

Sagittal Thrombosis & Stroke - Tricia Alexander

Sagittal Thrombosis

Tricia Alexander experienced a Stroke which was as a result of a Sagittal Thrombosis, less than a week after giving birth to her 2nd child. It is thought that the underlying cause was Preeclampsia a condition of high blood pressure that affects some pregnant women during the later path of their pregnancy or after the birth of their baby.

According to Wikipedia, **Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST)** is the presence of a blood clot in the dural venous sinuses, which drain blood from the brain. Symptoms may include headache, abnormal vision, any of the symptoms of stroke such as weakness of the face and limbs on one side of the body, and seizures.



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The greatest challenge for me to overcome is that once it did hit me how close I came to death was getting over it psychologically. And even still, sometimes, especially when I hear that someone has passed away from a stroke, or someone my age has passed away, then I kind of, as I told you in your DMs, I suffer from I guess survivor's remorse. Because I think to myself, well, I survived, how come they didn't survive? And so I, struggle with that sometimes.

Intro 0:39

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

Bill 0:47

Bill from recoveryafterstroke.com. This is Episode 69. And my guest today is Tricia Alexander, Trisha was a mom to a seven year old. When a week after giving the birth to her second child, she experienced a stroke, Trisha contacted me, and I thought it would be great idea to have her on the podcast, as her story is very familiar. And it's a story that many people experienced. And the difficulties that she had to overcome are truly inspiring and worth listening to as a amazing example of what's possible.

Bill 1:23

Also, just before we get stuck into it, I wanted to let you know about something that I've been working on that I finally completed. It's a free webinar that people

can download directly from recoveryafterstroke.com/webinar. In the free webinar, you'll learn how to take action on your recovery now, how to build a vision of the future that will inspire you and what to do when you are faced with hard decisions about your path forward. You'll also learn the importance of creating a supportive team around you, and what kind of people that may involve as well as how strength recovery coaching can help speed up your healing. So go to recoveryafterstroke.com/webinar. and download the recording now. And now it's on with the show. So Tricia, welcome to the podcast.

Tricia 2:10

Thank you. How are you?

Bill 2:11

I'm well thanks for being on. It's nine o'clock here in Melbourne in the morning. What time do we have over there?

Tricia 2:18

It's 7pm.

Bill 2:20

Perfect timing. 7pm. The day before?

Tricia 2:25

7pm Sunday.

Bill 2:26

Yeah, today is Monday for us.

Tricia 2:29

Okay, you're ahead of me.

Bill 2:30

We are we're in the future.

Tricia 2:33

Okay.

Bill 2:36

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

Tricia 2:40

I suffered a Sagittal Thrombosis, six days after giving birth to my youngest son. I had preeclampsia. So I guess that precipitated it, perhaps the high blood pressure.

Bill 2:56

So you had preeclampsia before you gave birth? And, you experienced the thrombosis after you gave birth?

Tricia 3:04

Right, six days later.

Bill 3:06

Is it something that was

Bill 3:09

Developing in your body that caused that blockage to occur? What do you know about that?

I had a really bad headache

Tricia 3:14

I think so, I say that because I gave birth to my son in June. So in May, Mother's Day of 2005. I had a really bad headache. And I was seeing a headache specialists. And we really didn't know what was causing the headaches. And we couldn't do an MRI because I was pregnant. And so we kind of just had to wait it out. So I guess those were signs of it that we had no way of knowing because I was pregnant.

Bill 3:45

Right? Okay. How long ago? Was that experience? 14 years ago? Well, you're looking amazing. 14 years on, so that's great.

Tricia 3:53

Thank you. Yeah, when I tell people I've had a stroke, they look at me like it couldn't have been that bad. And I'm like, it really was. Not only did I have a stroke, but I was hemorrhaging. And I had seizures.

Bill 4:09

So what was it like? experiencing the stroke? What did you notice? During that time, when you were at home? I imagine with the brand new baby.

Tricia 4:19

Yes. Um, so I remember that day, it was a really bright sunny day. I was holding my son. And I went to scratch my face. And my hand just felt really awkward. That was like, Hmm, I can't really bend my fingers or control my fingers. And so I kind of just like, Okay, this is a little weird. But I think I really noticed it when I went to lay him in his crib, and I couldn't put him down properly, I kind of had to roll him into the crib.

And I was like, okay, something's wrong with me. But, stroke wasn't on my mind. I don't know what I thought it was. But I definitely didn't think that. And so I call my mom. And she was like, I think you should call 911. Because when I explained the symptoms to her, she thought I was maybe having a heart attack, because I lost feeling in the left arm. And by the time EMS came i couldn't move my left arm at all.

Bill 5:22

Wow, were you at home alone with the baby or was your husband home?

Tricia 5:27

No, it was just me and the kids I have, well, he was seven at the time, my oldest. And then a six day old, it was just us. And we had a tenant in the basement who I ultimately had to leave the kids with as I went to the emergency room.

Bill 5:45

So you had a brand new baby at home, and your other child, and you had to leave your kids with a tenant. So you can go to a hospital on your own.

Tricia 5:58

I couldn't find anybody I called doctor I called my cousin I called my brother, my brother had just left my house maybe an hour before, to go back to church nearby. So I just told the tenant I was like, just keep trying to call him. When he gets out. Just tell him what hospital I'm at. And just meet me there because I don't know what's going on. And at that point, I was losing feeling in my leg. So I'm dragging the leg around, and I'm looking for my insurance card and everything I was really calm considering.

Bill 6:29

Now if you or someone you know, has experienced a stroke, and are 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, doctors will explain these things to you. But obviously, because you've never had a stroke before, you might not know what question to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing the things could help speed up your recovery.

If you're finding yourself in that situation. Stop worrying. and head to recoveryafterstroke.com where you can download a guide that will help you it's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your 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 and download the guide. It's free.

Tricia 7:28

But yeah,

Bill 7:29

I smile and i laugh because it's familiar I similar. I couldn't feel my left side by the time I went to hospital. But I was very calm. I didn't really make a fuss about what was happening to me. I didn't consider stroke. Of course, my mind was caused by a bleed. So it was slightly different yours was caused by a blockage so you go to the hospital and what happens? How long are you in hospital for?

Tricia 7:56

I was in the hospital for about two and a half weeks.

Tricia 8:00

My mom doesn't live in this country. So she was coming up for the birth i wound up giving birth three weeks early because I had high blood pressure so they induce my labor. And so all of this happens before she can get here. But when I got to the hospital, the first thing I told them was I just had a baby. I had preeclampsia and I remember they gave me a pill. And then I guess I was kind of in and out of consciousness. I really didn't know what was going on. I don't recall anybody mentioning stroke at that time.

Tricia 8:37

Um, it just it just all happened so fast.

Bill 8:40

And it would have been days. And do you recall having any contact with the baby after that after you were hospitalized for those two and a half weeks?

Tricia 8:50

I they did I think they were fearful that I would delve into postpartum. So they did allow him to come to the hospital, they allowed my mom to bring him and they put this is real separate wing of the hospital because of course he hadn't had his shots or anything like that. So yes, they allow the children to come see me.

Bill 9:09

That would have been dramatic. And then you're going through two and a half weeks of hospitalization treatment, I imagine. And at some point, was there any need for surgery to deal with the blockage or any of that type of thing?

I guess I'm very blessed



Tricia 9:24

Well, my cousin told me because I don't recall. But for the bleed, they did want to go in to stop the bleed. And she was like, No, we want a second opinion. My Aunt is not here yet. You know, we need some really be sure. And they never had to do it. And I guess I'm very blessed. Because I'm here with no telltale signs. But it was bad. Because when my mom got here, maybe two days later, I was in ICU. I didn't start off in ICU though. I think it was the I don't know if was a combination

of the bleed and the seizures. That wound me up in the ICU. That's a little sketchy for me. I don't recall.

Bill 10:08

Wow do you have any recollection of what it felt like to be a brand new mom again, young baby at home and you stuck in hospital going through the challenges of a stroke? Do you have any recollection of what that felt like for you?

I had to get home, I had to get better

Tricia 10:30

My focus was just on the kids, I had to get home, I had to get better. You know, whatever it took whatever I needed to do, I just had to get back home to them. Actually, when I had the stroke, I had my girlfriend come to the hospital and take the T shirt that I was wearing to put it in my son's crib so he could have my scent around him. And in turn, when my mom got here, I had her take off one of his undershirts and bring it to me and I wore it on my left arm.

So all the nurses on the floor knew me as the new mom that had the stroke with the undershirt on her arm. And I wouldn't take it off. If I took it off. I had to get it back on as soon as possible. Like after they would do testing and things like that, because I just needed his scent. Yeah, around me and I just have my Bible and a picture of the kids.

Bill 11:26

That's beautiful. So I like that thinking from your friend to take your scent and bring it to his crib so that he can have you know, his mom sent around. And it's really important in those early days when moms and children to connect that way through the scent. So, that's fascinating. I love that they did that.

Tricia 11:47

Yeah. And when I got home from the hospital, the shirt was still in the grip.

Bill 11:51

Lovely. So you got home from hospital. But did you go directly to hospital time? Or did you have some time at rehabilitation?

Tricia 12:01

Oddly enough, I did not have to go to rehabilitation. I went straight home. And I'll

never forget getting into the car. I hit my head and my mother was like, Oh my God. I mean, I just, I guess my balance wasn't really stable. But I think I just led them to believe I was more stable than I was because I wanted to get home so my kid and got in the car and banged my head so hard. I think I saw star sounds like oh my god (inaudible)

Bill 12:34

Trisha, that's crazy. I remember coming out of hospital and having a talk. Obviously, most people know that I had a bleed in the brain. And then I met a particular person gentleman who didn't know that I had a bleed in brain he hadn't seen me for a few months. And he was excited. And he kind of did this manly thing, you know, like to the tap on the back of the neck, you know, and the back of the head and he hit me on the back of the head. And i said to him no, don't touch my head. I just got out of hospital. He said Why? I said because I had a bleed in the brain and he went, he just went gray.

Bill 13:09

He said sorry, I didn't know, it's okay. Just

Bill 13:17

shake my hand you don't have to

Tricia 13:21

Yeah.

Bill 13:22

So mom would have freaked out she would have thought, Oh, no, what is she doing to herself?

Tricia 13:26

She was I thought I'm okay. I'm okay. I'm fine.

Bill 13:32

Just now going home with a lump on my head as well.

Tricia 13:34

Right.

Tricia 13:37

I had to come out with a cane. I had to walk with a cane, which I refused to use in

the house only when I went outside. But um,

Bill 13:46

Why did you refuse to use it in the house?

Tricia 13:49

Um, because I just, I don't know, I just felt like, I didn't want to become dependent on it. I didn't want to use it as a crutch if it wasn't necessary. And my house wasn't so spacious that there wasn't anything nearby if I needed to hold on to something. And so I did without it in the house. And even my mom was like, Are you sure? And I'm like, I'm fine. I'm in the house. You know, I have the wall, I have a chair. There's something nearby. I didn't want to become dependent on the crutch on the cane.

Bill 14:29

It's not a bad idea. I don't know if I would recommend that. So if anyone's listening who's fresh out of hospital, and they have a walking aid, perhaps everyone else should maybe consider using it. But I totally get it because even then, when you're not using the crutch or the cane you are retraining the brain to start to get back to learning how to walk again and to give signals from the foot up to the brain so you can regain your balance and become able again. So I love that you did that. But then you use that outside. So was the theory that if I fall outside, I got one anyway to lean on.

Tricia 15:13

Exactly. Exactly. That's that's exactly what it was. And then going outside was walking longer distances than inside the home. Yeah. And so I would use it just to make sure I was steady because of course they stressed I cannot fall I am not allowed to fall. Something like okay, and so I would use it when I went out.

Bill 15:36

And when you went out? Were you able to actually be fully comfortable with being out and about and running your chores and doing all those things?

Tricia 15:49

Um, I didn't do major things. I mean, I'm at the most I would walk to the corner store, or I walked a few blocks, get my hair done. Nothing major, nothing that would strain me. If anything like that my mom would be with me. If I had to do any major things,

Bill 16:11

And what was it like with the babies and the kids getting them out with you? I imagined was there a pusher a stroller or something like that you had to

Everyone was amazed

Tricia 16:20

Um, I didn't use the stroller in the beginning because he was still so young so I would just strap him to the front of me because I remember going from my six week checkup. After giving birth. I strapped him to the front of me. My mom was with me my son and we took the subway, the bus in the subway. And when I got to the doctor's office, everyone was amazed that I had walked in there because they'd all heard and expected me to be worse off than I was. At that point I had my speech was back to normal. And looking at me I had no telltale signs that I'd had the stroke except for walking with the cane. I was very, very lucky.

Bill 17:02

So you would have been very motivated not to fall over as well, because you have a baby strapped to you.

Tricia 17:08

Right. And I just I took my time. I just really walk slowly took my time. You know, pretty much I'll get there when I get there type of thing. I didn't rush. I didn't push myself in that way.

Bill 17:20

Mamas and their absolute determination to get things done. And you know, to be okay for the kids. And all that just reminds me of my experience growing up with my mom and I imagined some other so many other people's experiences with them moms, absolute determination just to do everything that they possibly can for their kids. It's just amazing.

Tricia 17:46

Yeah, like it really wasn't about me, it was about needing to get to my kids needing to take care of my kids. That was my focus. Yeah, I didn't focus on myself.

Bill 17:58

Was there any long term neuropsychological challenges? Did you have problems with speech or memory or any of those things?

Tricia 18:07

Um,

Tricia 18:10

I'm going to say maybe a little bit of with the memory, because there are stories that people tell me that I just don't recall, during my time in hospital conversations and things like that. Like, for example, my cousin said she knew I was going to be okay, when I told him that I needed to get my hair done. Because like, Oh, she's gonna be fine. Soon as she get her hair done. She's gonna be okay. So but, you know, like the conversation about the bleed, I don't recall that. I'm just some little things that I didn't recall.

Because it was bad. I remember my last neurology visit with the hospital was actually on my birthday that year. And I asked the doctor, I said, Well, how bad was it? She was like, medically, we had done everything could do for you. The rest was up to you. And I was just like, wow, that fine line between death. And It took me a while before it hit me. But it was just like, wow,

Bill 19:15

And serious disability between serious disability or, you know, death or something that's life long and lasting. It's just, it's just moments and luck and randomness, and all sorts of silly things. And just no way of knowing what outcome each person is going to have. Although, we can still expect the best and work towards having a great outcome can't we, like, we don't have to all get concerned that it's the worst thing that ever happened. Because it is bad, it's terrible. But we have to work towards getting the best out of the situation and working towards a solution of some sort.

I Survived, How come they didn't



Tricia 19:57

I agree. I think for me, as I said, if you look at me, I look perfectly normal. I don't have any telltale signs whatsoever. However, I think the greatest challenge for me to overcome is that once it did hit me how close I came to death was getting over it psychologically. And even still, sometimes, especially when I hear that someone has passed away from a stroke, or someone my age has passed away, then I kind of, as I told you in your DMs, I suffer from i guess survivor's remorse, because I think to myself, well, I survived. How come they didn't survive? And so I

Tricia 20:45

I struggle with that sometimes.

Bill 20:47

That's interesting, because I also had that early on. Definitely. And I always do, what's the word I compare myself to other people, like you do when I hear the somebody my age passed away. Recently, a couple of my friends passed away, they were in their early to mid 40s. And they didn't pass away from stroke, but they passed away from other. I think it was heart related conditions. And I do that I compare why they aren't here? Why I am? And then I also do also do that crazy, you know, why did I survive type of thing do you find any comfort in the work that you do, or the way that you go about your life, and that's why you survived.

Because the way I motivate myself to feel this is a strange sentence, good about my survival. Mm hmm, is that I'm a better version of myself in that I am better around my wife, my family and my children, the people that know me, and then I use podcast, and I kind of like say, you know, like, I'm going to be doing all these amazing things to sort of say, thanks to, to pay tribute to whoever, for me being here.

Tricia Alexander became a blessing to others



Tricia 22:16

it makes absolute sense to me, um, I always had faith. You know, I grew up going to church. So I've always had faith. But this definitely has deepened my faith. And my motto now is I'm alive to be a blessing. And so I have found that the few people that I choose to share my story with, it uplifts them, like, I had a co worker whose mom was dying of cancer. And so I shared my story. And she was like, my mom just wants it still, she just keeps going. I said, you have to do that for your own sanity, because as long as you're moving, you're not sitting there moping and worrying about the outcome to stay busy.

Just helps you focus on something other than yourself. And if that's what your mom needs to do, as her coping mechanism, you have to let her do it. She said to me that it was very helpful for me to share that insight with her because she just I guess didn't understand it. Because in her mind, It was like, Mom, you need to rest Take it easy. And I said, No, that's how she copes. If she wants to run around cleaning everything and doing everything you have to allow her to do that. She needs to be as much of herself as she can with the time that she has left.

Bill 23:35

I know with stroke, that rest is a very important thing. So people that are listening, that have had a stroke experience, what they need to do is really do rest, because that's how the brain heals. So if you're feeling tired, rest and do the things that you need to do to sleep and to eat well, and all those things that just heal the body. And then when you're not healing the body by sleeping, or resting,

and you have got some energy, absolutely get out and about, and do what you love, and do the things that make you feel normal for as long as you can do them.

And then you'll find that the time increases the amount of time you can spend doing stuff as your brain heals, the longer the recovery goes, it will increase. But definitely, I've come across a lot of people who have been unwell before as well, obviously, in our lives, we have, you know, the same types of experiences. So there's nothing better than seeing somebody who's going through something so dramatic as a cancer journey. But, then still being creative, but then still being connected to the community. And still doing all the things that they normally do, because that is healing to the soul that's healing to the heart, even though their body might be suffering.

Tricia 24:54

I agree. I agree.

Bill 24:58

How old were you when you experience stroke?

Tricia 25:01

I was 34.

Bill 25:05

Too young, always too young, when you hear somebody had a stroke, whether they had a stroke at 80 or 70, or at 60. But at 34 with two kids at home? Mm hmm. That's just way too much on one person's plate to have to deal with a stroke as well.

Tricia 25:20

Yeah.

God don't take me yet



Tricia 25:22

It was it was challenging I. But I don't know, I don't think I saw it as a challenge. It was just something that happened to me. And I remember attending a church service after having the stroke. And my Bishop stated that sometimes God allows you to go through things to bring you closer to him. And when you come through it, you know that it was only him that got you through it. And I think that's always how I looked at the stroke, it just put it in perspective for me like, okay, I did develop a closer relationship with God through that because it was only him.

Because the doctor told me out of her mouth, they had done everything they could do for me. The rest was up to me. And my focus was my kids. So I guess, just focusing on them. And knowing that I just had to get Well, God, don't take me yet. I have to take care of my kids. And he answered my prayers. And here I am 14 years later. And you can't tell. So I feel very blessed.

Bill 26:32

Did you have a stroke survivors remorse early on when you came home from hospital? Or is that something that developed a little bit later on?

Tricia 26:43

It developed later on. I think because my son was so young, and needed so much attention that I didn't focus on it. I don't think it hit me until about a year later. I started to kind of tailspin a little like wait a second, i almost died. Wait a minute. So because to the point that my mom said when she was on the flight coming here, because as I said, I was in ICU at the time, she was trying to decide where she was going to bury me?

Was she going to take my body back to the Caribbean? or was she going to bury me here? Because that was my status at the time. It was touch and go. They didn't know what was going to happen. And when she told me that, I was like, wow, of course, she didn't tell me at the time. She must have told me maybe about a year later. Like, people began to tell me things. I think after a year, it began to kind of fill in the gaps for me and in that moment, I did not realize how bad it was. I had no idea.

Bill 27:46

Had you been previously employed before you gave birth?

Tricia 27:53

Yes.

Bill 27:54

So then you've been employed, you've had time off to have the baby. And now you're also having time off to have recovery from stroke and raise the baby. How did you ease back into work or did that come a bit later on.

Tricia 28:09

I stayed home for four months.

Tricia 28:14

When I returned to my job, I returned on a reduced work schedule. But ironically left the job two months later for a new job. And in retrospect, I should not have done that, because the new job didn't give me those allowances. And I kind of hit the ground running. and wound up quitting that job after about a year because my body was going crazy. It was just too much too soon.

Bill 28:46

So they weren't aware of your stroke history.

Tricia 28:50

They were, I don't know how detailed I got into it. But I did. I think I did mention like during the interview that I had been sick. But I don't think I went into it into too much detail, because of course, I wanted to get the job. But in retrospect, I realized that I should have given my body more time to heal.

Tricia 29:13

Because it was too much.

Bill 29:15

I recall having deadlines and, times on the calendar that I thought ok by that date, I will be like this. And by that date, I'll be like that. And I'll be better. And I remember as I kept getting to those deadlines, or those timelines not being there, and just at the beginning being extremely frustrated that well, I told somebody 12 months ago that I thought I was 90%. But in fact, I don't feel like I'm 90% today, which is a year later. Back then I must have been only 50% or 60% back to normal. So is this a real 90% today? Or is it per se 90%? Do you remember having those types of experiences well? Did you go through something similar?

Tricia 30:07

No, I think because, physically, I felt fine. I looked fine. And so therefore I thought I was fine. And thought I could just go back into the fast pace of New York City. But it was too much and I did I quit the job after about a year and a half. My body just couldn't take it like it was just too much. My son was a toddler. And I had an older son and they just needed attention. And then work was very demanding. And I just couldn't balance it all. I took on too much too soon.

Bill 30:48

Yeah, when you quit the job, did you go into another job? Or did you take time

Tricia 30:52

I didn't, I actually wound up staying home for 11 months. And by the time I went back to work, I was ready. I felt good. But um what I learned when I had the stroke is that I have protein s&c deficiency and lupus anticoagulant. So my blood is always going to clot if I'm not on blood centers. And so my first few years on the job, I was in the hospital. Think about every year for the first five years for one reason or another, trying to balance everything out. I think I finally got everything under control. But it was a lot of trial and error hit and miss. I've had DVTs. I've had I think two DVTs. I've had a pulmonary embolism.

Bill 31:49

DVT is Deep Vein Thrombosis, isn't it?

Tricia 31:52

Yes. And it's the one that develops in the caf. And then I also had a pulmonary embolism, which is the worst. Everything.

Bill 32:01

That's, a lung clot

Tricia 32:07

And every breath hurt, inhale, exhale, it was just so painful. And so we came to the realization after the trial and error that I do have to take my blood thinners for the rest of my life. And that's kind of hard sometimes. just realizing that this pill keeps me alive. Because if I don't take it, I will get a clot because of the blood conditions that I have.

Bill 32:34

The tablet that you take for that is that Warfarin

Tricia 32:39

I do I take Warfarin, the only good sign is that I did reduce the dosage amount. So that's the blessing that's taken place recently.

Bill 32:49

Yeah. And has the Warfarin. Does that have other side effects?

Tricia 32:59

Just the facts that being on them, you bleed longer. And as a woman that can be very, that was very difficult. But aside from that, for me, no, nothing else.

Bill 33:14

I know a few people that are on Warfarin, my dad is also on Warfarin. And I remember him having a blood vessel in his nose that was weak, or just the one of those little ones that sometimes they bleed. And he bled for that long. Not a lot. But for a long amount of time. He had to go and see the doctor and they ended up taking him to the hospital to try and manage the blood vessel from continuing to bleed and they didn't know at the time, whether they decrease this dose or not. But it was a real challenge for him. It gave him a real I think it gave him a bit of a fright, you know, because he realized as well that

Bill 33:55

Shis seems benign, but if it was a more

Bill 33:59

Serious cut or it was something else, that it could be even more challenging. So

that plays on his mind as well. I know.

Tricia 34:07

Yes, that's where it's scary, because I'm like, God forbid I get into a car accident or something like that. So I do have a medical alert bracelet that I wear. Just in case I'm unconscious or something they know that I'm on medication and that I do take a blood thinner. Yeah. And so I would lose more blood if I cut my finger than you because of the blood thinner.

Bill 34:34

Yeah. What type of work did you do at that time where you were doing one job and leaving

Bill 34:43

Because you couldn't cope with it? What kind of work was it?

Tricia 34:45

I was a contract analyst.

Bill 34:50

So a lot of data a lot of computer time a lot of processing a lot of thinking.

It was too much

Tricia 34:56

a lot of timelines, a lot of changes, because it was a very large union. And it just, it was a lot. It was a lot like I wouldn't even get my coat off. And i'd be getting 20 questions and I'm like, Can I just get in the office, take off my coat, give me five minutes. I hit the ground running every day, rushing to get to work after dropping off the kids then working a full load and then going home picking up the kids, it was too much. There's too much and by that time I was single. So made it a little harder.

Bill 35:32

Just a little You sound like a superwoman at that time. I mean, I did all of those things that you described just now. But my children were teenagers, and they have their own challenges, but they don't have the type of challenges that young kids do. And I tell you, Trisha, when I got to one or two o'clock in the afternoon, I was gone. And then when I got home after commuting for an hour, it wasn't any

better, I didn't feel better, I felt even more drained and stressed from all the drama and driving on crazy roads.

And then to get home, I would often be at home first before my wife, and teenagers don't do anything to help out around the home. So preparing dinner and doing all those types of things was extremely difficult. I would get to sit down and just zone out and do nothing and you know, at 8am at 8pm or something, and that was just in just enough time to wind down to go to bed. It was so frustrating. I just cannot imagine what it would have been like to do what you did the way that you did it and being a single lady at the time that would have been just next level. Amazing and, superhuman.

Tricia 36:55

I just have to attribute it to my faith and to God because when you don't have a choice, you do what you have to do. And I had no choices. I mean, my brother would stop by on occasion, you know, and try to help out. But you know, it's not quite the same. So it really, you know, for the most part was on me. I had to cook clean. You know, take care of homework, make sure homework is done, get them ready for bed, bathe them. But I just did it. I didn't think about it.

I had to do it. So I did it. And I think that's what anybody in my position would do. I mean, if you were faced with the same thing you wouldn't know how you did it. Like looking back. I don't know how I did it. You know, you're asking me and I'm like, how did I do that? But I did it. You know they came up pretty okay. It turned out okay, but at the time I just had to do it. So I just did it.

Bill 38:00

Yeah, well, I think it's fascinating. New York is a pretty large city. Did you ever have any trouble navigating, getting around, remembering which train line to take or any of that stuff? Because I remember going to a shopping center or shopping mall, parking my car, and then forgetting which level it was on and spending 45 minutes going from level to level to level to find my car.

Tricia 38:25

Wow,

Bill 38:26

Was a Seinfeld episode all over again.

Tricia 38:30

No, I didn't have that experience. I was really blessed like I recovered, rather quickly considering what I've been through. Because even when I go to a new doctor, and I say to them, well, this is what happened. They looking at me like what? Because you look at me, and you really can't tell. Yeah, but it happened.

Tricia 39:00

But I'm just I don't know what to say except blessed. really blessed because it could have turned out so much worse. I could have a lot of telltale signs. You know, I could be disfigured because of it. And I'm, I don't ask why. I just say thank God that I'm still here.

Bill 39:23

Yeah, it's definitely a great blessing. Tell me about sometimes, I'm seven years post my first episode. So when I get tired, I have certain things that I know, related to the stroke experience, and I get those little symptoms of Okay, you need to rest now I get the signs, you know, if you need to rest. Did you find yourself having any of those leftover residual challenges where, when I've done too much something plays up? Did you have any of that?

Tricia 40:00

I'm going to say at the time, not that I can recall.

Tricia 40:05

As I've progressed and getting in, I guess getting to know my body better. Being on the blood thinners and coming to terms with the condition that I have that requires me to take blood thinners. That's where it's difficult for me because you know, when you're on warfarin, you got to stay away from iron rich foods. Therefore, I'm anemic because iron rich foods have a lot of vitamin K and vitamin K clots your blood. So where someone can sit down and have salad, I have to if I'm going to eat salad, I have to eat the same amount of salad every week or every month just to keep my meds regulated.

If not, it can throw off my medication. Even multivitamins, I can't take curriculum of vitamins because they have vitamin K, I can only have gummy vitamins, I found that out the hard way wound up in the hospital for a week. Because it made it made my medication look like it didn't exist. And my neurologist was really on top of things and was like, well, you're staying here for a week to make sure that we

get your numbers back right before we let you out. So I'm more tired as a result of not being able to eat as many iron rich food as the next person. And then being a female made it worse. So those are the types of things that I struggle with.

Bill 41:35

So that makes it worse because during the menstrual cycle, you're losing blood, therefore decreasing the amount of iron in your body and at the same time, you can supplement or you cant eat iron rich foods. So you really struggle for however long it takes to get through that.

Tricia 41:56

It was very, very difficult. I mean, I even had to get iron fusion for a while where they injected the iron straight into my veins, which was not the best feeling but I had to do something in order to survive. Yeah. So that has been difficult navigating the tiredness.

Bill 42:17

So tell me about lupus and hopefully you have a little bit of awareness about what lupus is and how does it work against the body. What does it do?

Having Antiphospholipid lupus and Sagittal Thrombosis

Tricia 42:27

Well, for me, I don't actually have lupus, I have lupus anticoagulant, which means that it just makes my blood just clot much more quickly than others. I thankfully don't have lupus, which is the same thing I asked when I was told I have lupus? and they said no, you have anticoagulant, Antiphospholipid lupus, something like that. That was like the constant term and I can never say it and the numerologists used to just laugh. But it's basically that my blood clots very easily.

Usually people have one or the other. I was fortunate to be the winner of all three, the protein S the protein C, the end, the lupus anticoagulant, so, which is weird to me, because with my first child, I didn't have any of these issues. So that was the thing that I couldn't understand, like, does it sit dormant in my system and this pregnancy just brought it out? That was one thing that I never kind of really was clear on?

Bill 43:37

Yeah, that is dramatic. I'm curious.

Bill 43:42

Excuse me, too. Hmm. I'm curious if it's okay, if we can talk about it. You mentioned that you became single soon after the birth of your second child and then you went through the stroke recovery? Was did the relationship fall apart after that? Or was that something that was occurring before the birth of your second child?

Tricia 44:07

It was it was occurring before.

Bill 44:12

And how do you feel about the timing of the relationship ending? Was the stroke something that brought that forward the ending of the relationship? Or did it create a complication in that area?

Tricia 44:26

Um, no, I think, honestly, the relationship was probably over long before that. But you know, sometimes when you're in a situation, and you're just comfortable, you know, you shouldn't stay in the situation, but it's comfortable. And you know, you have a child already until you try to make it work. It's almost like putting a square peg in a round hole. So no, the stroke didn't send it over, but send the relationship over the edge. It was it was over before then.

Tricia 45:00

Unfortunately, or fortunately, I don't know.

Bill 45:04

Depends on the day that you think about it, I understand. I hear about a lot of stroke survivors having gone through a tough relationship or being in the middle of a tough relationship, and then the stroke will be the catalyst to the relationship going either one way or the other. And often, it ends up with the person who experiences the stroke, being left alone to deal with and recover from stroke. And that's an interesting added challenge to stroke recovery. I think about how blessed I was, with my family just, you know, really loved and my wife went out of her way, and all those amazing things that you don't see in a partner until you really need them, you know?

Bill 45:54

So I often hear these messages from people who had experienced a stroke, and then their relationship broke down or their partner left. And sometimes the stroke created the Rift. But sometimes it was just the last straw, almost. But it's like, some people would say, I don't really want to be around you because I don't love you. And now you had a stroke, for what am I going to hang around now?

Bill 46:29

Now, will i hang around out of pity or guilt or any of that stuff, which I think is the worst reason for people to hang around, and they tend to go. So it seems really dramatic. But I think there's a blessing in that person being able to say, I think it's time for me to go and let you deal with whatever it is that you've got to heal without me being here, so to speak, to make it worse for you.

Tricia 46:53

Mm hmm.

Bill 46:55

It's just such a really complicated and interesting situation. That's why I thought I'd ask.

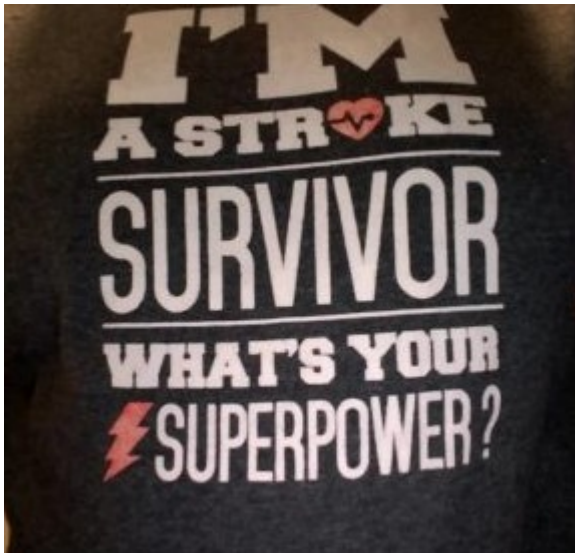
Tricia 47:02

No in my case it was over, before.

Bill 47:07

Fair enough. Moving forward, What kinds of things do you do now to feel less of that survivor's guilt? What do you do every day in your life so that you can really make the most of the blessing that you've had since then.

A miracle



Tricia 47:28

I just try to pay forward, I try to help others. I try to be a sounding board, voice of reasoning. As I said, my faith increased greatly. I mean, I was always faithful. But you know, I've been referred to as a miracle. So it's not something that I take lightly. And so I do share my testimony with people who feel like sometimes they're at the end of their rope.

And I'm like, God plucked me back from the grave. So you know, you just have faith. (inaudible) big or small it is faith, the size of a mustard seed is still faith. So as long as you believe in something that can keep you going, and I that's just what I focus on. And still, of course, my kids. I'm so thankful to be here to see them grow up.

Bill 48:24

Yeah. Isn't that a great blessing?

Tricia 48:26

Mm hmm.

Bill 48:28

Tell me about the kids. How old are they now?

Tricia 48:32

My oldest is 21. And my youngest is 14. So every birthday is the reminder of the blessing it is that I'm still here. Because again, I had the stroke six days after he was born. And ironically, he was one Father's Day that year.

Bill 48:50

Yeah. Trisha, you didn't look like you're over the age of 35. And you've got a 21 year old and a 14 year old. That's cool. That's very cool. Well, Trisha, look, I really do. Thank you for being on the podcast. I really appreciate learning a little bit about your story. Thanks so much for sharing it.

I'm so glad that you get to be here to share your story with me and the rest of the community. And thank you for reaching out and touching base on Instagram. I really appreciate it if somebody wanted to get in touch with you because they related to your story. How could they do that?

Tricia 49:28

Well, I'm also on Instagram, ohsoprecious_events. I'm a certified event designer. So I'm sitting in front of one of my creation. So they can send me a DM. Yeah, I'd be happy to talk with anyone who feels that they can benefit from what I've shared.

Bill 49:48

So you've moved out of your old kind of work where you are an analyst into event creation and design. Tell me about that.

Tricia 49:57

Well, I think it's something that has always been in me, but I never focused on it. And I still don't focus on it. 100% I still do work as a paralegal by day. And I design on the side for now.

Bill 50:15

And what type of things do you design,

Tricia 50:18

um, I do backdrops. I do candy tables, I plan weddings, birthday parties. I've even made pamper cakes, or I guess in Australia, you might call them nappy cakes. So yeah, I just I love to design I love to see the expression on someone's face when I brought their vision to life. That brings me the greatest joy.

Bill 50:45

Wow. So that's a party type of planning and space design so that people can go into a room and it looks really fleshy, your fancy or whatever.

Tricia 50:58

Absolutely.

Bill 51:00

Brilliant. Well, that is a lovely backdrop. It's better than my backdrop.

Bill 51:05

Which is walls and half of my kitchen and half of my dining room, but that's okay. I do love your backdrop

Bill 51:13

And you positioned yourself right in the middle of it.

Tricia 51:20

Maybe I can get a little free advertisement here.

Bill 51:24

Definitely share that and you have a website that people can go to a link that we can share.

Tricia 51:29

It is still the same Oh So Precious Events. I'm on Facebook and I'm also on blogspot

Bill 51:36

Excellent, brilliant when, when the episode ends, please send me those links and I'll add them to the show notes. So if anyone wants to have a bit of a look they can find it.

Tricia 51:44

Thank you! I appreciate that.

Bill 51:48

Tricia, thanks so much for being on the podcast.

Tricia 51:51

Thank you so much for having me.

Intro 51:53

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recoveryafterstroke.com