

# **Recovery From Postnatal Depression - Dawn Rieniets**

## **Recovery from Postnatal Depression.**

Post Natal Depression affects 1 in 7 women and 1 in 10 men. According to the website, [panda.org.au](http://panda.org.au) Postnatal depression and anxiety (PNDA) can be devastating and debilitating illnesses that can persist and affect not just a new mother but everyone around her.

It is not a modern condition. Each generation calls it something different.

What we call Postnatal Depression and Anxiety today may have been called a 'nervous breakdown' fifty years ago.

Post Natal Depression and Anxiety can be mild, moderate, or severe and symptoms can begin suddenly after birth or appear gradually in the weeks or months during the first year after birth.

Post Natal Depression and Anxiety occurs in all cultures and can happen to child-bearing women of all ages. Pregnancy is a common factor. It can happen after miscarriage or stillbirth, normal or traumatic delivery, or cesarean delivery.

## **After which pregnancy will postnatal depression occur?**

Post Natal Depression and Anxiety happen not only after the first baby. PND can occur...

- after a third or fifth baby.
- with the first baby only.
- It may happen with a third baby, but not with the first two.

- in some cases, after each pregnancy.

An American ex-pat in Australia, Dawn struggled to smooth motherhood into her already complex identity but that didn't stop her looking for bliss (and kangaroos) even without a map.

This particular road leads to a dormant love for acrylic paint which ultimately helped Dawn heal from postnatal depression.

Dawn lives with her farm-raised Aussie husband and half-American baby girl. Aside from raising a human and doing laundry, she's always creating.

Creating sentences, recipes, artwork, lists, goals, designs, DIY projects, anything to keep the muses at home and the smiles plentiful.

Post Natal depression can sometimes be assisted by developing your purpose in Life.

Listen to episode 2 to learn how to develop your life's purpose.

<https://www.roospotting.com>

Watch Dawns Commercial Here

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The Recovery After Stroke Podcast moves you through life's transit lounge and helps you go from where you are to where you'd rather be.

# Introduction - Postnatal depression

Bill 0:14

Did you know that postnatal depression affects 1 in 7 women and 1 in 10 men? According to the website [panda.org.au](http://panda.org.au) postnatal depression and anxiety can be a devastating and debilitating illnesses that can persist and affect not just a new mother but everyone around her.

Bill 0:34

It is not a modern condition. Each generation calls it something different. What we call postnatal depression and anxiety today might have been called a nervous breakdown 50 years ago. Postnatal depression and anxiety can be mild, moderate, or severe and symptoms can begin suddenly after the birth or appear gradually in the weeks or months during the first year after birth.

Bill 0:59

Postnatal depression and anxiety occur in all cultures and can happen to childbearing women of all ages. Pregnancy is a common factor. It can happen after miscarriage or stillbirth, normal or traumatic birth, or even cesarean delivery. Postnatal depression and anxiety happen not only after the first baby, but it can also occur after one or multiple pregnancies and is different for everyone.

Bill 1:27

As you may have guessed, today's guest is someone that has experienced postnatal depression and has come out on the other side. A new Australian Dawn struggled to fit motherhood into her already complex identity. But that didn't stop her from looking for bliss and kangaroos, even without a map. This particular road led to a dominant love for acrylic paint, which ultimately helped Dawn heal from postnatal depression.

Bill 1:55

She lives with her farm-raised Aussie husband and a beautiful baby girl. Aside from raising a human and doing laundry, she's always creating, creating sentences, recipes, artwork, lists, goals and designs, DIY projects, anything to keep the Muses at home and the smiles plentiful.

Bill 2:19

Welcome to the program. Dawn.

Dawn Rieniets 2:21

Thank you so much for having me, Bill. Really a pleasure to be speaking with you today.

Bill 2:25

Oh, my pleasure having you on the program as well. I think we've got a really important topic to talk about. So the listeners are going to be in for a treat. Tell me, you've got a bit of a funny accent. Tell me a little bit about yourself and where that funny accent comes from.

Dawn Rieniets 2:43

Yes, depending on which side you're on. You might have a funny accent. But I am American. I've lived in Australia for seven years now. Because I happen to meet my husband while I was traveling off in Malaysia of all places, and I've I was already planning on coming to Aus I had a ticket booked to spend a few months in Sydney. And so I gave him my email and I said I'll maybe I'll look you up when I get there.

Dawn Rieniets 3:09

And Melbourne is really close to Sydney, right? You can like to drive there in a couple of hours. I have no idea. But yeah, so anyway, I ended up staying and I love my adopted home. It's been great.

Bill 3:22

Wow, you ended up staying. So was he the reason you actually made the decision to finally get here?

Dawn Rieniets 3:28

No, that's the funny thing is I came here because my best friend loved Sydney and she wanted to just spend a few months there because she had been there previously for work. And just after spending a year working in Europe, I was back in my hometown of Buffalo, New York, and I was bored and my feet were itchy.

Dawn Rieniets 3:48

And I just said to her, Michelle, let me know where you're going next because I'm coming and she's like Sydney, and I said, Okay, so we booked that and in the meantime, she was working in Kuala Lumpur. So I went to visit her there just for

a 10-day trip. And we're all excited. So it was six months out from Sydney. And behold meet my husband, Matthew.

Dawn Rieniets 4:09

So it was kind of one of those weird things where I didn't come here for him, which I'm kind of proud of, because I, you know, I learned my lesson the hard way about changing life decisions for men, but I stayed because of him. So it was a happy compromise, I suppose you can say, we always said that we would stay here unless our quality of life could be better or different somewhere else. And so far, it's pretty good here. It's pretty safe. I'm digging it.

Bill 4:36

Yeah. Awesome. I've met Matt as well. So I reckon he's a pretty cool dude as well. So yeah, you made a pretty good choice.

Dawn Rieniets 4:43

Thanks. Yeah, I think so too.

Bill 4:46

Were you in Australia for many years, when you guys decided to get married or what was the goal there?

Dawn Rieniets 4:52

No, not really. We were 28 when we met, and I think I was 29 when I finally moved here. permanently. So we were kind of old enough to know. And also the circumstances were quite serious. You know, it involves sacrifice on both sides. So we made the decision pretty quickly to get engaged.

Dawn Rieniets 5:13

Well, obviously he asked me to marry him and I said, yes. And so we had kind of a long-ish engagement just because we wanted to give my family from overseas a chance to book flights to come out to Australia.

Dawn Rieniets 5:26

And then we got married and within the first year of marriage, we fell pregnant with our daughter Lavinia so we've been married for five years, but she's three so not too much alone time. We got right down to it. You know.

Bill 5:40

Kids tend to do that. You know, they're pretty needy sometimes these kids

Dawn Rieniets 5:45

Ah, those darn kids, they always need something, yes, absolutely.

Bill 5:50

And I've met the lovely Lavinia as well, and she's like, cute as a button like, seriously cute as a button.

Dawn Rieniets 5:57

Yeah, I think so too. Obviously, I'm biased, but I mean, everyone else thinks so. So I'm going to go with it. She's pretty darn cute. Pretty, clever too. So yeah, we're very lucky. You know, obviously, with the topic today, it wasn't always this easy and I wasn't always this chipper when speaking about my daughter or our family because it was really tough.

Dawn Rieniets 6:18

And the transition me living in Australia and then having my first child here made it even harder. So, yeah, there's definitely no sugarcoating it. Like we're in a really good place now. However, it took a lot of hard work and a bit of struggle to get to this good place.

## **Before Postnatal depression diagnosis**

Bill 6:36

Yeah, before you were given a diagnosis or you were told what was going on with you. What was it that you were experiencing?

Dawn Rieniets 6:46

Yeah, so it's funny six weeks before our daughter was born, we moved to the burbs, you know, so I went from this like cute Melbourne, life, cycling to work every day, and then, you know, we're out in the suburbs. So I hadn't had to drive a car in Australia. So that's a different side of the road than I was used to. I didn't know what the supermarket was.

Bill 7:07

Do you guys drive on the wrong side?

Dawn Rieniets 7:09

Yeah, we do I agree with you. So yeah, so there were a few factors environmentally, which made it challenging. You bring a baby home from the hospital, here's your car. You need a GPS to figure out how to get to the supermarket. So that was stressful. And then of course, not knowing anyone in my neighborhood and not having my family nearby was also extremely difficult.

Dawn Rieniets 7:34

Like my, my husband's family is wonderful and beautiful and they do help but I don't think it's as easy in the beginning with your in-laws, you know, it's, I don't think I was as comfortable being vulnerable around them or asking for help. So there were quite a few factors that made it challenging just environmentally for me, home with a baby, and then also I had had a history of depression in the past, so I was actually on medication for about 9 10 months in my 20s.

Dawn Rieniets 8:05

So, you know, I was more likely to suffer from postnatal depression because of that risk factor as well. You know, there are a few other things, you know, that kind of come into play, you know, but I guess a lot of people think it's purely hormonal, however, I tend to think it's hormonal, environmental, and it has to do with your previous mental health history. So all of these things are just, I don't know if I can swear and fit storm for, you know, it's ripe for the breeding ground of this nasty postnatal depression and anxiety.

Bill 8:44

Yeah, so it is a shitstorm it's a perfect storm of things coming together to cause some kind of an outcome and you were feeling sort of a bit isolated. You're feeling stressed, everything was new. You didn't feel like you had the support sort of networks there because you were new to the family. And it was early on, what were you feeling about yourself? So how are you sort of talking to yourself during that time? really early days?

Dawn Rieniets 9:15

Yeah. And that's the scariest thing for me is that negative self-talk that was happening in my own mind. You know, just, you're, you're weak, you're not strong enough, you're not good enough. And the most heartbreaking thing was, I felt like I was failing at motherhood. I felt like I was a horrible mother.

Dawn Rieniets 9:36

You know, not to put a disclaimer out there, but I didn't have any bonding issues with my daughter, which is really great. However, I still thought I was screwing up by, you know, either relying on her for my only happiness or smothering her or being in her face too much. I just felt like anything I was doing was the wrong thing.

Dawn Rieniets 9:56

And I and I just didn't know who to ask for advice, you know? Back in the day, we had our villages, right to help us raise our children. And now a lot of couples are in the same position that you know, maybe you're from Sydney and you moved to Perth, you're in the same boat as I was. And, you know, on the one hand, my mother was telling me, oh, you know, the newborn stage was so hard, I blocked it out, I don't even remember.

Dawn Rieniets 10:18

And then my mother-in-law was telling me that it was blissful and beautiful and wonderful. So two very different perspectives. And I didn't fit either one. So I felt like something was really wrong with me. And I worried more than anything that I would just ruin my daughter's life because I couldn't get my shit together.

Bill 10:37

Yeah. Did you have any feedback from anyone else to say, hey, you mothering your child incorrectly or you're not doing things the right way?

Dawn Rieniets 10:45

Not in so many words. I mean, I do think that quite a lot of people, strangers, relatives, friends, like tend to make comments. And most of the time, what I know now is that a lot of their comments are reflections on them, right?

Dawn Rieniets 11:02

However, at the time, I took things extremely personally, and every comment felt like a judgment. And I've spoken to many other new moms who felt the same way you just feel like they're you feel like you're being attacked because you're already in such a delicate and vulnerable state of mind that you know, these offhanded comments about, oh, you don't put the nappy on this way?

Dawn Rieniets 11:26

Why not? echoes in your mind over and over and over again, and you can't turn it off? So? So yeah, I mean, no one was downright cruel or critical, but I did take a



few innocent things to heart and interpreted it that way.

Bill 11:41

Yeah, it's interesting, the things that we take to heart and then and then when you look back, you can say, okay, that well, I see why I shouldn't have taken that to heart but at the time, you're probably tired. You probably haven't slept right. Oh, yeah. probably haven't eaten properly.

Dawn Rieniets 11:55

Yes. Absolutely.

Bill 11:58

And you probably haven't had an opportunity to catch up with girlfriends or boyfriends, especially because they weren't near you, or you hadn't created a network of friends yet, so, you know, taking things to heart makes sense. Not that it's what we would advise, but it makes sense and is a sign that perhaps something is amiss. Would you say that that was now something that you would be able to recognize I sign that like that.

Dawn Rieniets 12:23

Yeah, if it were to happen to me again, or to somebody else? Yeah. Yeah. To someone that I mean, and that's, that's where it's tricky, right is because I do think that these, you know, mental illnesses if you can call it that manifest themselves in very different ways for different people.

Dawn Rieniets 12:38

And, you know, sometimes I do see friends struggling, however, I know with myself that when, before I was ready to get help, I wasn't ready to hear it necessarily. So what I try to do for others now is just, you know, make them a meal and stop by for a cup of tea. Just have a chat, and try to positively reinforce the idea of my time, you know, offering to babysit, for example, when I have time.

Dawn Rieniets 13:08

Just those little things can really help mothers who are struggling and fathers too, because, you know, the fathers are like the silent sufferers, and in most of these cases, because the, you know, in my family, my mood affected our whole family dynamic.

Dawn Rieniets 13:25

My husband was worried about me and wanted to suggest that I see somebody or get help, but he didn't want that comment to make me feel worse. So he didn't say anything. So it's really, really tough, and it's really delicate. And I think we need to be very careful about how we approach others who might be suffering. Yeah, as well. It's hard. It's really it's really tricky.

## **The identity shift during postnatal depression**

Bill 13:49

Yeah, I get it. So in that time, I mean, your identity has shifted right. So you were a free spirit. You were traveling with your friends. You were saying different things. Not that long later. Even if it was a couple of years, not that long later, you're married, which is amazing. You're pregnant, which is fantastic. And somehow there begins this shift in your identity. How did you notice your identity get affected? And what did you think? or looking back? How did you sort of interpret that change in your identity?

Dawn Rieniets 14:25

Yes. And it's funny though, because that identity shift happens immediately, at least for me it is. As soon as she was out, I was a mother. And now that title was at the very top of the list of things that I was, you know why friend, daughter, sister, traveler, adventure, free spirit. Mother was just dominating all of those other things.

Dawn Rieniets 14:49

So not only are you exhausted, and you know, your emotions are all over the place, but you're trying to reconcile this new giant, all ever important. the thing that you are into your own identity. So that was almost the most troubling part for me because I had no idea who I was anymore. I didn't know. I mean, am I allowed to put makeup on and try to feel pretty still? Or am I you know, do moms dress this way? Or would a mother go out for drinks with her friends?

Dawn Rieniets 15:20

Or is that not okay anymore? You know, there's all these weird little things that you really need to work at trying to not only remember who you were but somehow amalgamate that with who you now are in your current life, you know, you I used to travel around Europe and I want to go to Milan for the weekend. I'll put it on my credit card. I have no money, but now I couldn't even go out for

coffee without planning and packing baby stuff and worrying and you know, sometimes it was just so hard I wouldn't even go.

Dawn Rieniets 15:50

I mean, to be honest with you. I barely left the house those first few months because I was terrified so that you preserve your own mind and your own house and Yeah, the identity thing was enormous. And I don't think a lot of people talk about that because obviously, there are so many other physical and emotional issues to get to first. But finding your new identity is huge.

Dawn Rieniets 16:15

And that is something that I preach about I write about I talk to women about all the time, through my blog and in my own friendship groups, because, I want people to be able to rediscover their identities after becoming a mother because it's changed instantly. Like there's no getting around it. But you do need to find that happy space for yourself because you need it and you need to set an example to your children.

Dawn Rieniets 16:44

A mother and a carer who puts themselves first sometimes because that's really important. We want to we don't want to be martyrs and have our children model that behavior. You know what I mean? So this identity thing is so important to work on it. So important to not nail it down because it is fluid, but you need to you need you to deserve to find it again if you know what I mean.

Bill 17:09

Yeah, definitely do. So. I love what you're saying about how you needed to amalgamate your identity into motherhood and probably makes sense to you now, but what a lot of people don't realize is that we inadvertently start to create these sorts of little pigeonholes of where we fit with regards to our identity, and it happens from the very beginning. You're a good girl. You know, you you know, you wouldn't do that.

Bill 17:41

I haven't raised you like that you would do this and you should do that. And we don't do that in this family and we don't do this. And then that sort of carries on and I found myself doing that. Okay, so before I had my brain hemorrhage, my three brain hemorrhages ended up being surgery, and needed to learn how to

work walk again, and all that kind of stuff. I started a business because I wasn't happy working for different people.

Bill 18:06

Because the jobs that I was doing, were not fulfilling in any way, shape, or form. I didn't know how to explain it, then I know now. And my dad or my mom used to say, well, you need to go and get a good job, you get a good job, and you work. Why are you leaving another good job and 10 jobs later, when I finally started my business, my parents had no one in their family that had started a business. So for them, it was really odd.

Bill 18:30

And they would say to me, but I hope it succeeds. It better succeed. You've left your job, a good job, and now you're going to go and do this. So it was raised in my head that I was somebody that did a job that worked for somebody else that did all this kind of stuff. And it was a massive struggle to go down the path of becoming independent in my own way and raising and creating a company. So what did I do? I created a company and I called myself a painter.

Bill 19:00

I thought that was fantastic. And it was. But what I realized about four or five years down the track is, I'm now doing a job. The job is called painting. And the only thing I'm doing all day every day is painting. And it wasn't until one of my clients who I had a fantastic relationship said to me, hey, there's a possibility for you to pick up a contract. It's worth half a million dollars.

Bill 19:25

And in order for you to pick up this contract, you can't be a painting company. No, and I almost walked away from it. I said I'm a painter. What do you mean, I can't be a painting company? What do I need to be able to deliver this project? And he said You have to be a maintenance company. And I thought, Wow, what a massive moment in my life. I mean, now what does that mean? A maintenance company is such a broad term.

Bill 19:53

And it means that I can fulfill the contract because now I'm no longer offering just painting services. I'm also offering You know, carpentry services, electrical services, plumbing services, bricklaying services, any kind of service that involved

that was needed to be involved to build this business. And it gave me a new lease on life, it renewed my energy you know, piqued my curiosity, it meant that I wasn't just painting, we were doing all sorts of things.

Bill 20:23

And I became somebody even more trusted because I was able to provide many different services to one client and I became more useful. When I look back on that small change, my client who was amazing said to me, You have to be a maintenance company. I recognized that I was limiting myself because of what other people had told me that I needed to do most of the time, and I had just picked that up somewhere along the line, and it was reinforced a number of times.

Dawn Rieniets 20:53

Mm-hmm. Absolutely.

Bill 20:55

And when it was reinforced, I found myself caught up in somebody else's belief system, somebody else's story because I did get told many times you can't do this or you can't do that you don't have a license for this. You don't have a license for that. But the truth is, I didn't need to have a license other people did and I used to get them in to do those kinds of work.

## **Before motherhood**

Bill 21:16

Now, that's a long way to go to my next point, which is recently I came and saw you present an art show of sorts. And what I didn't realize about you until I saw you at the art show until you told me about the art show was that you were an artist as well. So tell me just so we can give people an idea of how our mum is not just a mum, what else did you do before you became a mum?

Dawn Rieniets 21:49

Well, that is really interesting because this ties in perfectly with the story that you just told me. As a kid, I was obsessed with art drawing Painting crafts, all that stuff I would spend hours you know, at my grandmother's big dining table with all the bits and pieces and I loved how quiet I was when I was doing that stuff.

Dawn Rieniets 22:10

I started taking art lessons at age 10 I went to university to study art and my parents said to me, Well, you need to do something else to fall back on. So I compromised and I took a double major in English and art which meant I had more credit hours and most students and I would spend late nights in the studio finishing pieces and writing Shakespeare papers, but it came down to it was time for me to graduate it but I needed another two classes in art history to get my double degree.

Dawn Rieniets 22:43

My parents said that's enough your cut off, no more funding, get your English degree go get a real job. So did you know I was a naive 19-year-old kid and I have received a lot of negative messaging about art and creativity? Both My parents did work. My dad owned his own business. He's a chiropractor and my mother worked in marketing.

Dawn Rieniets 23:08

And they encouraged me to be a career woman, you know, go out and earn some money, you're supposed to do better than we did financially because that was the baby boomer mentality. So long story short, I had no idea how to get a job or what I wanted to do ended up going to graduate school for English again to get a master's degree in English, which I've never technically used yes, I I write and I do freelance writing sometimes, but I didn't need that extra degree are to do so in that extra expense.

Dawn Rieniets 23:39

I wrote my first paper for a little while I traveled to Europe, I sold advertising. I worked in marketing. I worked for a matchmaker for a little while, and none of that was for me. So I flipped it around and I tried to find my thing and I could never find my thing. You know, and so my thing I said, Oh, it'll be travel. You know, so then I ended up in Australia and I was miserable.

Dawn Rieniets 24:03

I had a good job. You know, I worked in a not-for-profit here and I was there for about four years, but I hated it. I hated going to work every day. The only thing I looked forward to at night was cooking because that was my creative outlet. I dabbled, I painted every once in a while, but to me, you know, it was a waste of time, even though it made me happy.

Dawn Rieniets 24:22

Anyway, cut to the chase my daughter's born. I decided I need to figure out who I really am. It's time to set an example of a woman who's passionate and who follows her dreams and her goals no matter how silly I said to myself, you know what, I'm going to call myself an artist and it doesn't matter if I make money from this or not, because I do it for the joy, the love and the joy of it alone.

Dawn Rieniets 24:45

So I grabbed an easel my husband stretched a canvas for me and I made I painted this giant thing for my living room and I put it on Facebook and people went nuts over it. They were asking me to recreate it for them or to buy prints. Submit. So that was very encouraging. And I said to myself, I don't need that external encouragement, but it helps.

Dawn Rieniets 25:07

And then, you know, a year later, I think I started a business I sold. My business is blogging and, and artwork, and I and I do try to combine the two and I encourage mothers to rediscover their own identities through creativity and, I show them how to do DIY projects. But I paint because that was one of my first loves from a small child.

Dawn Rieniets 25:30

And I said to myself, I no longer want to listen to the opinions and voices of other people. So I aim to help mothers find their own identity through creativity. I truly believe that everyone is creative to a degree Even if you say you're a numbers person or an accountant or whatever. I think you still need to be creative to find certain solutions and as human beings, we all make things we have to make our own food and we have to build our homes and adorn them with things.

Dawn Rieniets 26:02

And I think somehow along the way that got that gets lost. And, you know, I think in during childhood, creativity, and imagination are things that are encouraged. But once I don't know when it happens, but we become adults, and all of a sudden we need to get serious. And we need to get a real job. And you know, we lose the magic a little bit. So I want to try to help people create and reclaim the magic in the way that I did.

Dawn Rieniets 26:30

And look, if it's not your thing, it's not your thing. But if you're interested if you have a secret desire to learn how to knit, but you think you're not going to do it, well, it doesn't matter. I don't know where we got this idea from that. We have to do things well before we do them because that's not how it works.

Dawn Rieniets 26:47

So, for me, art has been a therapy. It's been part of my journey to discovering my true identity, to being somebody that I'm proud of to be an honest and open person. Because when I'm trying to hide behind some real job and be all serious, that's not me. And I don't think that that's everyone either. So yeah, so that's what I'm doing.

Bill 27:12

Awesome that's good to hear. I want to, the for the listeners, I want to sort of give him a bit of an understanding of the difference between then and now. So the question I have for you is, so back then the story you were telling in your head, the story you were running in your head, and we kind of have heard about it. But if you can briefly summarize it because now I want him to hear about the current story.

Bill 27:38

You're telling yourself about who Dawn is, etc. Because I think if people have a comparison, they'll have this really good opportunity to sort of understand that, you know, rock bottom isn't permanent. It's just a place that we start at sometimes. And as we move forward and take each step we we can get to this new place, so give us a brief summary. of what the story was you were telling yourself in your head and how that's changed.

Dawn Rieniets 28:05

Sure, absolutely. And even as you say that it gives me goosebumps because there's definitely a before and after. And I actually just listened to this really interesting podcast yesterday, and they were talking about rock bottom is just the point in time where there's a before and there's an after, right? So that's a really interesting way to look at it.

Dawn Rieniets 28:25

But anyway, for me, the tape that was playing in my mind was one of criticism, self-doubt, negativity, worry, anxiousness. I constantly told myself I wasn't good



enough, or what's the point? Even when I would get some momentum and start trying to do things that I enjoyed it was always Well, what's the point you're not good enough.

Dawn Rieniets 28:48

You're never going to be as good as this person. You know, the whole comparison is the thief of joy. So now, fast forward to me being in a much healthier place when those negative voices creep in, and sometimes they still do, I'm much better at recognizing how to shut it down how to mute it, how to keep it in the background, you know, when, even when one of my biggest goals in life was to, to exhibit in an art show, which I did a few weeks ago.

Dawn Rieniets 29:20

You know, the day off I was driving there with all the crap in my car getting ready to set up and I'm thinking, I don't deserve to be there. And then I said to myself, Yes, you do. They invited you. They, you know, you can do this. And so I think, I think we all just need to get a little bit better at shutting that voice down and creating the more positive tapes to run in our mind.

Dawn Rieniets 29:46

So getting rid of any of those negative messages that we've absorbed, whether it's from childhood or, you know, early adulthood, whatever the case may be. I mean, I even heard an interview with Adele who was worried that her new album would flop because she wasn't good enough for everyone, no matter how talented you think they are, and how amazing and professional and successful I think we all struggle with this.

Dawn Rieniets 30:10

So it's about consciously choosing to play the negative tape or I'm sorry, the positive tape in your mind and allowing the good messages in and believing them too that's the trick, right? You have to actually believe it to even get there.

## **Follow your heart**

Bill 30:26

But you probably know this, but I'll give the listeners a tip. So if you want to get out of your head, and you want to stop hearing the negative stories to start following what your heart desires and it sounds like you did that it sounds like

whether you knew it or not instinctively you followed what your heart desires, because your heart desired.

Bill 30:45

To express yourself your heart's desire, to be creative to do things that you were doing in the past that brought you joy. And, it seems as though if you're doing at least what your heart desires, then the path forward makes it a little bit easier to stop playing just because, by default, you stop playing the negative stories because you're starting to notice things that you love. Is that something that you can relate to?

Dawn Rieniets 31:11

Absolutely. I think it's so interesting you say that because yeah, for me, it was definitely subconscious. I didn't know what I was doing at the time. I just knew it was hard. And I knew that I was just trying to shake it off. You know, I'm not sure if you heard this growing up, but everyone tells you to use your head, use your head, at least that's what I heard all the time.

Dawn Rieniets 31:30

I was too emotional, too sensitive, whatever the case may be. And I'm, I don't think I'm a head person. I think I'm a heart person and to have that stifled or to try to, you know, teach your mind to drown that out. I was never that good at following logic. Anyone in my life will tell you, I'm very impulsive.

Postnatal depression

Bill 31:52

The challenge with that is not only do they tell you to use your head, they tell you to use your head at the exclusion of taking your heart and to consider And breaking your gut instinct into consideration. So the head gets elevated it gets given this task of making every decision for you. And it's not supposed to do that it's supposed to do one plus one equals two.

Dawn Rieniets 32:12

Yes. Why is that Bill?

Bill 32:14

It's told to do things that it's not designed to do your head's, not gonna work out what you love to do. Because when I asked you to point to your body and tell me

what it is that you love, and when you feel that no one ever points to the head, they point to the heart.

Dawn Rieniets 32:31

That's absolutely true. A hundred percent. When did we come to value these things, I think maybe as a society, we're chasing the dollar, we're chasing status and fame and we're chasing all the wrong things. So maybe we're using the wrong part of our bodies and the wrong part of our brains to achieve those things.

Bill 32:49

We're being influenced by external sources. And those external sources come at you from birth. They come at you in the form of advertising from all these organizations that are designed to advertise to people from birth to have them for life. So when you know, children are born, that's what happens when they go to school, our current society, sort of our method of schooling is industrialized.

Bill 33:15

It's all about getting results, getting outcomes, achieving things, doing things that no one ever sort of steps back and says, hey, what would it be like if you just paid attention to your heart for a moment, and pretended that nothing else sort of mattered?

Bill 33:27

And when you do that to people, especially in a coaching session, what happens is they come alive, and you see the shift, and then all you got to do is nurture that and, and it's not that the head shouldn't, you know, be involved in decision-making processes. It absolutely should, but not to the exclusion of the others.

Bill 33:45

And what's happening now with science is we're finally getting to the point where science is proving what Buddhism taught for 2000 years, which is okay if you don't believe the woo-woo stuff. Here's why. thousand articles and papers on why, you know, meditation works. They can do a scan, they can show people and now they have to convince up to the head, they have this strategy to convince the head, hey, you want to know this information?

Bill 34:15

You've got it now. But let's step back a moment. And here is how you can use this to benefit you going forward and to get you out of your head when it's not

necessary to be there. Unfortunately, for me, I discovered the hard way how to get out of my head and that was three brain hemorrhages, you know, and the head wouldn't work anymore.

Bill 34:38

And I was forced by nature, the universe, I don't know whatever you want to call it, whatever you believe is fine by me. And I was forced to pay attention to what my heart desired I needed to make decisions that made it easier for me to exist on the planet. Even though I was now dealing with brain surgery, learning how to walk again all this kind of stuff.

Dawn Rieniets 35:01

Yeah, that's absolutely fascinating. It just blows my mind. I had no idea that there were neuro-pathways in our hearts and in our guts. Just like in our brains that makes so much sense.

Dawn Rieniets 35:13

I just, I mean, you would think it would be common sense. But you're right. Its society has kind of crafted this culture of logic, the heads at the top, so that's where we'll stay. And yeah, we shouldn't do that we should be more compassionate and more nurturing of people's instincts and gut feelings and they're there for a reason.

Bill 35:33

Yeah, absolutely. Mums. Know when something's wrong with their child, their head doesn't work it out. They have a feeling somewhere. And they can respond quicker than the dad even pays, you know, even notices that there's something going on.

Dawn Rieniets 35:48

I know it's wild it is and I swear my daughter can read my mind sometimes like she'll say a word that I was thinking and that I didn't even say out loud. It's It's unreal. The connection. Yeah, and I you know, I'm a feminist and I believe in equal everything for men and women.

Dawn Rieniets 36:04

However, since becoming a mother, I really do see those instincts kicking in those really animalistic things that kept us alive. You know, back in the caveman days know, for your children.

Bill 36:17

Yeah, we were all programmed in a similar way but mums had the unique program because you raised you know, you develop this child you grew this child in your body so it's logical that mums have these unique skills that are a little bit more in tune with those types of situations and men have their own set of skills that are in tune to what they need to do to provide and to deliver.

Bill 36:39

Men have this trouble of connected to their hearts because it was never good at school to grow up and connect to the heart and be you know, all we were and all this kind of stuff because you got harassed you got bad you got hustle, you couldn't hug your mates. You have to shake their hand you have to high-five them.

Dawn Rieniets 36:57

And you can't cry can't show emotion. It's awful what we do to our boys.

## **Growing awareness about postnatal depression**

Bill 37:03

It is. So you know, this whole podcast and all the things that you know I do and that you do is all about growing awareness of how we can come from a place that doesn't serve us that perhaps was created by other people's in other people influencing us. And now here are two people talking about adversity and how simple things can enable them to enable people listening to move from adversity to a better version of themselves their lives of how they interact in the world, right? Yep. So I want people to understand that that's what this is about.

Bill 37:42

This program is about and because you and your awesome husband have experienced postnatal depression in your own different ways. How about you share a little bit about how Matt experienced that so that the listeners can get an idea of, you know, not only your perspective but what a husband goes through because my wife went through a really tough time dealing with what I was going through?

Dawn Rieniets 38:07

Sure, you know, it's a very, very important point because of postnatal depression sorry excuse me. postnatal depression affects the whole family, of course, but I

think it directly affects the partner. And obviously, men can experience postnatal depression as well, let's not forget, but in our case, my husband was there.

Dawn Rieniets 38:30

And he felt helpless. And I knew that I was making him feel that way and knowing that I was causing him to feel bad made me feel worse. And he was so concerned but he didn't want to make me feel guilty or even worse than I was already feeling. So he didn't necessarily want to suggest that I get help.

Dawn Rieniets 38:52

He kind of he was walking on eggshells. It's terrible and I was miserable at him and I have to say, we have a great relationship and we get along really well. He truly is my best friend in every cliched sense of the word, and we hardly ever fight. But when I was going through postnatal depression, we fought all the time I hated his guts, like I didn't want anything to do with him. I was so resentful that he got to go to work every day.

Dawn Rieniets 39:21

And even though he was working his butt off to provide for us and take care of us. It's just like, I couldn't get what I needed from him and I couldn't give myself what I needed. And he was just totally hamstrung. I think he just felt really, really lost and, and scared and sad and he didn't know what to do in his family, they've experienced postnatal depression on his father's side and it was very devastating.

Dawn Rieniets 39:48

So he, you know, he knew what was going on, but he didn't know how to fix it. So I think it's, it's so vitally important that you know, even if it's not the couple involved directly that friends and Family keep an eye on people with, you know, with their firstborn children or even second or third children. But, you know, I think it really affects you the most, after you've had your first we need to watch out for parents and offer help.

Dawn Rieniets 40:14

There's so much out there, there's so many resources nowadays, things you can do privately. You can try out yourself online, you know, there are new tools and apps being developed to help you do that. Whereas, you know, it's not that easy to self-diagnose, I think when you're in it, yeah. So, yeah, the dads really do struggle too. And it's the worst feeling knowing that you're causing your partner to

struggle as much as you and it's just in a different way.

Bill 40:44

So it's tough. It's a bit of a cycle, right? So sharing the hype with these types of interviews is that the people that are listening are perhaps either on the periphery of and they know somebody who's going through it, so perhaps they can offer suggestions to the people listen, listen to this podcast, listen to another podcast, listen to somebody talking about postnatal depression because it's a third person, they're removed from the situation.

Postnatal depression

Bill 41:10

They're not judging you. They're not doing anything. But they're allowing you to perhaps recognize some things that they went through that maybe you're going through, but you haven't recognized that yet. So. So I think that what you just explained is going to be really helpful, extremely helpful.

Dawn Rieniets 41:28

I hope so because it's hard, you know, and I remember hearing about couples Oh, well, our relationships are not great. Let's have a baby and fix it. And now after I've had my child, I know that there is no worst thing that you can do for a relationship because even the strongest ones will suffer and I know that so yes, everyone keep your eyes and ears open. And even if the couple isn't really ready to accept help, just do something to make a casserole.

Dawn Rieniets 41:54

My GP told me depression is not a casserole disease. It's not like getting a physical illness diagnosis. People don't rally around you. They're afraid of it because I think we don't talk about it and share about it enough. And every time I mentioned it to someone new or just in conversation, I get a little cringe. But there's always been a positive reaction.

Dawn Rieniets 42:19

I've never had someone say to me, I can't believe you just you've just told me that that's too much information I always hear. Wow, I think I had that too. And I never got help, but I should have or I had that too. Or my sister, wife, girlfriend, or somebody I know has had that too. It's one in every four women I think one in 10 has it severely so that's, that's a lot of the population.

Bill 42:43

Yeah, that is if the person listening right now knows 10 people that's two people in that group that they know that my experience personally postnatal depression stroke is one in six. Wow. So what's weird is when we go and talk to a group of people and present and, you know, try and sort of raise awareness that I normally talk, you know, rooms with 20, 30, or 40, or 50 people in the room.

Bill 43:13

Today, we just calculate how many people are in, then we do the numbers, and then guys, it's either you or somebody, you know, that's going to actually experience what I've experienced at 37 you're gonna know someone in this room that's going to go through that. So what we're sharing isn't something that is going to isn't something what's going to happen to somebody who you don't know.

Bill 43:35

Unfortunately, it's going to happen to someone you do know and if we're prepared if we have even the slightest skills, which is make a casserole, or we'll do whatever if we prepared for just a little bit of if we know sort of just one way to support that. That's one way more than that person had before that. So that's why I really love what you're doing. Now, you and I met in the coolest way?

Dawn Rieniets 44:01

Yeah, I was thinking about this, you know, Bill and I were like, essentially we met because we had the same private health fund. However, the journey itself has been so much more interesting than that little factoid.

## **The meeting**

Bill 44:14

I know, so we'll share a little bit with the listeners about how we met now I was chosen by the Stroke Foundation and I was introduced to Bupa via the Stroke Foundation to be involved in a commercial that raised awareness that went to national television that's on my website, and it's on YouTube now, that went to national television.

Bill 44:41

And it covered 92nd kind of snippet of what my wife and I went through with my



stroke journey, and then Bupa is kind of supporting people and the Stroke Foundation because they supplied I think it was up to half a million dollars for the Stroke Foundation to build this awesome website that created a community for stroke survivors to go to and to interact with each other. Where before there wasn't and that was a direct result because the Stroke Foundation in Australia listens amazingly to the people that it supports.

Bill 45:23

And the people ask me the patience and then the stroke survivors, were saying we needed to build a community to bring people together. And they did what we asked because Booper supplied the funding. Amazing. And I thought, oh my god, I need to be involved in that. And yes, I'll do anything you want me to do.

Bill 45:42

And it was just fantastic that we were a part of that we got to learn some amazing things. And then we were invited to go to a launch where they showed the video my video to a room of about three or 400 people. I think it was a great Coming. And then and then I got to see your video and it was something similar. How did it happen to you?

Dawn Rieniets 46:10

Okay, cool. So I assume that you are a Bufo client first but that makes sense and that is so cool. So I actually had I was a member I, the day that I decided to call my maternal child health nurse and ask for help because I was struggling. She put me in touch I think it was with the Austin hospital and then they had someone call me back and somehow they found out that through Bupa, I had access to this parent and baby well-being program.

Dawn Rieniets 46:39

So it was 18 free therapy sessions with no out-of-pocket costs, which I was like, is this Christmas. That's amazing. Well, I could bring my daughter with me. I had the choice of doing group sessions or one on ones It was 10 minutes from my house. And so I gladly took that on board I would talk to my therapists about blogging and how I decided to share my postnatal depression journey on the blog and how difficult that was for me, and so she knew about the work I was starting to do.

Dawn Rieniets 47:12

And Booba contacted her to see if she had any clients who might be interested in participating in an ad to raise awareness about this program and about postnatal depression. And she actually said, Oh, I don't know if I'm comfortable asking anyone however, I do have this one client who's who blogs about it, so perhaps she'd be interested and of course, I was all over it. I wanted to be brave enough to do it.

## Postnatal depression

Dawn Rieniets 47:35

It was scary and it was bigger than just my little blog or my little Facebook group you know, the whole of Australia was going to see hey, I suffered from postnatal depression and anxiety. So but I just felt like it was real and stepping outside of your comfort zone, as you know, helps you grow. But at the end of the day, what I really wanted to do was help other people.

Dawn Rieniets 48:01

Because if I had never made that phone call to my nurse, I wouldn't have known about this program. And I was a boob member. So I think it's really great to work that they're doing to show that they care about their, their customers, their people and that there are programs like this out there. And since I've been active in this space, I've been hearing about lots of other communities and counsel-run programs that do similar things, but it's like, you just need to know where to go.

Dawn Rieniets 48:30

So again, it comes down to keeping our eyes and ears open, right? Yeah, so we can help direct people to the right places to get treatment. So it was Yeah, it was incredible. And then remember the night I'm not sure if you remember the night that the ads went live, we were watching TV and I felt so sick to my stomach.

Dawn Rieniets 48:52

And we couldn't find it it was going to be on all the major channels and we were like watching the voice even though we hadn't really been into it. And I just gave up, I grabbed the computer to do some writing, and all of a sudden Matt elbows me and I look up and there it is on TV and it was kind of anticlimactic in a good way.

Dawn Rieniets 49:09

But my stomach settled, and I felt better. I was like, okay, it's done. It's done.

Now it's out there. There's no stopping it. And yeah, and then we got to go, or the launch party was first wasn't it before it actually went live? So that was a trial run doing it in a room full of hundreds of strangers. But how great were the reception people? were loving us?

Bill 49:28

We were celebrities for about five minutes.

Dawn Rieniets 49:32

For about five whole minutes. It was really overwhelming. And it was a great night. But yeah. And then we had a really interesting chat and you told me about the work that you're doing. And I find it so fascinating. And then this whole world of podcasting. I've become obsessed with podcasts. By the way, I love it. I love yours. I love this conversation, by the way.

## **Dawn's advice about postnatal depression**

Bill 49:51

Well done, well done. So that last part of our conversation brings us to a beautiful point in the interview and that is where we're sort of getting ready to wrap it up. But before we do wrap it up. What would you say to somebody that's going through postnatal depression Now, let's say they just fluked. In this episode, they came across it. And they said to you, I think I'm experiencing postnatal depression. You know, what would be your small little bit of advice?

Dawn Rieniets 50:22

The main thing that comes to my mind is that you can get through it. I know that when you're in it, it doesn't seem that way. However, you can cross through the other side, it takes work, it's not easy. Your treatment will have to be as individual as you and as your illness. But I am proof that you can get there.

Bill 50:47

Yeah, beautiful. Now, on that note, where can people find you and sort of get to sort of learn a little bit more about you?

Dawn Rieniets 50:57

Sure. You can find me at [roospotting.com](http://roospotting.com) as in kangaroo spotting, and from there, that's the whole of my blog. I've got an art gallery, links to my Etsy store, and stuff. So if you want to come and have a chat, all my socials are on there. Come

find me on Facebook as well, that kangaroo spotting and I'm always around. I love hearing from people. I love hearing from readers. It's the reason I do it. Really. It's to serve my audience is my main goal in life. You know, and to be a good mom.

Bill 51:30

Yeah. Awesome. I'm just one thought that came up before we leave it at this. I get asked all the time, would I change anything about what happened to me? And it's a really interesting question because I asked a lot of people that I come across and my particular experiences I wouldn't have changed anything, because I was a figurehead.

Bill 51:52

And it didn't kill me and I needed to be taught this sort of divine lesson not in a negative You know, you need to be taught but you know, I can edit to learn from this experience and I did, I took it as an opportunity to learn and boy have I learned I've never sort of learned this much before in my life.

Dawn Rieniets 52:13

I agree with you completely. And I love that answer. I would not change a thing either sometimes, unfortunately for us thick heads or former thick heads. Yeah, it does take a big life-changing event. And luckily for us, we're still here to talk about it. You know, it didn't take one of us or one of our loved ones away from us in order for us to wake up. So we got the message. Okay. I'll do the thing I'm supposed to do. And I think that's beautiful and agreed. It's the hard stuff that makes us grow.

Bill 52:41

Yeah. Dawn, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it. And for the listeners, I'm going to make all those links available in the little description that I put on every podcast so that anyone who wants to find one can go there. If you liked this episode. Please do us a favor, give us a like, share it on Facebook, and tell your friends about it.

Bill 53:05

And if you know somebody that's going through postnatal depression, or has a family member that knows about postnatal depression, get them to get in touch with either me or Dawn and get them to listen to this podcast, it might help get

the message across to them that they are supported that there are ways that they can recover without sort of needing to tell them what to do. So Dawn has that sort of been sent to you?

Dawn Rieniets 53:32

That sounds like a great idea because nobody wants to be told what to do. So let's hope to inspire people to do the thing they need to do. That's perfect. Thanks, Bill. Thank you so much.

Bill 53:44

All the best Dawn.

Dawn Rieniets 53:45

Thank you bye.

Postnatal depression

Intro 53:48

The presenters and special guests of this podcast intend to provide accurate and helpful information to their listeners. These podcasts can not take into consideration individual circumstances. Did not intend to be a substitute for independent medical advice from a qualified health professional.

Intro 54:06

You should always seek advice from a qualified health professional before acting on any of the information provided by any of the Recovery After Stroke podcasts. This has been a production of <https://recoveryafterstroke.com/> Check out our page on Facebook and start a conversation by leaving a comment at <https://www.instagram.com/recoveryafterstroke/>. Subscribe to the show on iTunes and check us out on Twitter.