

# PFO And Stroke Recovery - Yvette Adams

**On the road to recovery after an Ischemic stroke which was caused by a Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO) Yvette Adams shares her stroke experience and her recovery 8 months from the date she ended up in the hospital.**

Facebook

Instagram

The Creative Collective

Highlights:

00:44 Introduction

02:23 It's Not A Stroke?

09:24 Diagnosed With A PFO

17:30 PFO And Stroke Recovery

21:25 Time Management After A Stroke

25:12 Emotional Lability

31:50 Managing Multiple Businesses After A Stroke

42:42 Sensory Overload And Fatigue

51:24 Having A Long-Term View

58:54 Stroke Support Groups

1:09:29 Importance Of Sleep

Transcription:

Yvette Adams 0:00

And then finally I had the neuro-psych assessment. I knew in myself that I was affected cognitively. But I didn't know how to articulate it or what help I needed. So finally I had that test and then it's a really long time to get the test back and explain it. And for me, it's my working memory is impacted. I was telling you about my short-term memory because I literally couldn't remember what I did yesterday, or where I parked car once I got driving again after a month, of course.

Intro 0:31

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

recovery after stroke.

## **Introduction - Yvette Adams**

Bill Gasiamis 0:44

This is Episode 231 of the recovery after stroke podcast, my guest today is Yvette Adams, who instinctively knew she was having a stroke, but was convinced out of it, not by one, but two medical professionals. To learn more about my guests and to get links to their social media and other relevant links, and to download a full transcript of the entire interview, please go to [recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes](https://recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes).

Bill Gasiamis 1:12

If you'd like to support this podcast, the best way to do it is to leave the show a five-star review and a few words about what the show means to you on iTunes, and Spotify. If you're watching on YouTube, comment below the video, like this episode, and to get notifications of future episodes, subscribe to the show on the platform of your choice.

Bill Gasiamis 1:35

Sharing the show with family and friends on social media will make it possible for people who may need this type of content to find it easier. And that may make a massive difference to someone that is on the road to recovery after their own experience with stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:52

Yvette Adams, welcome to the podcast.

Yvette Adams 1:54

Thanks for having me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:56

Thank you for being here under trying circumstances.

Yvette Adams 2:00

Yes, we all have them right.

Bill Gasiamis 2:03

While you were at the beach, and then you got distracted with a friend of yours chit-chatting about amazing stuff, probably. And then you got home and you're

locked out of the house.

Yvette Adams 2:13

That's right, that's how my morning started but I did do a 6k walk so that's good.

Bill Gasiamis 2:19

Awesome, awesome. Tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

## **It's Not A Stroke?**

Yvette Adams 2:23

In regards to the stroke, I presume you mean so it was this year in April 30. One of those dates we don't forget, I was at a yoga class one on one. She's actually a registered nurse. And it was right at the start of the class. And she went to hand me a small ball with spikes to put under my hip and roll it out.

Yvette Adams 2:41

And I just couldn't take it or my coordination went. And the ball dropped to the ground. And I thought that's weird. And then I went my arm feels really disconnected from my whole body. And I remember feeling all along here was pins and needles.

Yvette Adams 2:56

And then I must have looked funny because she said, are you okay? And I meant to go back and say I feel funny. But the words didn't come out right, they were quite garbled. And then my vision went on the side. And then the headache started on the side.

Yvette Adams 3:11

And I thought something was wrong. But she's a registered nurse. So actually even the next words I spoke did come out. I said you don't think it's a stroke do you? I actually thought to say that because we've had strokes and my family. And she said, can you do that and stick your tongue out? And I couldn't and then she said can you raise both arms and I could.

Yvette Adams 3:31

She said it's not a stroke then even though she's a registered nurse, and I actually continued to do the rest of the class quite gently for an hour with a cracking headache and my vision not quite there. But just thinking must be like a bit of a

faint episode or something.

Yvette Adams 3:47

Then I drove home, which isn't very far but the vision in one eye was still not great. And I told my partner what had happened. And I said what do you reckon? What should I do? He said we're going to the hospital. So thankfully he said that but to be honest, the hospital overlooked it too.

Yvette Adams 4:03

So I was there all day. They said maybe my brain my face was a bit droopy on one side, I slept a lot of it because the headache was just too bad. I wasn't hungry. I felt sick all the signs of stroke but no one really took it as that took them till about 5pm that day to do a CT scan and they turned up nothing.

Yvette Adams 4:24

So they sent me home and said follow up with your GP. So that night I came home and was full of liquid from the CT scan rushed into the toilet, cracked my foot because my spatial awareness was completely out and actually broke my foot.

Yvette Adams 4:39

So stroke with a broken foot now still wasn't recognized. Monday I rang the doctor diligently couldn't get until Thursday. All that week felt pretty rubbish, irritable sight, just not myself, went to the doctor. He ordered an MRI and it was another 24 hours before we got the results of that.

Yvette Adams 4:58

He said you've had multiple strokes. So that was three almost points of failure, he nearly didn't get the MRI. So we will, we won't, but they did a CT scan already. And then he said straight to hospital. And yeah, then it was along all sorts of tests. And people, I think feeling a little bit embarrassed, they didn't pick it up earlier.

Bill Gasiamis 5:20

I'm just sitting here, every time you say the next thing, I'm just thinking, Oh, my God, the next thing Oh, my God. Your instinct was to say it was a stroke, but then you go to the experts to get confirmation or help or support. And they tell you it's not so you kind of have to go with them since you're not a nurse or a doctor.

Bill Gasiamis 5:39

And it's a really difficult thing. So are you going through these difficult physical

times, like for that whole week? And are you thinking, Man, I should have done something more about this, or I still think this is a threat, like what are you thinking? What's going on in your head? Even though they're telling you it's not.

Yvette Adams 6:07

Well, I am thinking, I feel really frustrated because I feel like something's wrong. And you guys are the experts, and you're telling me it's not. I mean, they're saying have you had a migraine before? And I said no. And I said, well why do you think it's a migraine?

Yvette Adams 6:22

And then I had to question it and say but would you face go droopy with a migraine? And they said, Oh could be Bell's Palsy. So okay, what's Bell's Palsy? like googling it and stuff. But I knew in my family, there was stroke. So my great-grandmother who I think I've got some of their genes on kind of look like that side of the family.

Yvette Adams 6:43

She actually died instantly at 37 of a stroke. And then her daughter, my grandmother, same thing, very strong connection too, she died of a stroke, although she was 69. So that was the only reason I thought maybe a stroke because of that sort of family history.

Yvette Adams 7:01

But yeah, I guess I had a registered nurse or hospital and a doctor, pretty much the doctor, to be honest, belittled me, you know, I said, I was talking funny. He said, Yeah, but all Kiwis talk funny. And I was sitting there thinking, this isn't real funny. Like, I feel like rubbish. And when I looked back, it was so obvious.

Yvette Adams 7:19

You know, I went into the MRI and it's like, I knew something was very wrong, because I actually burst into tears in the MRI, like my body just went you're about to discover something that's going to blow your mind. And then even coming out of there and I driven myself there by myself.

Yvette Adams 7:35

I walked into the reception, and I forgotten to put my bra on I've forgotten to put my jewelry on I was so not with it. Yet here I was driving a car because I didn't know I'd had a stroke. So I guess the lesson on that is if you feel like something's

wrong, yeah, keep going to medical professionals until you feel like you are getting the diagnosis that sits well with you or that seems right.

Bill Gasiamis 8:00

It's such a hard thing. You did all the right things and it still didn't turn out right. I've interviewed heaps of people who have been down the same road. And, unfortunately, waited way too long. Well, didn't wait way too long. Got help way too long after they should have and as a result that left them with deficits that they could have avoided.

Bill Gasiamis 8:22

And a road to recovery that's way longer than necessary. And all the issues that come with that. You kind of got to give the doctors and the nurses and all them a break a little bit but still to say things like but all Kiwis talk funny because you're from New Zealand and you happen to be living in Australia as a way to justify not doing something is such a weird thing. Like his next question should have been your speaking funny how?

Yvette Adams 8:59

I know. He was very embarrassed, actually, I think as well, because of what I had. I had multiple infarcts. So I had them all over my brain and I'd actually been having them for two weeks. Unbeknownst to me. I'd been to New Zealand after all the COVID lockdowns to visit my family and friends and I was you know, desperate to go possibly the air pressure and possibly doing more exercise than usual.

## **Diagnosed With A PFO**

Yvette Adams 9:24

But as it turned out, I had a hole in my heart which is how I was having the strokes but when I said my symptoms, they didn't add up for him the GP because I said my vision went on my left but my pain was in my right temple, but my arm on my right side went so that's where I think he went. It can't be a stroke because it would all be on one side right? But when the diagnosis came out, it made complete sense would lose your vision because it is one over on that side as well as on the right side.

Bill Gasiamis 9:56

Okay, yeah. But still though droopy face, talking strange, weakness or sensation like, you know they are the three of the four face and arm well, one is enough and face and arm speech. The last one is time. It's just time. It's not anything else. It's just do something.

Yvette Adams 10:26

Yeah, I know. They were really onto it once I got to the main hospital. But yeah, I just wasted about five days. And who knows whether I've got some cognitive deficits that could have been avoided now, maybe. But I mean, yeah, they diagnosed the hole in the heart.

Yvette Adams 10:43

And it still took another month before I got surgery to close that. And so I did feel like a bit of a ticking time bomb walking around thinking, Will I have another one? Because there's nothing stopping and other clot going through my heart right now. So that was quite a scary month and a half and anxious time.

Bill Gasiamis 11:03

They would have put you on blood thinners I imagined during that time?

Yvette Adams 11:07

They did immediately. Yeah, high dose and they put me on clopidogrel as well. And they wanted to put me on a third thing. And I guess something I learned was to question everything because I went what is each of these for? Like, you know, if you're the medical experts, fine. But of course, I've lost a bit of faith from this experience and some others.

Yvette Adams 11:28

What is this for? And they said it's for high cholesterol? And I had to say, but I don't have high cholesterol. And I think they just did it standard stroke procedure, but I said but I'm not a standard stroke patient, you know, I'm not older, overweight, you know, got high cholesterol. So why would you prescribe that to me? So I negotiated them from three medications to two immediately. And I've since negotiated down to just aspirin because I just didn't feel it was right for me or necessary.

Bill Gasiamis 11:59

So the cholesterol medication. And then what was the third one going to be?

Yvette Adams 12:03

Clopidogrel was an anti-platelet drug of some kind. Yeah, but I mean, it seems, if you read all the side effects, headaches, fatigue, all these things, which I definitely had post-stroke, and I just wanted to eliminate the medication and try and work out what am I left with? Or how am I really feeling without this medication. And so I questioned the cardiologist as to whether it was absolutely necessary. And he said I could come off it.

Bill Gasiamis 12:32

I was speaking to somebody in a coaching environment years ago. And one of the first things in the initial stages, the conversation and coaching, was just trying to get a bit of a background understanding the health and well-being of this person.

Bill Gasiamis 12:47

And I got told that they were taking a medication. I'm pretty sure it was a birth control. And they've been taking it for about 15 years. And it wasn't for birth control purposes back then it was to settle something else. I think it was a hormonal thing.

Bill Gasiamis 12:47

And, and then I just asked like, so what's the situation about this medication? What are you going to be doing moving forward? How are you speaking with your doctors about it? She goes I haven't spoken to my doctors about it for about six years. And I was like, okay, any reason why? I just haven't been and I just take it. And I'm like

Yvette Adams 13:36

Question everything right? You have to.

Bill Gasiamis 13:40

Yeah, do you have this issue anymore? I don't think so. And it's like, wow, so detached from anything else, that you're just still swallowing this medication that you've been doing for 15 years, because somebody told you 15 years ago to do it. And you haven't followed up and you haven't done any of those things.

Bill Gasiamis 14:01

And nobody has also thought to go. Maybe we should be looking at following up these people and every so often see how they're going and what they're doing, send them a notification to maybe do a checkup or an appointment or something.



So the first thing that happened after that conversation was she made an appointment saw her GP, they both worked out that she doesn't need to take it anymore and she stopped taking it.

Yvette Adams 14:24

Yeah. Did it helps at first?

Bill Gasiamis 14:30

Yeah, the process eliminated one thing out of the many things that needed to adjust or change or resolve or whatever you want to call it. And it's one less thing that you need to do and swallow and impact your your biology with right? And I'm not against medication, absolutely not against it.

Bill Gasiamis 14:54

But cholesterol medication when the reason you had a stroke was PFO. Of course I would question that as well, that's ridiculous. And then, and then another medication for platelets, because sometimes platelets cause clotting. And it's like, again, you know, why was the clotting occurring, and for them their prevention medications, but I know people that have been on cholesterol medication forever.

Bill Gasiamis 15:25

And they've never had to really be on it. But they're told to do it, and they just do it. And then they just go through this process. There are long-term side effects of all medication, and you need to know what they are. And I'm not advocating for anyone to stop medication based on what I'm saying. But if you've been taking some medication, and you've just been doing it, go and get some advice.

Yvette Adams 15:57

Yeah, if it doesn't feel right for you, and you're having bad side effects, question it, explore it.

Bill Gasiamis 16:05

So how long were you in hospital? And what did you leave hospital with what kind of challenges after the first stay with a stroke and the clot symptoms.

Yvette Adams 16:18

I wasn't in hospital long at all, because it was a 24 hour diagnosis. I mean, I felt pretty poked and prodded. I had a lot of blood tests, a lot of all sorts of tests. And then they went, we think it's this hole on your heart. Once I did the bubble tests,

they call it where they throw a bubble through your heart chamber and it goes through, there's a hole.

Yvette Adams 16:39

So they do a little OT test on me to see how I made tea and toast in the kitchen and how I was sort of functioning with my daily living. But at that stage I mean, I'm really very lucky, I can talk I can well, I wasn't walking then because of the broken foot, they gave me a nice Moon Boot, which really helped because I was in a lot of pain, it was fully displaced my toe.

Yvette Adams 17:04

And they sent me home with the medication said, you know, your book, and for the heart surgery publicly pretty much. Just take it easy. So that was it. So at that stage, I hadn't had any I guess we'd call it neuro psych assessments or anything like that. Then just because it was still a little bit COVIDy and just getting into the system and these huge demands, and there's delays.

## **PFO And Stroke Recovery**

Yvette Adams 17:30

It took a while to get into rehab and get assessments done. And to be honest, that was fairly bumpy, not saying, you know, I'm angry at the system, it's just the journey, it was for me, I think I had three OTs in over three months, so you're not really getting any continuity of care. And then finally, I had the neuro psych assessment, I knew in myself that I was affected cognitively.

Yvette Adams 17:53

But I didn't know how to articulate it or what help I needed. So finally, I had that test. And then it's a really long time to get the test back and explain it. And for me, it's my working memory is impacted. I was telling you about my short term memory because I literally couldn't remember what I did yesterday, or where I parked car once I got driving again, after a month.

Intro 18:15

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.

Intro 18:40

If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation. Stop worrying, and head to [recoveryafterstroke.com](https://recoveryafterstroke.com) where you can download a guide that will help you it's called the seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Intro 18:59

These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your condition, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery. Head to the website now, [recoveryafterstroke.com](https://recoveryafterstroke.com) and download the guide. It's free.

Yvette Adams 19:18

Little things like that. So my working memory, which affects my planning and organizing, my attention overall. So concentrating on things is difficult. And I actually almost wonder if I was perhaps a bit ADHD before this happened, and now it's really exacerbated as well.

Yvette Adams 19:41

So I could lose my train of thought and things quite easily. So, I mean, I think I was pretty high functioning before so I'm sort of average or poor in some areas now and they gave me some stuff to work on. But for me I really notice the difference.

Yvette Adams 20:00

And I get quite frustrated. Fatigue and pacing is also an issue for me and headaches. So they're all invisible things. And, again, I'm so grateful and lucky. And I don't want to sound like I'm, what's the word? You know, hard done by because I've, I'm very aware, I'm really very lucky.

Yvette Adams 20:19

But by the same token that's changed everything in my life, it's been a very difficult adjustment for me from what I was doing to what I do now is very, very different and been hard to accept emotionally. And then, life adjustments very, very difficult. The fatigue for me can be debilitating, I can be laid up on the couch for three days in a row, I can't even sit up. So I feel like I've got this little battery.

Yvette Adams 20:46

And every morning, I wake up and go, what am I going to do with it. So just now I've done the walk, and I'll probably make dinner soon, first thing in the morning, because that's how I get it done. Work out any tasks I need to do that need my concentration, filling in forms or things or organizing myself for the week thing on Sunday. And then that'll be it. I'll be laid up on the couch probably later this afternoon because that's just the way it is for me at the moment. But I still like seeing myself as being in recovery. Six months.

Bill Gasiamis 21:19

You've got people that are saying they're in recovery, 10 years out I'm one of them.

Yvette Adams 21:24

Yeah, really?

## **Time Management After A Stroke**

Bill Gasiamis 21:25

You know, because everything you describe the things that I still go through, they're not as bad as they were at the beginning, at the acute phase, it's a little worse. But as your brain heals and gets better and better and better, you get back to yourself more and more and more. And then what you find is every once in a while, you just get wiped out. And it's like, oh, I remember this, I don't like this and you go through the process of okay, do nothing for the next two days, cancel all the appointments have nothing to do.

Bill Gasiamis 21:59

And I was the same I love what you said about your battery, you know, it's that big. And what am I going to allocate it to. And that's what I used to do as well, I used to have a real it was really important for me when the kids when I was when they were younger in school, that would come home from school and my wife would come home from work, I would have a meal ready for them.

Bill Gasiamis 22:24

So I would do almost nothing to make sure that I could get the ingredients and that meal cooked and ready for dinner when everyone got the big. Yeah, whenever I was in the house at 6:30pm. And then and then I would be what wiped

for the rest of the day. And I haven't done anything the whole day leading to that anything compared to my previous version of me.

Bill Gasiamis 22:53

And the other thing you said about the car, and not knowing what's going on and you need a neuropsychologist to test your cognitive awareness and your cognitive deficits actually to see where they're at. And because you're the stroke survivor, and you don't know how to articulate that you're just in the lala land in this spaced out zone. You don't know you can't articulate that help that you need.

Bill Gasiamis 23:25

Like the exact thing that you need is to say I need help with these things. But I actually can't get it out. And it took me it took me my think maybe within about six or seven weeks of counseling with my psychologist, after the first and second blades, she said to me Have you had a neuro psych assessment? And I said, I don't know what that is. She could tell that I was talking differently, I couldn't string sentences together, I couldn't remember what I was about to say, even though I was about to say it would go in the middle of the conversation.

Bill Gasiamis 24:10

I would just lose my train of thought exactly what you said. And because she said that my wife and I then made an appointment with a neuropsych. Because we didn't. Again, we've never been through this before we didn't know to go and just pay a neuropsych the \$500 it takes to get an assessment.

Bill Gasiamis 24:29

Because I didn't know that we waited nine months to see a neuropsych in the public system. And by the time nine months came, a lot of those things had come back. And therefore my assessment had been inconclusive. And they didn't recommend anything afterwards.

Yvette Adams 24:53

But you've also had nine months of frustration and lack of help which is just so difficult for you.

Bill Gasiamis 24:59

Really hard really, really hard. So all the things that you mentioned, very similar to what a lot of stroke survivors have mentioned. And then you're going through all these changes all these weird things, and then you're dealing with the

emotional side.

## **Emotional Lability - Yvette Adams**

Yvette Adams 25:12

That's difficult. I actually think it was my psychologist, you learn all these new terms, don't you? Who said I think you've got emotional lability. And I've had to go, what's that? So yeah, she explained it to me and anyone can Google it, but it's when the part of your brain that's affected affects your emotional regulation. And for everyone that can present differently it can be anger can be outbursts, it can be laughing uncontrollably, and weird places for me it sadness.

Yvette Adams 25:43

I can just burst into tears for no real reason. And I've always been a bit of a tomboy, and I'm quite a strong person. I'm not that kind of person. But one example from last week is I went for a swim in the ocean with my partner, I love the ocean, I love my partner. I think I was just tired. So tiredness then connects to the emotional lability. And I just burst into tears.

Yvette Adams 26:04

And he said, what's wrong? And I'd say, I don't know, I just can't help this. And it's a horrible feeling not being in control of your emotions, and that can stop you're socializing, because you're worried that that will happen. And that will be embarrassing. And yeah, if you don't know the people that well, and they can't see you have any deficit. So know that you've had a stroke, they just go, what's wrong with this girl? She's just crying for no reason, is she drunk? And I don't even drink and all these things. So then the socializing gets tricky as well.

Bill Gasiamis 26:35

Pseudobulbar affect, that's another name for it Pseudobulbar affect. And it's very common, and you hear about it from most stroke survivors. And I had that, and I'm a blokes bloke, and then all of a sudden, I'm a crying ball of a mess. And over nothing over the cat tripping over or I don't know what, sad movies immediately. And recently, even though I thought kind of, I've also done it on stage presenting, chatting to 200 people.

Bill Gasiamis 27:20

And I always sort of told myself before the beginning of the presentation, I'm not

going to do this today. It's not going to happen today. And I prepare myself and I get to another point in the presentation that I've never cried at before. And bang, sure enough, I have to compose myself and go again, it makes it okay in a presentation. Because if you're talking about stroke and stroke recovery and overcoming adversity, it kind of brings the crowd in, and you have them.

Bill Gasiamis 27:55

It's not ideal. But recently, I thought I was beyond it and over it and had moved on my team, which you may have heard of in the Australian Football League is Collingwood. And they had a cracking season. And we went to follow them in interstate for the last game of the season in New South Wales.

Bill Gasiamis 28:19

Were in and saw them play against Sydney Swans. And they lost they lost by a couple of points. I was crying in the stadium. But because everyone was so in their own emotions, some of them are going crazy because they won. And the others, me and all my people were all depressed in their own way.

Yvette Adams 28:44

You looked like a really passionate supporter.

Bill Gasiamis 28:47

I just turned around, looked down and just stopped making eye contact with everyone and cried. And the two weeks leading up to it because I couldn't get to the game. I was watching it at home on the TV. And we had one again by just a few points just got over the line. I was so emotional, my wife was laughing at me because I was crying at the football.

Bill Gasiamis 29:14

And then the following week. She said to me, so the second last game of the season when that game, they just scraped that alone. And she just looked at me and she said, You're gonna cry today? And I had already started crying. I had already started. I told her to get lost and leave me alone. And we had a laugh about it. But over the football over a win and a loss at the football. It's something that I couldn't care less about 99.9% of the time. I just couldn't stop myself anyway.

Yvette Adams 29:47

It's good that your wife makes a joke of it. And my kids do too. They've started

calling me Dory because I forget things. And I don't know what it was the other day we walked out, and I overheard my daughter saying to my son, she's just Dory. Like, she just forgets everything now, but it's kind of cute. I'm okay, if I worry. At least I'm still alive.

Bill Gasiamis 30:10

Yeah, absolutely. With my memory, I've got this weird memory thing. So I'll prepare myself in the morning. I've got to get this and that. And then I got to leave the house. And I'll walk out the door, the threshold of the door. And then I'll remember, Oh, I forgot this and that, and then I'll go back and get it. And again, it's become a thing that my wife has noticed. "What have you forgotten now?" And I'm like "I haven't forgotten anything. I'm just going through my process." My process is I've got to go through the threshold of the door. Take two steps down.

Yvette Adams 30:44

Remember what you actually need.

Bill Gasiamis 30:48

I've got to get my stuff in the moment of preparing my preparation cycle is completely out of work. I can't do it. It doesn't seem to work, the things that I need to do and one day it might be I forgot my son, the next day might be I forgot my hat. Or just weird things, my food that I make for lunch, I might leave it on the on the counter and not take it, my water bottle every day it's something, every single day. And she's just like, she's just used to it.

Yvette Adams 31:18

My partner sits in the car with the engine going and the garage up waiting for me. Because I go out. I come back. I go out. I come back. And I'd make lots of apologies and say I'm really sorry. It just takes me ages to plan and organize now. I'm sorry. He's always like, it's alright. It doesn't matter. But yeah, I can't just leave with everything I need.

Bill Gasiamis 31:41

So bizarre. Is it your own business? You're involved in your own business?

Yvette Adams 31:48

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 31:48



Tell me a little bit about that.

## **Managing Multiple Businesses After A Stroke**

Yvette Adams 31:50

Technically, I've got three businesses but once quite an established one. And you know, largish, there's 20 staff and about 40 contractors. And fortunately, I had a 50% shareholder business partner. And she's been very wonderful. She's very wonderful person, great friend, she's actually due up here tonight, I'd had a senior manager start only a month prior to the stroke. And rather than, you know, a nice, easy onboarding, it was kind of a swim or sink now.

Yvette Adams 32:21

And at the same time, he also hired another guy who had experience running his own agency came on as an account manager, that's a creative marketing agency. And he was a real blessing. So I guess between those three, they took my rather large workload, it wasn't a one-person job.

Yvette Adams 32:38

And I was pretty concerned about that. In hospital, I remember, crying, you know, saying, I don't know how this is going to work, like who's just going to take over myself, but nothing like a good old crisis for people to somehow figure it out.

Yvette Adams 32:53

And yeah, it worked out really well, I guess, in a really strange way, the strokes made me realize, I have actually got the business to a point where I can retire or semi-retire. But I'm in this weird zone of having to decide, what do I want to do? Am I trying to get back to work? Do I not? I want to make it even because if I'm out or semi-out, I want my business partner be out, because we're both getting the same wage.

Yvette Adams 33:19

So anyway, there's ongoing discussions. And yeah, I think we're big enough now. And things are going well enough that we've set it up really well. Thank goodness that happened, I guess now and not 10 years ago, when we were in the earliest stages of the business. So yeah, thankfully, I had those things in place, and the business still operates. But I've had to, I've used the opportunity to simplify a lot of stuff.

Yvette Adams 33:19

So get out of stuff of, you know, it's not essential kind of thing. My other business or training business, we're actually on this week, merged it with the current business, because then I've got the support of all of those staff. And it was a training business. So through COVID, it really suffered, we couldn't run the in person training anywhere in Australia, like we had the past few years.

Yvette Adams 34:05

I was doing a lot of public speaking as well. I was a trainer for Facebook until startup last year. So yeah, I have done some speaking things I would like to get back to speaking, I think because it's short burst and doesn't take too much energy. And I'm trying to figure out how I use my story and my journey to you know, hopefully inspire others or help others along the way.

Yvette Adams 34:30

I do think that's what I'm here for. And I also love property. And that's another thing. It's not as time sensitive as say client work and things. So I've been doing kept doing property stuff, but I definitely need help with forms and organizing. And that's not an easy thing and it can be frustrating. But yeah, that's, I guess how I've pivoted for now and but I'm still trying to find you know what makes me happy.

Yvette Adams 34:58

That's all brings the money in but you've got to find happiness. So next year, we've got some travel plans, I'll get married. And travel used to bring me a lot of happiness. So I really hope that I can get back out in the world and my body will allow me to keep walking around and not be lying down and stuff because we plan to tackle Europe. So my goal right now is to just get as well as I can and figure out my limits and get the help of professionals as well to really know myself as well as I can, by the time we leave. So yeah, that's all my work stuff I guess.

Bill Gasiamis 35:35

Wow there's heaps going on there. So I had a similar experience with work, before the strokes, I was whinging and complaining that something wasn't right with the business. You know, I couldn't run it the way I wanted, I couldn't present myself to clients the way I wanted to.

Bill Gasiamis 35:56

I was running it from home, and how could I possibly be running it from home, it was before working at home was a thing, right? But I was doing it thinking that it's not a thing. And it's so weird. And then I got sick. And we're at a painting company, a property maintenance company.

Bill Gasiamis 36:14

And I had work to do. And I thought I couldn't run my business from home, because it wasn't professional life and all that type of thing. And then I was running it from a hospital bed that week while I was in hospital. And for the first time I was working on the business instead of in the business, right, and I had, again, my guys, everyone just seemed to just step up and do everything that I thought they were never going to be able to do.

Bill Gasiamis 36:42

And they just blew it out of the park. And my clients were just cool. And we went with it, and it worked. And then it stopped working after the second bleed, which when you're trying to kind of drag everyone along with you, and things are going okay for a while, it's okay.

Bill Gasiamis 37:02

But when you're not there all the time, the wheels can fall off, right. And that's what happened and then I had a third blade, you know, so and then brain surgery. So over, it dragged out over three years for me. So eventually the kind of business fizzled out, and things weren't the best. And then after the third bleed the fatigue it was more debilitating, and the recovery was a lot longer because I had to learn how to walk again, and all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 37:33

But it gave me that wisdom. And that lesson of I can not grow this into something unless I'm removed from it, like unless I am one step removed from it, and I'm observing it and I'm putting it in motion rather than trying to do everything and be everybody, everything to everyone. And that's still happening now like I'm still battling with how I'm going to refine it and refine it and refine it.

Bill Gasiamis 38:04

And now we've just got to the point where instead of offering seven or eight services, we're offering just one service, simplifying and niching, and niching, and niching, and it's made it a lot easier for me to get my head around all the stuff

that I need to do, and to be motivated to do it. And in Melbourne, as soon as I got back on my feet, after about six or seven years from all the stroke stuff, then COVID kicked in.

Bill Gasiamis 38:34

And then we had two years of pretty much locked-down in Melbourne, and we couldn't do much. So you know, then we have to deal with all of that. But we also traveled and then travel became a priority family so that we could have some memories and great experiences and all that kind of stuff and not put things off until we can't do it later because we're too old or whatever.

Bill Gasiamis 39:04

And I think what, you'll find is that, if you overthink this, it's going to probably be really difficult. What you got to do is you just got to book in, whatever it is that you're going to do, plan that trip and say it's happening, this is when it's happening. And then build yourself up as much as you can and do what you have to do to get to the airport. And then you're off.

Yvette Adams 39:31

Deal with that when you're there. I have booked I've booked booked one way at the moment I'm having the book and chance because booking the whole lot is just too big of a task. And just even getting the first booking was tricky because I had bonus pass like a credit from a previous trip that didn't go ahead. I've got points, I've got all these things and I can't just go to a travel agent and say book it for me please.

Yvette Adams 39:55

Because they don't want to deal in points and passes and stuff. So recently I did book over there, but I'm just doing it in chunks. And then another day, I've got the accommodation and Dubai enough to use points. And then the next day, I've booked Amsterdam, in points but I do have to book the rest of the trip at some stage. But that's how I'm dealing with it just biting down into small chunks, but we're going now, I got the trip over but there's no trip back at the moment.

Bill Gasiamis 40:22

Well, that's good. And then the other thing is just get the best insurance you can while you're going to be overseas. And that's the only thing that we did, like we got the best, most expensive insurance we could possibly get. Because we were

going to the United States, and I didn't want to be in a situation where I end up in a hospital. And even though I may not have or well I didn't.

Bill Gasiamis 40:43

But we kind of thought well, why risk it? We're going to be so far away from home, we want to be in a position where we can just feel at ease about that one thing, if not everything else, and we've got it over the line. And it was hard. I often said to my wife while we were there.

Bill Gasiamis 41:03

Forget about tomorrow, I'm not doing anything tomorrow, I'm going to be wiped out. We're not going to go anywhere, see anything, you can go on your own, I'm just going to rest for the day. And then come the morning, I'd be good. I would have had a good sleep. And I'd say Oh, I'm actually good, I'm good to go we're gonna go.

Yvette Adams 41:18

And did you find that travel energize you too, because you're in a different environment having new experiences.

Bill Gasiamis 41:24

I did and because we were doing a lot of walking and I wasn't doing a lot of cognitive stuff, or my fatigue was different. It was kind of physical fatigue. And there was a lot less kind of cognitive fatigue. Because the exercise really does help the brain the physical movement, and that really helps the brain. You know, you're getting dopamine, you're getting endorphins, you're getting serotonin happening, everything's happening.

Bill Gasiamis 41:51

And I was really getting energized, but then being extremely exhausted at the end of the day and wiped out. And I think that also helped because then I'd sleep really well. And then I'd wake up really fresh. So it was this really unexpected, strange, real obvious cycle of up up, up, up, up, down, down, down, down, down, down and around.

Yvette Adams 42:21

I think if you're away from all your day to day and your to do list like that, you know what, to cook dinner, I've got to do this thing with the kids school, whatever. I'm hoping when I mean, I did travel for seven years in my life and was

very free. I didn't have any responsibilities in that time. I didn't need insurances. I didn't have a car you know, I just travelled.

## **Sensory Overload And Fatigue - Yvette Adams**

Yvette Adams 42:42

So I'm hoping to get back to that where all you've got to worry about is where you're going to eat breakfast and what sites you're going to see today. I'm hoping that I do have the energy because like you say there'll be less cognitive impact. But I do get sensory overload too. So I'll worry about that. I went to a concert recently. And that just wiped me out.

Yvette Adams 43:03

And sometimes big crowds, I think for whatever reason may be because you're looking and trying to not bump into them or make sure if you have to engage that you're saying the right thing or whatever. I mean, I speak Spanish, but there's a lot more languages, going on in Europe.

Yvette Adams 43:19

So that's probably going to anyway, I'll see. But at the moment, even I went to my team lunch on Friday, and I was absolutely exhausted afterwards. But there's like, you know, 13 of us here on the Sunshine Coast. And I guess because I haven't seen them. And I'm really interested in what they've been up to. And but I came home and I was wiped out. Just from that conversation concentrating, I guess.

Bill Gasiamis 43:42

Yeah, sensory overload. It's a huge thing. And you're very early on in the recovery process, like you really are really early.

Yvette Adams 43:50

Doesn't seem really on six months, but I guess you've got the wisdom of time.

Bill Gasiamis 43:55

Yeah, 12 months will be early 18 months will be early 24 months will be early, you'll be getting improvement and improvement and improvement, it will continue to improve. But when you're at 24 months, you'll be going he was right, Bill was right.

Yvette Adams 44:12

I'm just not a very patient person.

Bill Gasiamis 44:15

Well, you're going to learn patience it's going to teach you to be patient and to have a long-term view. That's what's weird about me is I've got this long-term view that I never had before. And I wasn't like, you know, there's a generation, which is instant gratification all the time and everywhere. But it was impatient. And I never had the long term view on anything.

Bill Gasiamis 44:39

But now I've got a long term view on so many things, you know, an investment. Yeah, we'll sit on that. We'll see what happens in five years. And if five years isn't the best thing. We'll see what happens in 10 years. And then it's like with a book I'm writing a book so I never knew that a book is gonna take me two and a half or three years to write but it is it's simply because of all of those challenges that you have, that I also have.

Bill Gasiamis 45:05

which is I cannot sit down and concentrate on a daily basis for a long time to write a chapter on the book, I can push through the timeline, so I could sit there and force myself to be there, but I'm not writing anything, I'm not achieving anything.

Yvette Adams 45:24

And you'll be wiped up, and you won't be able to write for a few days.

Bill Gasiamis 45:28

And it's a waste. So if I'm not feeling it, I don't sit down. But when I am feeling it, I might do three or four hours, and then I get a good chunk done. And then I feel really good about it. And I've just tried to see where those chunks are and squeezed them into my routine. And they usually on a Saturday or a Sunday. And, and even though it's been so fragmented my time sitting down and writing, even though it's been fragmented, um, eight and a half chapters into a 10 chapter book.

Bill Gasiamis 46:01

So, you know, we're getting there. And that's one of the things I've gained from how long things take to change after stroke, like how long it takes for you to get back to, your "normal" life, or your new life, or the new you or your new identity,

you know, because it's got to emerge. And it's got to emerge in this weird stage of life, which is recovery, time to recover, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 46:39

And I tell people that you've got a 40, 50, or 60, you've had a stroke, and you haven't been unwell in all that time. You know, you've had your broken foot and your damaged knee and all that kind of stuff and some heartache and some tough times and challenges, but you physically haven't been unwell until you had the stroke. Well, you've done all these other things all this time, and you haven't had to stop and rest and look after yourself. Now, it's just the season for rest and recovery.

Yvette Adams 47:12

I'm very philosophical like yourself. And I guess patience has never been my virtue. And whenever something difficult happen in my life, and there's been plenty I've always gone rather than Oh, poor me, because there's no point in that. I've gone. What's the lesson in this? What who's trying to teach me what lesson and maybe patience is the lesson in this one, quite possibly is also, I guess, letting go and it'll be okay with the business because that's working out fine.

Yvette Adams 47:43

And you have enough and yeah, it is rest. But it is hard doing that stick, change that gear change, whatever you want to call it. When you have gone your full tilt personalities, live life to the fullest. You've done a lot where I have in my 45 years, it's difficult to go. Am I satisfied every day just do my walk and my gym and my tiny bit of work or cooking a meal? And that's it like am I happy with that? So I'm still trying to figure out yeah, what I've got to do to Yeah, find that satisfaction.

Bill Gasiamis 48:18

Yeah, it's fair enough. I completely understand I was there as well. But then one day, you'll look back and you go, Oh, my God, five years have passed?

Yvette Adams 48:30

Yeah, yeah. I'm also got the double whammy of got the four teenagers my partner's got two and I've got two my youngest is about to turn 16 Next month, and it's kind of like, almost empty nesting as well. There are nights where you do go, hang on a second, noise. I'm on a recording. There are times where we go. There's no kids, what do we do with ourselves? So double whammy because for



some people, stroke or not, that would be a lot in itself. Just figuring out who the new you is, once you kids are all grown up and don't need you all the time.

Bill Gasiamis 49:07

Absolutely. Middle age is kind of where I'm at. And that's exactly what's happened. The kids have moved on. And we're both trying to work out who the hell we are and what we do. And I'm reinventing myself every three minutes because I have to because I can't be doing the things that I've always done because my physical limitations don't allow it. And it's not fun.

Bill Gasiamis 49:31

Some days, you know, my deficits really cause me pain and suffering and I don't want to be in a physical situation at work doing, you know, that type of stuff. So I try to find ways to reinvent myself. That's part of the reason for the book. You know, I did a project for that I interviewed people I came up with a hypothesis. I tried to prove it. I got chapters out of it. Now I'm writing to those chapters in. Hopefully this book is going to end end up with another book.

Bill Gasiamis 50:04

And that's going to sell and people are going to like it. And they're going to want the one read the second one. And it's going to lead to public speaking, you know. And I wanted this 10 years ago, I wanted all this stuff 10 years ago, when I had no hope, in my stroke brain to have been able to commit to it to anybody and anything. And it's taken 10 years to get to this stage.

Bill Gasiamis 50:27

And I'm thinking, man, if I just get this over the line now, I'm going to be set in 10 years from now. And I'm 48. And that's kind of what I'm thinking. So an all the stuff I said, to motivate you just now to get it over the line. And now you tell me, you've got four teenagers, it's like, okay, hat off you're doing an amazing job, congratulations, well done. You've come so far.

Yvette Adams 50:54

Well they don't all live with us. But you know, you think of your kids, and you help them anyway you can, wherever they are, whatever they're doing. But yeah, and I've written a couple of books too before, so I know your pain.

Bill Gasiamis 51:07

It's like somebody I don't know who it was. It's like cutting yourself and bleeding

all the time, when you're writing a book, it just hurts. It's painful. It's difficult the whole time, it's just so hard.

Yvette Adams 51:18

It's a marathon. You got to keep going.

## Having A Long-Term View

Bill Gasiamis 51:24

And I've never done anything physical long-term to understand what it's like, my work I don't see as being the long-term thing that I've done. It's just me like that, that happens easily work stuff happens easily. But I've never run a marathon. I've never played sport for decades and decades, I've never overcome something, you know, that I made myself overcome that I didn't need to do like a physical challenge or anything like that. I've never done anything like that. So this is really testing my resolve.

Yvette Adams 51:57

It's your first big one. Yeah, I didn't have a background in sport and climbing mountains and all sorts of stuff. But yeah, this is hard. This is up there with the hard stuff, the stroke recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 52:10

I remember my brother, because I'm not an academic person, either. My brother had been right. And I remember saying to my brother, you know, degrees and University, who needs all that shit, you know. And he'd say, to me, it's not about the degree and the university, it's about sticking to something for four years, and then seeing it through to the end and getting the result now he probably won't even remember telling me that I've never forgotten that.

Bill Gasiamis 52:34

And this is what this book has become. It's become my degree, my four years or three years at the moment, roughly, of putting in time and effort every single day, as much as I can to get a result out of it. And it started with the research. And it started with the finding people and it started with, I had built a podcast before that.

Bill Gasiamis 52:58

And it's like, wow, I get it now I totally get it. So long-term view people, anyone

who's listening, you know, we're gonna be around for a little while longer. We're all meant to be here. So focus on the long-term view. So tell me about those physical endurance things that you did in the past? How physical were you?

Yvette Adams 53:22

I used to play age group, water polo for New Zealand. So that was pretty physical stuff, boot camps, and you know, swimming, basically, swimming, surf, lifesaving competitively, you know, at national level, as well. So, yeah, I was a very fit teenager. And I had to balance that with trying to be a teenager and go out and get my grades and work and work to get the money to play the sport.

Yvette Adams 53:49

So weren't funded sport. So I actually am so grateful for those experiences. Because when ever I've had difficult things happen in my life, I do think I've got a lot of resilience from those times of just, you know, getting through it, because you had to kind of thing. And then I've, yeah, I've like, walked the Inca Trail and done lots and lots of travel that was hard.

Yvette Adams 54:14

You know, your altitude and you're thinking I'm absolutely buggered, and are we setting up camp now and then the guides going see this mountain here? We're going to do that now. And you're like, now, we're not done. I've got nothing left in the tank, but somehow you've stopped flooding and next one that you're going up the incline and next minute, you're nearly at the top and and then it's all on the downhill.

Yvette Adams 54:34

So yeah, I've got all those reference points. But gosh, I mean, it's a difficult journey at 45 is what I am the stroke recovery. And I can totally see how people have a choice. You can just choose to sit on the couch and eat unhealthy food and not work again and get down in the dumps and go down a really dark hole with your emotional state easily. You can easily just do that. it.

Yvette Adams 55:00

So it does take an enormous amount of resilience to just go Oh, no, that's not what I'm going to do. I'm going to push through and you've got to have people around you who are supporting you for when those moments sure lights really aren't. I can't do it, blah, blah, blah, because it's, yeah, plenty of them.

Yvette Adams 55:16

But I've gone back to some of those old sports friends, probably they're still my friends, because we shared so much together the good things for travel, the bad things, that they've been a good support for me, but unfortunate for me, a lot of them are overseas, I don't have so many locally, yeah, in my life, pre COVID was always on a plane for work, seeing them whichever town I was in.

Yvette Adams 55:39

So I've definitely felt a bit lonely at times lying on the couch, because I can't do anything for a while there. I couldn't walk, I couldn't work, I couldn't drive, I couldn't do anything. And I remember my partner, people were saying to my partner, what can we do to help? And he said, Just come visit, she just wants company, cup of tea. But then everyone's in such a busy life. Lots of people didn't come like they just, I think they meant to and they had good intentions. But they just, I get it. They've got kids, they've got work they're busy. They've got their own priorities and things like that.

Bill Gasiamis 56:14

Not many people know how to deal with people who had a stroke or a heart issue. It's really confronting. You're in it right. So you've got no choice, you're in it, you're going through it. But the other person who's not in it doesn't want to confront the possible mortality via you don't want to confront what it means for me to see Yvette like that.

Yvette Adams 56:41

They had plenty to say to me, it's been a big wake up call Yvette, you have a healthy one, like I'm the one who's always kept my fitness a priority and ate pretty well. And sure, I used to like a drink. I haven't drunk for six months now really odd wine, but very rare.

Yvette Adams 56:57

And that, you know, some of them are party hard. And they're like, if you've had a stroke, you've made me really stop and think and I'm like, Well, if that's what the outcome is, that's good. But you should think about Yeah, you know, none of us are getting any younger, and none of us are getting out alive. So do what you want with your body. It's your choice. But think about it, think about it hard.

Bill Gasiamis 57:21

Yeah, it's really confronting. At the beginning, I used to kind of take it negatively as well to hear about people who didn't come visit or whatever and is like, Okay, now, I'm a little bit more forgiving. And it's like, I get it, I totally get it. It's, it's really confronting, I'm the opposite. I'm the kind of person who likes to help out if I can, and see people and I'll do what I can. Usually your offer is not taken up anyway, usually when you know what you want me to do, most people will just thankful that you made them the offer.

Bill Gasiamis 57:57

But I did feel isolated, definitely felt isolated, and lonely. And that's why I went to the National Stroke Foundation and became an ambassador. So that I could at least have in all the downtime that I had, I could always have something to look forward to and go and do guys to speak on their behalf and raise awareness about stroke prevention. So I'd get I'd know for a month or two that was booked them planned.

Bill Gasiamis 58:26

And I would do everything that I had to do to make sure that I got there for that particular hour. And even then, sometimes I missed them because I forgot or because I couldn't understand how the calendar worked and how reminders worked on my iPhone and all that kind of stuff. But that made me feel less alone when I found more people who understood me and what it's like.

## **Stroke Support Groups**

Yvette Adams 58:52

I really started realizing the value of like the stroke support groups. And I have run the stroke line more recently, I think, first six months, a bit in denial a bit like, I'm alright. I can walk and talk. A lot of them can't, I'll be right. And I just sort of be this linear journey of recovery like a broken leg. But I've realized now it's not linear at all. It's round and up and up and down and back here.

Yvette Adams 59:21

And so I more recently did go to a stroke group. I did get the timing wrong. Like, it's hard to keep appointments and stuff. But now I've applied for another one. And then I found out about a woman who's a stroke survivor locally, and I plan to have a coffee with her because I think it's so important, isn't it? Like, if you were to make new friends, you've been through such a big thing. It's part of who you

are now. It's kind of hard. I'm I'm such an authentic person.

Yvette Adams 59:21

I can't just sit there and talk about the weather and small talk when that's not really who I am or what I'm interested in. I'm into the deep stuff and the real stuff. So I think it's helpful to connect with people who know what you're on about in that regard. Like, you don't have to have a stroke to be friends. I'm not saying that. But you have to be a good listener and empathetic when you've someone who's had a stroke, don't you like, it's too big of a thing to just pretend that never happened. And it doesn't impact on your daily life.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:20

Yeah, there's nothing worse than being with somebody who's ignorant to stroke. And I'm not having a go with them. Like, because they've never had one. And they don't know anyone who's ever had one. And it's really not their fault, right. But there's nothing worse than that early stage in my recovery, when they would say to me, how are you going? And I'll tell them how I was going. And they would be looking at me going, Oh, shit, how do I get out of this conversation now? They're in far too deep, and then it's like, I think I've got to go to the loo.

Yvette Adams 1:00:50

Don't you love as well. When you go, I suffered quite a bit of fatigue and they butt in and go, I'm so tired at the moment, as well. It's not the same, or well you know, I forget everything. Oh, me, too. It's so bad old age. It's like, I think it's a little different. But okay, let's run with it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:16

Another thing that happened to me, I was away on a trip on a holiday. And we're walking up the stairs, you know, it's an old ancient Greek village, you know, the stairs are a mess. At the best of times, and I have my left leg doesn't do what the right leg does, it doesn't come up every time I lift it as much as my right leg. And if I'm tired, it's a bit lazier and the rest of it. And I've tripped over the steps, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:45

And my cousin was there who I see once a decade, and I fell over the step going up. And I cursed and complained about my leg. It's my leg it missed the steps, she goes I miss the steps to every once in a while, it's all good, don't worry about it,

She's trying to make me feel better. And I'm thinking what you're thinking no it's not that version of it. But yeah, everyone tries to kind of make things better.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:17

And I used to not pick my people well, at the beginning, when they'd say, how are you? Whereas now I'm a bit nicer to people who I know, are ignorant about stroke, and I don't want to put them in an uncomfortable situation where they have to now listen to me blabber about all my problems and all my challenges. So, you learn, you learn who are the listeners, and who are the ones that you can engage with.

Yvette Adams 1:02:49

That's very true. I talked to a psychologist and they said, put people on trial, which sounds like heavy. But what they mean by that, and it really resonates for me is try them out, share a bit, see if they really listen. And if they really care. And if they really don't, then maybe they're not for you.

Yvette Adams 1:03:07

But yeah, you have to put a few people on trial. So you get to the good ones, that there is actually a two way thing going where you can. It's not all about me, but you can give to them and they are actually actively listening to you. And yeah, being empathetic rather than breezing over it with. I get tired too all the time. Just the same for me. You're like, no, that's not the case.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:31

I had some weirdo friends who I thought were just terribly non-emotional, and I thought they were never going to be able to step up and they were the ones that blew me away. They come out of nowhere. And then I was like, this doesn't compute for me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:49

I cannot understand how this person who has behaved and acted and spoken this way for the entire time I've known in my entire life has now come and been the guy who decided that he was going to set up a exercise regime for me, take me to the swimming pool, have a sauna with me, and it's like, who are you? You weirdo like what did you do to the old person that I used to know like what happened and it was such a lovely surprise.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:24

Maybe you were the catalyst to change?

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:23

So there was both sides of it. There was people who couldn't deal with it and then there was there people who could and stepped up big time. And and that's okay. For either one of them. It's okay that some couldn't. The ones that don't. Who, who? I think that's another blessing because I think then they give space for other people to actually be there. So I think instinctively they're doing the right thing. They know that they can't support the way that I need support. And instead of trying trying and failing. They're just going. Let me give space to other people to turn up.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:41

That's a good philosophy to some people just don't have the capacity. I've been in phases of my life where I've wanted to support someone, but I had so much of my own stuff going on, I just really couldn't. So I do understand that as well.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:17

If you're not emotionally intelligent, and you don't know how to practice it, and how to express it, and how to allow people to be vulnerable, and how to be vulnerable yourself, it's going to be a difficult thing to go to a stroke survivor, and then try and, you know, work it out.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:35

I think the best thing that people could do if people were listening now, and they wanted to know what to do is just like you said, turn up, have a cup of tea, bring a plate of food. And that's about it. There's not much more as necessary.

Yvette Adams 1:05:48

Listen, crack jokes share. Make it a two way conversation.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:52

Yeah, yeah, for sure. So tell me about the kids that are at home. How old are they?

Yvette Adams 1:06:01

At the moment, and it does change. It's a bit of a revolving door. And there's only the nearly 16 year old at home, my daughter, so she's been with us ongoing. But at times, we've had my son, and we've had my partner's kids for, you know, five



months, or three months since in the last 12 to 18 months as well. So it changes all the time. If they want to come they're welcome, basically.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:30

Yep. So what's been the hardest thing for you in this journey so far?

Yvette Adams 1:06:36

Oh, that's a big question. What's been the hardest thing. I think, just accepting the adjustment to my life. I'm just a very driven person, I've always gone and done a lot of stuff with a very full plate. And realizing I can't just do what my brain wants to do now that I have to work within the limitations of my cognitive deficits. And my physical abilities right now is hard pill to swallow. But I just try and keep positive and think like you say, it's six months in.

Yvette Adams 1:07:13

And I feel like I'm putting too much pressure on myself walk a bit of a tightrope, like sleep well eat well, don't drink alcohol, the whole lot, because I do feel like if I take one step wrong, usually I go that late night, what happened, you know, so I feel like keeping that strip can be a bit hard, too, because you want to live a bit more fluidly.

Yvette Adams 1:07:36

And say, I mean, I went to that concert that really didn't work out well, because in the sensory overload, I got offered another concert ticket the next day, and another the next day, free, completely free, and I love concerts. But that's made me go, I don't think you can go to endure very loud concerts for a while, like don't test that one out for another six months.

Yvette Adams 1:07:36

And so just keep doing the recovery, which makes me a bit sad, because I've always really loved live music. That's part of who I am. But for now, it's not what I can do. So I'll work on, do other stuff that makes me happy. It's finding that other stuff that you can do was a bit tricky.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:11

I can relate to that part that you said. But you're right. You're doing all the right things. Absolutely guarantee you're doing all the right things, even if it feels like you're missing out on some stuff that you've previously not, you know, you haven't missed out on, you're going and getting counseling, you're not drinking

alcohol. It's really, really, really important for any stroke survivor not to drink alcohol for at least 12 months. I didn't drink alcohol for five years.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:40

And then even now, I had two beers last night, it took me about three hours to drink them. And it's not nice, like I didn't enjoy drinking. What they did to me, I enjoy the beer, but I don't enjoy what they did to me, but I had it over dinner. So it was kind of better than just drinking without dinner.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:03

So 100%, I think you're doing the right thing there. Sleep better? Absolutely. Always have a routine to try and get into bed set by a time that you know is gonna get you enough sleep so that when you wake up in the morning, your batteries fully charged now whatever, however big that battery

Yvette Adams 1:09:23

Sleeps these days, like 10 to 12 hours, massive. I used to survive on four and six hours normal.

## **Importance Of Sleep**

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:28

Yeah, well see that's important because that's when the brain heals. It heals the most during sleep, and new things that you've learned and new things that you overcome and new neuronal structures and all that they get. Like, they get a lot of time to really sort of embed when you've had sleep. And when you have go through the REM cycle and you actually get that deep sleep that we all need.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:57

It really makes a big difference being physical is gonna help you and avoiding concerts, I did that. I avoided football matches where I had free tickets to Grand Finals and all that kind of stuff. I avoided concerts of I think I've only been to one or two concerts in the last 10 years. And both of them were one of them was ACDC. And the other one was Metallica.

Yvette Adams 1:10:20

Loud

Bill Gasiamis 1:10:22

Really, really loud. But I went with the ear plugs that traders use on site. Because I couldn't be there in any other way or would not have lasted the entire duration of the concert.

Yvette Adams 1:10:35

Yeah, I took my noise cancelling headphones. So I did take precautions. And I did that when the lights were a bit much but yeah, and I felt okay at the time, I enjoyed it. But it was the next day when the heads just like. Okay, it's not really for that. But you gotta test it, don't you? And you know that this is where the medical professionals can't tell you, you're ready for this or not ready for that. So they tell me go try it, you'll say no, suffer the consequences.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:05

Yeah, one of the tips that I could give people listening, and maybe you is if you're going to plan a concert or something that's going to be out of the ordinary, and you want to definitely go because you don't want to miss it. And you know, tomorrow is going to be a terrible day. Make sure your calendars clear for two days after that. So you can really recuperate.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:24

And I used to do that a lot is to make sure I'm not missing out on this concert. And I've got nothing to do the next day and the day after. And it really made it possible for me to feel like again, I wasn't missing out on something. You're doing well.

Yvette Adams 1:11:39

The acceptance part, you're right. Because even if I did say I've got the day free, I guess I'm still on this mode of I'm just wasting the day. But you know, you can't, you just gotta go, this is the Netflix, lie on the couch, or whatever. That's it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:11:56

Six months ago, I went through that, I decided that I was going to do nothing. On this particular day, I was going to wake up in the morning and I was going to sit on my bum on the couch or wherever somewhere around the house and just chill out all day. And then I made a post on Instagram. I decided I'm going to do nothing today and I'm feeling guilty about it. You know? So weird. Like, why do you feel guilty about it?

Yvette Adams 1:12:20

Yeah. But that's also part of it, or was that I made to believe? Yeah, you do feel

guilty. It's all the adjustments

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:27

Yeah. And what I'm doing if you later on, if I got the opportunity to philosophize about it, look, what I'm doing is actually I am doing something, that something is recuperating, resting, recovering. I'm actually physically participating in that by sitting on my bum and not engaging in other things that would make my mind busy. All this other stuff going on. So it's like, okay. I really appreciate you reaching out and connecting and becoming a guest on my show. Thanks so much.

Yvette Adams 1:13:08

Thanks for having me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:09

Thanks for joining us on today's episode. I hope you enjoyed this interview. If you are a stroke survivor with a story to share about your experience, come and join me on the show. Interviews are not scripted, you do not have to plan for them. All you need to do to qualify is to be a stroke survivor or care for somebody who is a stroke survivor. Or you are one of the fabulous people that help stroke survivors on the road to recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:36

Go to [recoveryafterstroke.com/contact](https://recoveryafterstroke.com/contact) fill out the contact form. And as soon as I receive it, I will respond with more details on how you can choose a time that works for you and me to meet over zoom. Thanks again for being here and listening. I really appreciate you see you on the next episode.

Intro 1:14:00

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 1:14:30

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. Do not use our content as a standalone resource to diagnose treat, cure or prevent any disease for therapeutic purposes or as a substitute for the advice of a health professional.

Intro 1:14:54

Never delay seeking advice or disregard the advice of a medical professional your doctor or your rehab delimitation program based on our content. If you have any questions or concerns about your health or medical condition please seek guidance from a doctor or other medical professional if you are experiencing a health emergency or think you might be called 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.

Intro 1:15:21

While we aim to provide current quality information in our content. We did not provide any guarantees and assume no legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, currency or completeness of the content. If you choose to rely on any information within our content, you do so solely at your own risk. We are careful with links we provide however third party links from our website are followed at your own risk and we are not responsible for any information you find there.