

# Part 1 - Tips To Manage Anxiety



Transcription:

Bill 0:01

Good day, Bill Gasiamis from [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com). It's been a while since my last post and I just wanted to answer a question from Stuart, who sent me an email.

By the website [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com), he sent me an email to ask me how I manage the journey and coped with anxiety after stroke. Now, I don't know if Stuart is somebody who experienced anxiety before stroke.

Bill 0:26

But if he was, potentially sometimes stroke can make anxiety worse, and for obvious reasons, right? If you're like me, and you experienced stroke, you're going okay what does this all mean for my life? You know, what does it mean about my mortality? Am I going to be alive next week? And thankfully, only have well, not thankfully, unfortunately, we lose 20% of people who have experienced a stroke pass away after the first incidents, but if you're around, you're one of the 80% and I'm glad that you are and I'm sad that the other people aren't.

Bill 0:59

But the fact that we are there's definitely some things then the trauma that we experienced that we need to deal with. And often, we don't have the resources

initially to deal with that trauma because we may have never had a trauma such as that. So we've never really gone out to seek out the resources to discover how to handle things like anxiety.

Bill 1:19

Now, if Stuart was experiencing anxiety, and notice that it got worse, usually the reason why anxiety gets worse after stroke is because the body goes into a fight or flight response. And what that means is that the body is looking out for danger. And it's sensing that you're in danger because something serious is happening in your brain. And it's trying to kick into a state of fight or flight.

Bill 1:45

And by fight or flight, what that means is that usually when we are in an anxious state, we are observing our environment and we're noticing a dangerous situation that's occurring and we're looking for ways to escape. From that dangerous situation to put us in a safe place, and then what is meant to happen is our anxiety levels are meant to decrease.

Bill 2:09

And in our society in the western society and in many other societies these days, anxiety is at a heightened state because there's a lot of things that we aren't doing to help get us out of that anxious state once we've achieved the goal of running away from the danger or fighting off the dangerous situation or person or getting ourselves out of that situation where we're at risk.

Bill 2:35

And what people don't realize is that, you know, jumping up in the morning to an alarm clock, and then jumping into a car and doing a one hour commute in traffic with a whole bunch of people who are stressed and trying to get to work on time, doesn't actually help to put us in a calm state. It usually helps to keep us in an anxious state, and then in the morning to get us awake because we interrupting our sleep cycle, not only are we jerked out of the sleepy state by an alarm, we're also using substances like caffeine to get us out of our sleepy state to stimulate artificially our body to tell it to be awake and alert.

Bill 3:16

So we're giving ourselves these situations where we start our day, quite artificially, and then we go to work. And as you deal with regular human contact,

you know, in life in work with the people around you, who also stressed and freaked out from all of the same things that we are, what we do is we just make that anxiety worse. And we just increase all the stress. And we're doing it five days a week. And we're getting to that point where, at the end of the day, we're trying to go home and we're going to run to catch our train or bus or get into our car.

Bill 3:52

And then we're going to make a long commute home. By the time we get home. You know, we don't get time to rest because then we've got to put dinner on, make sure we do a lot of washing, check homework, do all those things. And we very rarely get that time to rest. And if you're like me, and if you lived in a situation similar to me with young children, a mortgage and all the stuff that usually goes with a western life, what was happening to me is I was working up to 12, 13, 14 hours a day, sometimes.

Bill 4:22

So my rest time to unwind would occur between the hours of 9 and 11 or 12 o'clock at night. And it's not really a great way to create a space for healing the brain after stroke. Now, a lot of those things that I just explained, decrease during recovery from stroke because you can't go to work. Some of us can't commute.

Bill 4:47

And you're doing most likely less because you're experiencing fatigue. But the situation is that now you're dealing with this life threatening situation, and you've never dealt with something like that before. don't have the resources or the skills. So that's a little bit of the background to give you an idea of what I did to help overcome anxiety amongst other things. It's going to be counterintuitive.

Bill 5:13

There's a number of steps that you can take to do this. And I'm not going to go into every step totally today, but I will explain which the steps are. And I've made it my life's work to find out from the people that matter. And that's why I have the podcast and [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com), is to invite people on to share their stories, but also to get experts on to explain to me what it is that's going to support a good recovery after stroke.

Bill 5:45

And I've come up with the 10 steps from all the people that I've interviewed and all the stuff that I've done to support myself and my own brain after three brain bleeds and a brain hemorrhage. So let me tell you what the first step is. The first step is mindset. You got to have a healing mindset. And what I'm talking about there is, if you're not in the mindset of healing your brain after stroke, and you're in the mindset of how am I going to get to work? And you're in the mindset of how am I going to pay my bills and you're in the mindset of all these other things.

Bill 6:19

It's likely that what you're doing is you're just chasing the same ghosts that you were trying to find and get to, while you were in your healthy, quote unquote, healthy life before you had the stroke, which was running around and trying to appease the mortgage Gods, the work God's the things that we all get stuck trying to appease.

Bill 6:46

So there has to be a shift in mindset. When you experience stroke so that you're not dealing with the same stuff you were dealing with before. Although they are there and they don't go away. You're not going to heal your brain enough, if you're going into the space, or attempting to chase more work, pay the mortgage, do all those things.

Bill 7:10

They're important and they don't stop. They didn't stop for me. But you have to start putting your mindset into healing your brain first, that is going to be the priority. And the reason I say that is because if you get healing your brain mindset first and you become curious about how to heal the brain, then what you will do is you'll support your body, getting back online, with medical assistance, and you'll be able to improve the health of your body and your brain. And that will get you back to work sooner or quicker.

Bill 7:47

Now, I'm not sure how long your journey is going to take but however long it takes. If your journey is stuck out, I still got to get back to work and do more work. I feel like you're not putting your brain first. And as a result of that you're prolonging your recovery, because you're trying to get back to work, doing the same things you've always done, which is the things that got you into the space where you are unwell.

Bill 8:13

I could be wrong. That's how I hallucinate the situation for you at least. And at least that's what the experience that I had. So, once you manage your mindset, and you appreciate that the mindset has to take everything into consideration, as well as healing the brain, then you gotta take control of your emotional intelligence.

Bill 8:37

And I say that because many stroke survivors will go through a really emotional time. And I was extremely emotional crying at the drop of a hat and not being able to hold a conversation with many people on many topics because I would burst out crying. And I needed to get to a point where I understood what emotional intelligence was, and I understood how to tap into my own feelings, and talk about them so that I could start healing my feelings.

Bill 9:06

Believe me, it wasn't easy as a male in a western society, it was a little bit difficult. The more I persevered and the more I found people that I could share my feelings that weren't going to judge me and give me a hard time, the better I got at it. So, the next thing comes from the field of a new study of Gastroenterology, which is the gut brain or healing your gut.

Bill 9:35

And again, if you're like me, you might have noticed that after your brain injury, you may have experienced some changes in your bowels. Some inability to understand why you're feeling bloated all of a sudden, or why you couldn't go as regularly as it used to go before. Now the gut is really important in modulating our emotions and our moods. And if we can intervene in the right way or healing out