that. And then I'm going to get back on my bike.

Cheryl Shiltz 51:47

Did you?

Bill Gasiamis 51:48

I did, I got back home. But I do have a bit of a challenge on the bike. So my left side gets tired more quickly than the right side. And therefore, it fatigues quicker, my grip on my left hand loosens, and sometimes over a bump, my hand will come off. And I'll fall off. And I'll do all these crazy things to try to stay up. Another time, I was riding the bike into our central business district here in Melbourne. And there was a construction worker who said the roads closed, don't come down this path. And I was okay. So I stopped my bike, and I went to put my foot on the

ground. But my foot was so numb, that I didn't realize that my foot was on the ground yet. And the bike fell over and it flipped over. And I just trashed myself in the middle of business district.

Bill Gasiamis 52:48

So I had to solve the problem. And this is the amazing thing about the time of the world that we live in the changes in technology and how much they support us. You are supported with this very basic version of technology that was leading edge, definitely leading edge and it's still leading edge. And it was ahead of its time. But I discovered a bikes, electric bikes, which have a motor that supports the pedaling, therefore my left leg, fatigues less, therefore I can ride longer. And I can put my foot on the ground, and I can become comfortable to stop safely.

Cheryl Shiltz 53:32

Wonderful.

Bill Gasiamis 53:34

That's great. I remember.

Cheryl Shiltz 53:37

We should say the name of the device. It's called the Brainport. So yeah, I think if you go online, and the company that makes it is W I C A B. And if you Google them, or Brainport you will find them and then get some information from there. But you know, after all this stuff happened, you know, that's a big enough whammy.

Cheryl Shiltz 54:14

And then it was discovered I had a brain aneurysm. So it couldn't be coiled. So I had brain surgery, which was like, Are you serious? Yeah, so that was another, you know, great, here we go. And get that all fixed. And luckily, and gratefully. I don't have I think I have there are things that you know, it's that have taken a little a little stab, but then me you can't make this stuff up. Right. And then I develop seizures.

Cheryl Shiltz 54:59

So now I have seizure disorder, which is controlled by meds and all that. So each one of those things kind of like the first one was really crappy. And you know, you're being a three time stroke survivor. And so the first one is really bad. Right. So then another thing happened. And then another thing happened. And I had to

thinking, you know, what, that first thing kind of gave, you know, showed the other one the ropes to do?

Cheryl Shiltz 55:35

And then the other one. And, you know, not to say it wasn't, wow, was that scary? To have that done? And there's a saying that I absolutely believe, it says, when air hits your brain, you're forever changed. And it's, I just kind of think that's the whole vessel of your body. And when they open it, it just kind of goes. So we have a different body, we have a different brain, from what it was. But I could see that you've done it, and other people have done it, that we can do it, we can totally do it,

Bill Gasiamis 56:32

That's the message. It's the people that are early on in their journey. That's the message is, your journey was quite advanced by the time I got to it in 2012, when I needed that information, you had been on the journey since 1997. So that's what I needed to see, I needed to see somebody who had progressed through the stages and come out the other side. And it didn't matter to me specifically, how "good or bad" the recovery was, I just needed to see progression.

Bill Gasiamis 57:09

And then be hopeful that there was a possibility for progression for me. And that's what we're doing now. We're giving the same hope to people who are going through the tough times right now that there will be progress. And that things will be better in the weeks and months and years to come. And you might not know how much better. But just keep moving forward like you Cheryl. I mean, it's one blow after the next but that resilience fact, I imagine has still building and continues to build. And then when you get to the next one. It's not so foreign anymore. It's not ideal. And you'd wish that it never happened to you, but it's not foreign. And you have skills that you can draw on from previous experiences to get through the next one.

Cheryl Shiltz 58:06

Yes, exactly. And, you know, resilience, never hands pill. Every day, something comes to us that we have to bust through. You know, even if it's like, going to work and somebody is going to slow your car doesn't start, but you fix it. Right? So we just learned a little resilience in regards to getting in my car and going. And that's a whole different type of scenario. But everybody has it. Every single

person has resilience. It's just a matter of recognizing it and know that you have it.

Cheryl Shiltz 58:55

And every one that may be listening and seeing that. Yeah, you have it. I just want to share that we all have it. And that's how we get through. And it's not easy. It is not an easy, easy job. And a friend of mine said to me "oh gosh, I don't want to forget this". Oh my goodness. It's really a pretty killer statement. I'll think of it, it's just historically good. It's different for everybody. I don't know how this happened other than paying attention. That's what I started doing is paying attention to the good stuff.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:00:00

Paying attention to how I'm recovering physically and psychologically, because those two are literally shaking hands all the time. And when something really traumatic happens, I think it's hard, they might not reach all the way. And wow, I I'm just fortunate, I've just been really fortunate getting involved with these things. And I also became a warrior against the medication because that's what did it. It was Gentamicin, that antibiotic is the cause of my damage.

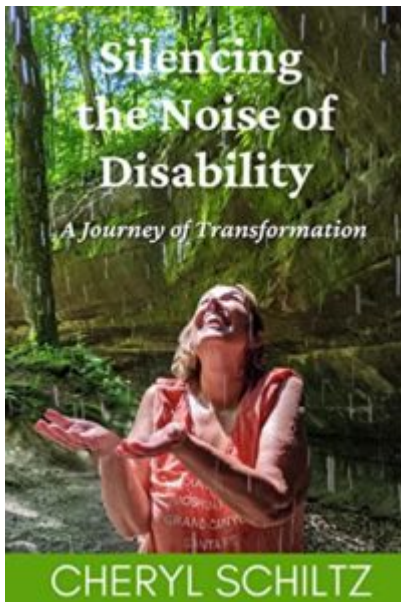
Bill Gasiamis 1:00:51

Are there people going through this vestibular issues that you had because of that medication?

Cheryl Shiltz 1:00:57

There are quite a few of them. It can be, you know, maybe a surgery, head injury, my thought is, yeah, there are a lot of people that have this happen. And if I remember right, it was three or 6% of the individuals that take this medication, develop vestibular dysfunction, which to me is way too many people. Yeah, it doesn't mean like any kind of medication. You know, when we're in the hospital, do we ask? You know, we do.

## **Silencing The Noise of Disability By Cheryl Shiltz**



Cheryl Shiltz 1:01:46

And I think they need to tell you, it's just like, when you go to the pharmacy, they give you this sheet and they tell you what to look out for. And that doesn't happen in the hospital. So I really rallied on that. And I made a lot of noise, whether or not it's made any help done anything. But you know, I got on the bandwagon. And I thought, something has to be done. And if I could, if it's okay that I tell my story about what happened to me, in my book.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:33

Is there a copy of the book there?

Cheryl Shiltz 1:02:38

Wait a minute, yeah, it's called *Silencing The Noise of Disability*. Remember when I talked about the noise? So this is telling my story from beginning to end to where I am now. And it's still on Amazon

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:03

I'll put some links to it.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:03:05

Oh thank you. That'd be wonderful. Yeah, it's a long time writing, I'll tell you, like years before, and then it finally all happened. But yeah, paying attention is a big thing, using the device was one that helped them, like getting out of bed and not thinking about it and going "wow, I just did something really huge" even though most people just get out of bed. But then it's like, you know what, there's more and more things that I found that I could do that were coming back, even if it was



just like walking around the corner. If I paid attention I think we can see our recovery, when we pay attention to it. And it's not just that we know, we see it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:09

Tell me if this sort of relates to it? Is it being active in recovery, because a lot of the recovery after stroke is passive, you go somewhere and they do something to you. Is that what you mean? Is that being active so that you're not only receiving passive assistance, you're participating in your recovery?

Cheryl Shiltz 1:04:35

Yeah, we do have to participate. And being active is one of the things and it was hard to be active because I'm like, I can't stand up. I can't walk a straight line. But after that, getting out of bed thing. I went "wow, I'm gonna start looking at what I'm doing". And to be active, and I used to walk, I walked around my little town that we lived in. And it wasn't easy, I was all over the place, but I kept going and going.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:05:20

And because you have to do that, and I know, it's so difficult, with anybody that, have a stroke, or whatever, to walk like that is so difficult. But even if it's just around the living room, to the porch and back, and just think, wow, I just took that step, and I did good, paying attention to how you really truly are getting better. You're just moving along to where you can, and you can take yourself there. It's not easy, but we can do that,

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:07

you have to do it, in spite of the difficulty of being uncomfortable, right? The difficulty of if I get up, I'm going to have dizziness, I'm going to feel unsafe, it's going to be scary, I might feel like throwing up, but I've got to do that anyway, I've got to get up anyway. And go forward. And achieve this thing in spite of the difficulty, the fear, the uncomfortable accountability, I don't even know if that's a word of consciously putting ourselves in a place that's hard and difficult.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:54

So it's like the guy jumping out of a perfectly good airplane with a parachute. It's like, a perfectly good airplane is perfectly good. But in spite of that, I am going to jump out of this airplane into the wind. And I'm going to land because I'm going to get a something out of it when I do that. And it's going to be hard and difficult

and frightening and ridiculous and probably stupid. And probably something we should never do. But I'm going to do it anyway. Because I've calculated the risks and the reward. And the reward is quite worth going after.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:07:34

Right, right. One of the things I thought about, the people around you not understanding or like yourself, you don't look like we have anything wrong, right? Until we get up and walk. It's like, okay, now I'm getting up and people are looking at you like "what's going on?" And that was constant, like, oh my gosh, people are always looking at me and wondering, and had to bust through that. And just just move through it. I started just smiling at people.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:08:25

Yeah, just I did a smiling experiment when I was on campus to see how people would relate to that. Now many, many people smile anymore. And so that was hard because you know what's wrong with you? Why are you doing this? Why are you doing that? Why are you getting special services at school, you can take a test in a quiet area, which I really hated doing because then that put attention to the fact that I have a disability. So I came up with the other thing is just put your plugs in, so I don't care.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:10

So you had a problem with overstimulation of the brain with sound.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:09:15

Yeah, because I couldn't concentrate. If I was having this conversation and other people were in the room having conversation. It's really hard to stay focused on you because I have all this stuff going on around me. Right. So those are the rules. Those are the little things that happens. But yeah, I had to come up with different ways, I worked with how disability resources and at this EPA college, I was able have somebody take some notes for me.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:09:54

I could take tests in another room, and I took my own notes, but only I could decipher it. But you know, it took me like three times as much to learn what we're talking about, because I had to see the notes I use a tape recorder, and I had to read it. And listen, all my senses, all my senses were in to reading that one lesson that eventually, we're going to have a test on.

# Invisible Conditions

Cheryl Shiltz 1:10:28

So it's not easy. But one of the things that I think is very important for physicians, PT, anybody that helps us get better, you know, to hopefully try to recover in whatever way is that I don't think people understand the inside of disability. And when I say that Bill is that we have this outer thing where we have, you know, this is what's wrong, but we have this inside of us that is just screaming and struggling. And that is the part that is missing in services and in recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:27

The challenge, and we talk about this a lot the invisible disability makes people like us who appear well and normal, for lack of a better word makes us able to relate to people who are suffering from psychological challenges, depression or anxiety or other psychological issues, because we can now relate to them because they've had this challenge that nobody can see.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:05

And therefore they can't understand that unless they've had the condition. And the problem with your recovery is that perhaps the people who have had what's happened to you haven't become doctors in that space to help people like them. That's difficult for many reasons. And the people who have had stroke haven't gone back to being doctors on helping people recover from stroke, because they are now struggling with their own challenges and issues that are stroke related.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:43

And they can't take up that type of a role in that space anymore. And that's the real difficult thing, isn't it? It's that whole idea that it would be great if they knew us better, but in order to know us better, they have done had a stroke, or vestibular challenges. And that means they have to be unwell. And how do we how do we get on well people to become doctors and spend so much time in doctoring, and helping in nursing and studying and all that type of thing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:13

It's so difficult. So we've got to deal with people who are ignorant, but Well, meaning they're trying their best to help out in this space. And then we've got to hope for angels like like Paul Bucky reader, to be curious to the extent that he was to come up with solutions to people that he doesn't understand, yet still come

up with a solution for them. And that's the the concept is like a solutions focused approach. But the medical system, the Western medical system, is not about solutions. It's about getting rid of symptoms.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:13:57

Oh, there we go. There it is that treating the inside of us.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:04

Treating what we see on the outside, it's, oh, you've cut your finger, and it's a bleeding in the bleeding was not stopping? Well, we'll just put a bandaid on that. And that'll stop the bleeding. It's not looking beyond the layers of the skin to see what it is that's causing the bleed unless the band aid is not managing to handle that bleed. We don't really care.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:14:28

Right. And, take it a step further, is you know, things that have happened to us. There's a whole big bunch of stuff under that skin. You know, where we are and how we feel and it it's like we have to treat ourself in that respect. And it's really hard because we hurt inside disability it and the things we've been through, hurt.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:15:05

And sometimes, a lot of times people don't understand what do you mean hurt? I mean, I hurt, because what happened to me, literally stabbed me to my core. And that wound, I don't think ever heals. I think it kind of heals. But I don't think I mean, I still feel that stab, you know, it's just like, wow. When I ended up with, you know, finding I had an aneurysm I'm like, are you serious?

Cheryl Shiltz 1:15:47

What they're gonna crack my head open now? And, you know, it's just that was another one it was just in a different place it was that inside pain that hurts bad. And eventually, you know, maybe all of our, you know, what I found is every those steps to the little things, you know that we're paying attention that whatever the pain starts to, you know, it's still there, but it starts getting, you know, quieter. And I called my whole thing as I was going through this, the beast, you know, I just call them the beast.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:16:36

And it's because I was introduced to disability now who the heck wants to be introduced to somebody like that, right? Because that's supposed to be for friends

and new people and you can get to know them have some fun. And it's like, this guy is not fun. And little by little, I'm just like, You know what, I gotta make him pick up my books and give me back my lunch money came to the point where he needs to get to know me.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:17:14

So then I can take control of it. And we have that, that way to control it. And no negative thoughts can can turn it in have lead to a positive thought. I did this today. And if you feel really rotten, feel rotten and let yourself feel that. You know, I said how many times that I sit there and cry. And, you know, I noticed one day it's like, I know everything in my house and the placement. I can figure this out. Because it's familiar to me, I cleaned it come times, you know.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:18:04

And so mapping myself, it worked, but it also was way of saying to myself, you can relax now. Because you know you can get there. There's always things to touch, but I'm going to try to do it without doing it. Because I know where I am. I know my familiar spot. And did you feel like that was the safest place for you to just be where you know?

## Reflections

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:39

It was and it was a big motivation to come home from hospital to be in a familiar place. But also I had the risk of it becoming a little bit of my jail cell as well because I retreated too often. And sometimes it would have been better to slay the beast and not go into retreat from it into my home would have been better to be out and going through that thing or trying that thing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:14

But I think at the time perhaps I was lacking the resilience at that time. Maybe I was just a bit low on you know like psychological resilience or mental resilience or emotional resilience. There was something lacking and it was like, okay, safe place, retreat there, stay there. Then always venture out. Always try and venture out and try and make it easy for me to venture out so that on the days that I really wanted to get to an event for example, I made sure I had nothing else to do on that day.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:57

So that I wouldn't be tired by the time I had had to get to that event and then miss out on the event that I so wanted to get to. So I had to really rediscover how to how to how to prepare myself to achieve the things that I really loved. And I've mentioned that in another couple of episodes where one of the things I have a lot of I value is being at home and preparing a meal for my family and eating together.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:30

So if it was my day to be at home and prepare a meal and eat together, I wanted to make sure that I had the energy to get that meal, to buy the ingredients to bring them home to prepare them and to cook the Anantha hadn't really when everyone was in the door at around six o'clock or whatever it was. So that day prior to that, if it meant I did nothing to get that done, then that's what I did. And it was a whole relearning about how to be me, and still how to achieve the things that I loved.

Bill Gasiamis 1:21:06

Because missing out on the things that I love too often, that made me depressed and angry, made me feel like things were harder than they actually were or more that there was no solutions to my problems. So I had a really supportive family, they, but they didn't understand me, I had a really supportive group of friends, but they didn't get it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:21:29

And, I sought out other people who I didn't know strangers, guide me, counsel me coach me to pick up the skills that I was lacking to evolve from this Neanderthal that I was at 37 Up until my stroke, I was just a guy that pushed through pain, barriers fear, who, who let fear control him who had one way to solve problems, you know, everything was a nail, and all I had was a hammer, you know, and I was just smacking in there, and you know, yelling and screaming and just reverting back to you know, this Neanderthal version of me was the only way that I knew how.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:16

And I had to, I had to go to places that were uncomfortable, like my heart and discover what was laying there and let it speak to me and then not be afraid to hear it and then take action on what it said, you know, the reason why I think I

was a bit of an authentic Neanderthal is because I became a data 21. So my then girlfriend became pregnant, then we got married. And six months later, my son was born.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:47

So I was just turned 22 When he was born. So I'm only four years out of high school. And you can imagine how lacking resources that 22 year old person is. And in order to support my family, my wife and my son, well, the woman who later became my wife, in order to support them, I went and did the only thing I knew how to do is work and put myself last and just worked and worked and worked and worked three jobs at some point, anything to just keep them with a roof over their head, the bills paid, you know, the heating on all the usual stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:30

So when things settle down after say, a decade of doing that, when I was say 32, I hadn't let go of those behaviors. They were useful for them. But I brought them into my 30s and beyond. And then at 37, I was still applying the same approach this I've got to be the man and I've got to feed my family and I've got to pay the bills.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:58

And you know, and I had already done that we were already well established and everything was fine, you know. But I just didn't realize that I could let go some of those behaviors and challenges and evolve and become a more upgraded version of myself had no idea. But then I was faced with such a tremendous loss of my abilities.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:22

And even if I wanted to I couldn't implement those breakthrough barrier. Work hard like machine, I couldn't even do those things anymore. So now they were stripped from me. Back then it was I thought it was a terrible thing. But in fact that was a blessing in disguise. And then I was able to find new skills that were scary and challenging and hard to learn.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:49

But as I found them and started to implement them, I started to get this sense of wow, there's more solutions out there than I thought of and better and perhaps before, and I was focusing on problems, rather than solutions. And I don't know

what my next stroke is going to cause, or the third one is going to cause more even if they're going to happen. But if I'm focusing on solutions, I'm going to get way more solutions than problems.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25:21

And that was the mindset that dragged me out of being this Neanderthal to this more modern version of me and people I'm a very different person to what I was before my personality was the same if we interacted, we interacted in a similar way, the same kind of passion and laughing at the same things. But underneath the hood was this very basic version, you know, the first version of the Model T, Ford Motor, that was great.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25:59

But if we put that into a modern car, it wouldn't run all the electrics and all the things that need to run. And, I got to check out that model T motor, and I got to replace it with a more modern one, and learn about what it could do. And what it can do, is so phenomenal. It's so unbelievable, what this new version of myself can do, this version of myself can create a podcast, this version of myself can create a course it can coach people, this version of myself can write a book, this version of myself can do public speaking. And none of that was possible before 37. And before the first stroke, it was not possible.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:26:44

That's fabulous. And that is a huge, huge part of resilience. And, funny, because you and I are very similar. The book just now started doing presentations, which I love, love, love, love doing it. And starting my website and working on that. So it's all these kinds of things, that would have never happened if this didn't happen. And then one of the things you said about solutions, were they self-made solutions? Or you were thinking about, okay, I can do it this way. And it'll help me better?

Bill Gasiamis 1:27:29

Some of them will self-made, there were things that were obvious at the time. And some of them were things that say I had a big problem, and I needed a solution. And I didn't even know that I had the problem. So you have to have this self-awareness of our there is a barrier in the way and you can't see it, because you're the one that's creating it, you know, when you're the person who's you're in your own way.



Bill Gasiamis 1:27:56

And there for those types of things. I did seek out coaching. So I went to counseling, to work on the emotional recovery and psychological recovery. I went to coaching to get me to solve the problems that I didn't know I needed to solve. And encouraging was more about, these are the steps follow this path. These are the steps and let's check in and keep following the steps and keep checking in and then reflect back in a year's time and see how far you've come and whether there's more problems to solve.

Bill Gasiamis 1:28:35

So those problems to me it was about how do I express myself? How do I? How do I connect with people from all around the world? How do I put my message out? How do I share other people's messages, and it was about the podcast mainly. And the reason it was important to do that was because my wife is lovely as she is she doesn't want to hear about me talking about my stroke recovery every minute of the day for the next years.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:29:12

I hear you there.

## Discovering Your Passion



Bill Gasiamis 1:29:18

So I created the podcast to kind of selfish reasons it was to meet other people and help me with my recovery, see if they could understand me and I understood them. And then of course when you're doing that you realize actually that's helping the other person on the other side and helping the other people who are listening and their caregivers and it's offering hope to all those people and then I'm like, okay, all right.

Bill Gasiamis 1:29:49

I think I've found my life's purpose, my life's work, my passion, you know. And before 37 And before the first stroke, no passion, no life's purpose, nothing was there. And I didn't know that I was going to uncover my life's purpose. When I started down this journey, it started because I just took those first steps and didn't think about it like you on the path with the rocks. I didn't overthink it, I just did something. And this is what's emerged.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:30:23

That's wonderful. And yeah, be really proud of yourself. That's really amazing. And, you are making a big change. And, I think that getting our messages out there. With my book, I thought, you know, if I am touching one person, I will have been successful. And oh, you know, I think it's really important for us to be doing things like this, because what you've done is, you know, when I was looking through some of this, I'm like, wow, you've made a lot of changes in people's lives.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:31:11

And I've talked to people that just, you know, had no clue or idea that you can do this, you can think in a different way. And one of the things when I went to counseling as well, because of the you know, you have all these thoughts and things that never even you don't even know they existed. And so, my, my counselor leaned into me and he says, you know, Cheryl, you're still you, you're just in a different skin.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:31:46

That sentence, just put the light on, like, I am still me, and I am wearing a different skin. And I'm going to wear polka dots and stripes together and go out and have people love my outfit. No, and that it was just that one thing, that, okay, I may be different. And I'm gonna wear something different. And I might even start a trend, who knows.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:32:23

But that was my turning point, that I am going to do everything I can to spread some hope. Because hope is huge. When you have that hope, that's healing, and take resilience, it's out there. And when people go through these things, I mean, it's significant. It is just a significant change in our lives. And how do we deal with that, because we didn't have any of those thoughts or feelings physically.

internally, externally, we just had a boater day without thinking about it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:33:27

And we had no training, either no training to deal with these types of challenges, we just get thrown in the deep end you have to work it out, you know, and how am I supposed to do that?

Cheryl Shiltz 1:33:39

How do you feel about everything that we've been conditioned? How our lives since our beginning, how we've been conditioned to be who we are the relationships, the what you were taught what you learn your experiences, and in that big part of how we are conditioned through many different ways.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:34:08

And then this happens. That conditioning has it's almost like that's the pathway. Right? Because that's all we know. We don't know what's going on over here. You know, I was extremely I was just fearful is all get out about taking that step to get better. Because I didn't know what that was stepping into.

Bill Gasiamis 1:34:39

The unknown, and it's an unknown that can make your life better because you're afraid of it. You don't go to it. It's you getting in your own way. It's that whole thing and and what you said about the conditioning is I was conditioned to serve a purpose for somebody else all the time.

Bill Gasiamis 1:35:01

Even when I was at school, they tell you that they're teaching you so you can do a better job in the real world, so you can, you know, make it in the real world or but in fact, when I observed my children going through school, the purpose of teaching them was to get high grades, so the school can advertise that to encourage more students to come.

Bill Gasiamis 1:35:22

So even the kids became a resource to sell more spots at the school because it was a private school, rather than it becoming about giving the kids the skills they need to pass the subjects and learn the topics. It was about if you don't perform, you're out of here. So we're not going to have somebody who's an underperformer in the school, like you're meant to have underperformance at school. That's the whole purpose why schools are invented.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:35:56

Things like that, I mean, to embrace all of the differences and all of the things your child wants, if they want to do something really silly, and they want to go pick up rocks, and they want to do whatever it is that they want to do respect that and encourage them to be their own authentic self. And we can do that as well, because we're kind of in school, but we are our own teachers.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:36:30

And so we don't have to worry about performing and getting all the grades and have somebody else have accolades for that, because they did it. We are teachers, and we can get good grades with whatever we come solutions we come up with, and just believing in yourself. And knowing that, yeah, this really horrible thing happened to me.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:37:03

But I'm going to believe that tomorrow is going to be better. One of the things I also learned with the research and just basically, you know, dealing with this and going through it is to be in the moment. Because right now we are in moments are not thinking about this, and we're not thinking about what was, we are in this moment, and every single moment leads to healing. Whatever little piece of that it is. Yeah, just to be in the moment, because you don't know what's going to happen.

## More Use For Neuroplasticity



Bill Gasiamis 1:37:54

I found that I was when I was thinking too far in advance that I would get anxious and worried and concerned. And that would change my whole physiology for the day. And I'd have a bad day in the present, you know. And then when I was thinking about the past, what I've lost and what's happened and all the dramas

and all the issues again, you know, you go into the past, and you get depressed about that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:38:17

And it's like, you feel unable to influence it. And you can't influence it, because it's the past and you can't change it because it's the past and it's happened. So you can't do anything about it. So what's the point of going there? In my mind. And that's also neuroplasticity, you know, we're talking about your plasticity is like, retraining the brain so that it's not doing those things that are not serving us about the past.

Bill Gasiamis 1:38:44

And what's going to happen in the future that is perhaps some neural pathways that we've created and given time to previously, but they're not supportive of us in our recovery going forward. And if you want to recover, going forward and have a full recovery, and you can get rid of some of those neural pathways about what happens in the past and what happens in the future.

Bill Gasiamis 1:39:09

It's going to serve you better it's going to be create space for evolution and for growth and for recovery and for new opportunities and for knowing where to go for solutions, just naturally without thinking about it like you did. Your whole recovery was I'm just going to go somewhere. And I'm not going to overthink it and we'll see what comes and what came was Paul Bach-y-Rita

Cheryl Shiltz 1:39:43

when I was doing the research, there was a point in time where I'm doing really well. And I said to Paul, Mitch, and Yuri, you know what? I said I'm gonna go hiking, and they're like no you're not. So yeah, try to stop me. So I jump in my car. And I drive to a place called the Indian Lake has fabulous trails, and I used to go there all the time. And I missed it so much, oh, I just missed it so much. And when I arrived, I just started crying that I am there. And so I took my trails, I took the path, I would take and stop and say hello to my trees and just kept walking.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:40:38

And the one path, this is beautiful, all they come grandfather Oh, and so he's there and I am okay, I can do this, because that's where you take a turn and you go up the hill, then you're in the woods, and you're walking on these paths, and I

have no cane, you know what, I'm gonna do this, even if I fall down, I am going to do this. And there was like some pretty significant problems, but I stopped, regroup, and I'm going to do this.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:41:17

And what I feel when I reached the end of that path, I knew I reached the end of my fear, and all the stuff that made it because that was the biggest day of my life. I knew I could do it. But I had to try it. And it was just, I can't even express how that felt. And it still gives me really good joy. To think about that when I have a really crappy day, or something happens. I think back to things like that I did it. And I can still do it. Because I did it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:42:15

Did you have a family when you're going through this? Were you going through it alone?

Cheryl Shiltz 1:42:22

I had my son, I, unfortunately, in a relationship that wasn't very healthy, and hence not getting any help. But I have my son he was in college. And so I was really, really pretty much on my whole, you know, I had to still go grocery shopping, I had to still do all of these things because of the situation. And I would see my family every so often. But it was just I lived in an area where it was quite a distance from people. And so I had to do this stuff. And because of just the way it was, I had to do this. So there was no other thing. There's no other way to approach it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:43:21

And what kind of message do you think it would have sent to your son, if you decided that it was all too hard and was too tough. And you were going to give into your fear? What kind of message sent to the people who are looking up to you who are being guided by you in life and who have been taught life lessons when they're young? You know it doesn't make for a good example, when you're giving interfere, and your concerns and all that type of thing. And I wanted to be a good example for my boys, when I was growing up about how you tackle a serious health issue.

Bill Gasiamis 1:44:11

And then what the hell you do with it? Do you just let it there? In the background?

I had a health issue once and that was it? Or can you take the health issue and turn it into a podcast a video course or coaching? Public speaking? What can you do with it? You can do all those things. So I wanted to really lay down the foundation for an example. What if my kids went through something like this, where could they look to for an example of how to get through it?

Bill Gasiamis 1:44:46

Well, I could start at home first. And hopefully then, if they had to go somewhere else, then they could find more people doing something similar that they relate to better, but initially, maybe I could just to implant that seed in their head to say, Ah, okay. The old man was unwell that he did this, he did that. Okay. There's a path, whatever.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:45:17

That was a really big thing and bless your heart for doing that because you just made a big difference with your kid, as well as my son, he saw me get better. And because, I'm not gonna lay on the couch, and he was gone during a lot of it. But I was not going to put that persona on, I was not going to do that. And it was difficult for him because he did a lot of the caretaking at the beginning. And that was hard. Yeah, that was hard to do. You know he's an amazing man, and so proud of them.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:46:11

But that's hard when you have your children having to take over. It's a whole different role. And so, again, I did a lot of this on my own. And I wish I could point and put a finger on it. And, perhaps, how can you put a finger on what it was, that got you to where you are now, other than just working hard at it, changing our thought pattern, and just keep busting through it, and get to become, you know, you have a podcast, you have all of these things.

Bill Gasiamis 1:47:06

I don't know how it happened that I became this way, but it's been a glass half full kind of guy. It's being an optimist and eternal optimist, in the face of absolute toughness and difficulty, and whatever, it's about being completely and totally optimistic that I'm going to, you're going to give me an inch. And that's all I need that I'm going to take a mile. And I'm going to develop that and develop it and develop it and make it grow and grow and grow. And I'm going to continue in the face of all the difficulties that are going to arise, and we're going to continue to be

optimistic in spite of them.

Bill Gasiamis 1:47:58

And I'm going to continue to look for solutions in spite of them. And I always had been that way but I used to go to the wrong people to share my optimism with and I used to seek out the wrong people to get advice from. And they were telling me that it's not possible or something isn't doable, or you can't make money in that career or whatever. And then I would just feel completely disheartened. And then I would have to pick myself up again and put my socks and boots back on and just keep going down that path.

Bill Gasiamis 1:48:38

And then I realized that I need to seek out the correct people to guide me and to be my ear. And to have them give me the feedback that I needed to continuously encouraged me. So that my God given skill that I was given to be optimistic in the face of defeat all the time, was going to be nourished and was going to be supported. And I think that's what it was. It's just this eternal optimist and I'm not surrounded by them. I wasn't surrounded by them growing up

Bill Gasiamis 1:49:24

And as a result, I felt like a bit of a black sheep. But I don't share with those people. The things that are in my heart that they may tread on unknowingly, just because they're not eternally optimistic like I am.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:49:43

Yeah. I completely understand where you're coming from to, within my family. I am a glass half full as well and good It's a whole different dynamic in my family and so I just, I'm gonna keep going and like, give me an inch, I'm taking that mile. Exactly. And activism is good, yeah, it's a good thing that we had it because that's a part of where we are now. And you know, I laughed through a lot of stuff humor just really helped, just being, oh, great, I have to do this, it's just laugh about it and see where it takes me.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:50:40

Oh, gosh, you know, it's such a pleasure to talk to you because you get it.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:50:49

And to find people that get it is just really monumental to be able to share this and we know where we're coming from. So, with that said, You're helping me, I'm



still having a positive person and somebody that gets it, and we'll understand it and encourage and say, this is great that you need a new person that is your ear, but it's more than that. It's there's this connection, because we know what happened to us. And we know how we got here. And now we're doing these things. And, getting it out there and sharing it with people and helping people to really make their own path. And, you know, sometimes it takes a really big lawn or to make your path. You can make it any way you want.

Bill Gasiamis 1:52:05

It's a beautiful analogy. And also another thing like the sense I get about you, as you can see inside me, and that's many people can't. And that's the thing. That's where I get you, I can see inside you. So I know what you're feeling or what you're thinking how you're challenged, and because of my own similar experience, but also because I know how to look beyond the external and go deeper, and I'm prepared to go there, and I'm happy to go there.

Bill Gasiamis 1:52:38

And when I say hello, and I asked you, how are you? I'm quite comfortable. If you say to me, Well, I'm having a terrible day. And this went wrong, but I'm here regardless, and I'm like, Okay, well, let's talk about that. Instead of Oh, okay. See ya.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:52:59

Good. Yeah. You know, if you're having this, if you feel like crying, just sit down and cry, just let it happen. Because it does have to come out, it has to, all of our emotions are coming out. And each one of those totals a little bit.

Bill Gasiamis 1:53:21

The crying I did was live on stage when I'm delivering a presentation and something triggered and then the crying comes and you can't stop it. And you're technically not meant to be crying on stage. But then you've got the crowd hooked.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:53:41

That happened in mine. Last Tuesday, I did one and it's like, even at the end. Oh my gosh, when I said thank you for being here. I really appreciate it. And I'm hoping that and I just started crying. It's like oh my gosh, that's like the last couple sentences. But it's okay. Because being authentic when we're talking

about something, and we're so authentic and it gets to us so good that we're still what happened to us we're feeling it worse because it's still really raw. Really raw and I don't think it really like I said, it's we're going around in there and it's a part of us now and we just need to tell it to go sit in the corner while we go and do our stuff.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:54:43

You stay back there. You know I danced with it for a while it was in front of me always beat me up and hit me and make me fall down and then think okay, little by little get to know it. So, at the side of me everyone saw Well, just for kicks and giggles for him, he will push me. But then finally, he's like, behind me.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:55:07

And now, technically, it's kind of like I became friends with it. I know, that's a weird way to say it. But I had to become friends with it. Yeah, you have to and because that, for me, I just felt like, the fight wasn't getting me anywhere, you know, it's like I wasn't able to see that progress I made, because it's stupid beast keeps picking on me.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:55:40

So when you start doing this, you begin to say, you know what, I am in control. You don't get to control me anymore. I am the one that controls this whole situation. So you know what, just a way you go. But it doesn't like all the way but you know, I'm putting you out for a while you go sit out in the backyard, or whatever, are in the Carter, when I decided to let you off, I'll let you out.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:56:17

But sometimes I think, for me, I have to grieve with it every once in a while. And, sit there and say, I know that this happened to me. And I just have to agree with it. Because life change literally in an instant. Stand up, get out of bed stand up and just literally fell to the floor. And there was nothing, there was absolutely a nothingness.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:56:55

It's like this movie centers, or somebody's dropped somewhere and all you hear is wind. That's all I felt like now I have to start building a whole brand new world. And as I progressed with that Bill, I found out that I do get to build my own world. But the cool thing is, I get to build it any way I want. That's going to make it mine.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:57:30

And if you know I'm going to do a block here and decorate whatever the way I want to build the houses, in my own house, I can do whatever it is that I want to do. I can go tip Tolson, tulips, anything how I have learned and perhaps you have is like, I'm going to do anything, and I really don't care what people think about what I'm doing.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:57:59

It could be something just totally silly. And, I was at the zoo, doing some photography the other day, and the lilacs were in. And I just ran up to him stuck my whole face in it. I didn't care what people were thinking, I just don't maybe they'll get somebody to laugh, but it's like come here and try this.

Bill Gasiamis 1:58:25

Crazy.

Cheryl Shiltz 1:58:27

I am kind of that way.

## **Overcoming Your Fears**

Bill Gasiamis 1:58:31

Well, that's me similar. That's similar. Although it took a while for me to overcome the fear of doing the podcast and putting my voice out there and being judged and all that thing. And when I did do it at the beginning, I did get some negative comments immediately. I have no idea what it was about. And even now, when I look through my podcast, reviews, there's some people have left a one star review for the recovery after stroke podcast, believe it or not, I have no idea why clearly, it's got nothing to do with the podcast, or those people have tuned into the wrong show.

Bill Gasiamis 1:59:07

And they're confused. Clearly, it's got to do with some issue that they might have with me or whatever. But it did stop me for a little while. And then I kind of got over that and just over came in and unprepared to do anything to get awareness about stroke recovery out there. But there is one thing I won't do, which is not painting is necessary to cross part to cross over into the stroke recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 1:59:32

So I want to talk about political issues during the podcast that are not related to stroke recovery. And I want to talk about the war in Ukraine or my thoughts on this or my thoughts on it because it's not relevant. So I will just keep it at talking about recovery from stroke and bringing on guests that are prepared to have that conversation.

Bill Gasiamis 1:59:58

But you know if the war was interfering with somebody's stroke recovery, I'll discuss it then what we did about the pandemic, which interfered in a lot of people's recoveries and rehabilitation, and all that type of thing, and I did go to Christmas dinner one time with half my head shaved and the other half, now the half have not shaved.

Bill Gasiamis 2:00:22

My pretty conservative laid back family all kind of like freaked out a little bit, what's he doing, as he lost his mind? You know, so I tend to do those types of things. I've bought some outfits that are the most loudest most obnoxious I can possibly wear. Just to test people's response when I'm feeling like having a laugh.

Bill Gasiamis 2:00:50

And yeah, and it has been as a result of, I'm gonna rewrite my journey, my book, and it's not going to be through the eyes of the vision or the eyes of somebody else, my own filter is going to be applied to it. And I'm going to go for it. And I'm going to reach out to strange people from the other side of the planet, who put a weird thing on the tongue to learn how to walk again, and get that balance back, absolutely.

Bill Gasiamis 2:01:23

I'm gonna talk to them for an hour and 50 minutes. And isn't that amazing. And I just looked at that thought, wow, I mean, that just goes to show you how much when we are with similar souls, or you know, time just doesn't mean anything, it just goes away. And that's how you recharge your batteries, and how you create more resilience and how you have an amazing rest of the day, and how that then goes into the next day.

Bill Gasiamis 2:01:58

And then when I released this episode, people are gonna go to me, oh, my gosh, that was an amazing episode. And I reached out to Cheryl, they're gonna say to

me, and I checked out her YouTube video, and it doesn't end like it becomes this snowball effect of amazingness. That just continues to happen. And all I had to do was reach out and have a chat.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:02:21

Well, I'm glad you did, I am super glad that you did. Because this is, I definitely have a new friend.

Bill Gasiamis 2:02:34

Do you consider yourself a pioneer of neuroplasticity research and that type of thing? Because you actually were. And now because of you 25 years later brain port technologies, you know, Whitecap Incorporated, has the Brainport Vision Pro, which wasn't really part of solving your problem, but the Brainport Balance Plus, which is definitely related to the work that you did early on. Do you think do you see yourself as kind of one of the people who really took neuroplasticity, understanding and application to new levels?

Cheryl Shiltz 2:03:15

Yeah, I do. Because as a group, we came through this, you know, as I was using the device we all talk together about what can we do here? What can we do here? How about different applications? Who can we talk to, you know, obtaining funding, and, you know, doing presentations and things I was alongside with with these individuals and, and with Michonne Uragan. And yeah, we were all part of this. We were all together on it.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:04:00

And I do feel that way, but not in a like highfalutin way. Just in the fact that I was so fortunate to have had that happen to me. And I think that it was one of those things that was supposed to happen. It just manifested to myself. And you know, being able to do what we do is one of the most amazing, incredible, beautiful things that can ever come to us. And I can really now say, Bill that what happened to me was the best thing that ever happened to me.

## **Bill's Upcoming Book**

Bill Gasiamis 2:04:57

You just said you just gave out the title of my book my upcoming book Stroke: The Unexpected Way That A Stroke Became The Best Thing That Ever Happened To

Me.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:05:10

Oh, my goodness. Is it out yet?

Bill Gasiamis 2:05:15

It's not out yet. But six chapters are almost done. And I have another four to do. And the book, I caught myself saying that in an interview at Episode 100, or something like that, somewhere near Episode 100, or maybe 50, or something, I don't know where. And then I caught myself repeating that again, down the track and another one and another one.

Bill Gasiamis 2:05:38

And it's like, what's all this about? You know, how is that possible? And then, then I put it out on my Instagram, where there's about 4000 followers at the moment, and I asked them, does anyone out there believe that stroke is the best thing that happens to them? And lo and behold, 10 or 12 people said, Yep, they do.

Bill Gasiamis 2:06:06

And I said, Well, then I must interview you to find out how, how is that the case. And the book is the stories of those 10 to 12 people. And each chapter shares that story of that person, and then goes into the 10 things that we had in common that they didn't know, they had in common with me, and I didn't know I had in common with them.

Bill Gasiamis 2:06:35

But those 10 things came out in the interviews without me going there, they just said these 10 things in the interview, and each interview took about an hour to two hours. And then those 10 things, which I won't reveal now, not one of them, one of them is mindset and how they changed mindset, and the kind of mindset they adopted. And then those 10 things became the chapters.

Bill Gasiamis 2:07:05

And, and then we share a little bit of scientific evidence to back up that idea and the topic of the chapter, and then we talk about, you know how to apply it. And we talked about what to do if you're facing fear, and you're facing some roadblocks and challenges towards applying that skill. And, and, yeah, that's one of those things, it's just one of those things that came out of nowhere, that I never expected. That is an amazing result of a terrible event.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:07:50

Right, right. So not only, you know, you're coming together with other individuals that you can truly understand, you know, it not only the physical aspects, but the psychological stuff, the stuff that's going on inside that we are it's so hard to communicate that to someone that has never had some significant traumatizing thing happen to them. And we all everybody has some kind of trauma that goes on, and some kind of jobs. But this one is. Yeah. I mean, how do you just keep going? That's, you know, keep adding that edge to your mile.

Bill Gasiamis 2:08:56

When you look back and you go "How far I've come".

Cheryl Shiltz 2:08:58

Right. But not to forget that you got a lot more that you can do. And you have so much more that this world can give you.

Bill Gasiamis 2:09:11

Yeah. As we wrap up, where can people find out more about you? What's the website? And can we also talk about the book again, just briefly, and I'll have links.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:09:28

My website is in process, it's in construction, it will be Cherylshiltz.com and I'm calling it you know, Silencing The Noise. And so it's gonna be all based really a lot on my book, which is called silencing the noise of disability. And one woman's journey of transfer of transformation not to transformation, it's about transformation because we never stop, transforming. We're always going.

Bill Gasiamis 2:10:10

It's a journey.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:10:12

It is a journey. That's what a journey. Know that my own book. So that is available on Amazon. And it's starts out, you know, it's a story of me, you know, from the beginning of when I was a child, to the very going through all of this really junk, and, you know, give a little information about who I was prior to this happening. And it's going through the process. I mean, if I will put everything in there would be like, you know, for peace, which is like it.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:10:56

But you know, it's just short and sweet. Again, what happened to me became the best thing that ever happened to me, because I never would have been able to do that. And so it's very, it's very exciting to have that, that out. And I am working on number two. That'll come out and but yeah, the website, once again, when I get it down Bill, I'll send you a link to it.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:11:35

It's not too far out. So a lot of stuff. There's all that work about, you know, connecting and this and that. But I'll, when I get it down, I'll let you know. And I certainly hope this isn't our last conversation because this has been wasteful. And I can't What is it? Oh my gosh, it's been like two hours.

Bill Gasiamis 2:12:00

Thank you so much for being on the podcast.

Cheryl Shiltz 2:12:02

Well, thank you so much for inviting me. I really, really appreciate it.

## **Episode Recap Cheryl Shiltz**

Bill Gasiamis 2:12:06

Well, thank you for joining me on today's episode. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as I did. For me talking to Cheryl didn't seem like it took two hours to get through this podcast interview. But time flew, we were having so much fun. And I really got a lot from speaking to somebody who's so passionate about making a difference to people experiencing all sorts of disability.

Bill Gasiamis 2:12:33

And not only that, about how her story has inspired so many people, it actually made a massive difference to the research in neuroplasticity. She's considered to be patient zero, when it comes to sensory substitution and substituting one sense to another part of the body. And isn't it amazing that she was able to find herself in exactly the right place in exactly the right time.

Bill Gasiamis 2:13:04

When Paul Bach-y-Rita

and his team were doing the research that was looking for and specifically needing somebody like Cheryl to prove that it was a viable thing that



neuroplasticity was viable, and absolutely possible. And Isn't it fantastic that she was able to get her quality of life back by substituting the job of the inner ear to the top of her tongue.

Bill Gasiamis 2:13:34

If you've listened to this episode, all the way through. What you need to do now is jump onto YouTube and do a Google search for Paul Bach-y-Rita to say the interview that was done with Cheryl and all the other things that the guys did together that the team did together when they helped somebody who was blind see again.

Bill Gasiamis 2:13:56

Also, if you want to find those links, really easily, just go along to the show notes of this episode, go to [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com). You'll find that on the homepage, or go to [recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes](http://recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes). And you'll be able to find all of the links in the show notes to the things that I think you should see that are important to learn and understand.

Bill Gasiamis 2:14:24

And maybe they'll make a difference in your own recovery. Now, please comment, like, share this episode. If you're watching on YouTube comment, subscribe, hit the notification bell to get updates of new episodes as they become available. The more interactions the episode has, the more the algorithm will push the episode out to people that need to see it and the greater the impact the interviews will make.

Bill Gasiamis 2:14:49

Thank you so much for being with me. All the way to the 200th episode of the podcast. I couldn't do it without you. I really appreciate you you for encouraging me to continue these interviews. It's made a massive difference in helping me in my own recovery and I hope it's making a massive difference and helping you in yours.

Intro 2:15:12

Importantly, we present many podcast designed to give you an insight and understanding into the experiences of other individuals opinions and treatment protocols discussed during any podcast or the individual's own experience and we do not necessarily share the same opinion nor do we recommend any treatment

protocol discussed all content on this website at any linked blog, podcast or video material controlled this website or content is created and produced for informational purposes only and is largely based on the personal experience of Bill Gasiamis.

Intro 2:15:41

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

Intro 2:15:57

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Intro 2:16:20

If you are experiencing a health emergency or things you might be call triple zero if in Australia or your local emergency number immediately for emergency assistance or go to the nearest hospital emergency department medical information changes constantly. While we aim to provide current quality information in our content.

Intro 2:16:36

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