

Spinal Cord Stroke Recovery - Jeffrey A. Morse

At age 49 Jeffrey Morse experienced a spinal cord stroke due to complications from brain surgery an intervention which left him paralyzed from the neck down.

Socials:

<https://www.jeffreyamorse.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/jeffrey.a.morse.1>

https://www.instagram.com/finding_forward/

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Jeffrey 0:00

One of the hard things for me after waking up paralyzed was closing my eyes. I found when I closed my eyes, my body no longer existed. So I couldn't sleep. Anytime the sheets would get pulled up over my body, my body disappeared. Those things were very alarming.

Jeffrey 0:19

So I couldn't ever sleep with the sheets over my legs. That was very alarming. So once I got home, one of the things I would find is I would wake up from a couple hours of just pure exhaustion. I haven't slept in 20 Something hours. And finally I'm going off to sleep and suddenly, I realize oh my god, I'm waking up, and I'm realizing I don't know where my body is.

Intro 0:51

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

Bill Gasiamis 1:04

Hello, and welcome to recovery after stroke a podcast full of answers, advice and practical tools for stroke survivors to help you take back your life after stroke and build a stronger future.

Bill Gasiamis 1:15

I'm your host three-time stroke survivor Bill Gasiamis. After my own life was turned upside down and I went from being an active father to being stuck in hospital. I knew if I wanted to get my life back to the one I loved before my recovery it was up to me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:30

After years of researching and discovering I learned how to heal my brain and rebuild a healthier and happier life than I ever dreamed possible. And now I've made it my mission to empower other stroke survivors like you to recover faster, achieve your goals and take back the freedom you deserve.

Bill Gasiamis 1:45

If you enjoy this episode, and want more resources, accessible training, and hands on support, check out my recovery after show membership community, credit especially for stroke survivors and caregivers.

Bill Gasiamis 1:57

This is your clear pathway to transform your symptoms reduce your anxiety and navigate your journey to recovery with confidence. Head to recoveryafterstroke.com to find out more after this episode. But for now let's dive right into today's show.

Introduction



Bill Gasiamis 2:13

This is episode 169. And my guest today is Jeffrey A. Morse, who experienced a spinal cord stroke due to complications from brain surgery that was meant to deal with a brain aneurysm. When he woke from surgery, Jeffrey was paralyzed from the neck down. Jeffrey Morse, welcome to the podcast.

Jeffrey 2:35

It's a pleasure to be here. Bill. Thank you for inviting me to your show.

Bill Gasiamis 2:38

Yeah, my pleasure. Thanks for being here. Tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

Spinal Cord Stroke



Jeffrey 2:44

Well back in June of 2012, everything started with a headache, which turned into a migraine, which turned into the worst migraine of my life. And I went to see an ear nose and throat specialist for a scuba diving incident that I had and when I told him about the headache, he said I don't deal with migraines, our meeting is over with go see your family doctor.

Jeffrey 3:18

Next morning I see the family doctor and he is very concerned because he can tell I've more than likely have an issue with an aneurism. So I wind up at the hospital. And this began a series of events of fate either turning left or right, depending on which direction you either lived or you didn't.

Jeffrey 3:48

And next thing I know I'm down in Charlotte, North Carolina in the neurosurgical ICU wing for the next 10 days. With the doctor trying to use medicine to reduce my aneurysm. And when it wasn't working, he finally told me, all we have left is surgery and you've got less than a 25% chance of surviving.

Jeffrey 4:16

When I woke up after the surgery. On July 9, I was paralyzed from the neck down. So while they were operating on me, they caused a spinal cord stroke and paralyzed me from the neck down. The aneurysm was fixed. But my journey was only beginning.

Bill Gasiamis 4:39

In Feb 2012 is when I experienced the first bleed in my head caused by an arteriovenous malformation so different from an aneurism. Aneurism is a bubble I suppose that grows on the blood vessel and then as it gets larger because of the blood pressure It tends to thin out the wall of the blood vessel.

Bill Gasiamis 5:04

And then eventually what happens is it might burst. But until then sometimes it can create symptoms by pressing on different parts of the brain depending on where it is, and kind of showing itself before it bleeds. But for a lot of people, it doesn't, it just actually ruptures.

Bill Gasiamis 5:23

And they're aneurism bursts, and then it just bleeds out. And usually aneurysms

are on blood vessels, or on veins, or arteries that are quite large. And usually the bleed is catastrophic. So did you know that you had this aneurysm in your head? Or was that something new that was discovered after this supposedly, headache or migraine?

Jeffrey 5:49

Well, when I went to the emergency room, the emergency room doctor ordered a CAT scan on my brain. And when they took me down, the lady performing the procedure, knelt down to me, I had a blanket over my head, I couldn't handle light anymore.

Jeffrey 6:10

She knelt down and whispered in my ear, I was told just to do one picture of your brain, but I decided to do one of your neck as well. And thank God she did that. Because what did they find? They found the aneurysm on my right vertebral artery.

Jeffrey 6:30

And just above the aneurysm, I had a dissection. So the blood was getting into the walls of the artery above the aneurysm itself. And the aneurysm was quite large. So I was very fortunate that she elected to do that to me, otherwise, I wouldn't be sitting here today.

Bill Gasiamis 6:51

Okay. First angel in your life, is this lady who has she done the wrong thing, according to following orders or whatever? Or is she allowed to take liberty and scan more than just your head?

Jeffrey 7:12

It appeared she had the liberty to do that. And thank goodness, she did do it. Because the doctor was already a bit high strung with everything going on. He kept calling down to the Charlotte Medical Center to talk to the chief of the neurosurgery department.

Jeffrey 7:32

And he was getting directions from that gentleman. And when he came in to initially tell me, I had an aneurysm, it was oh my god, you have to aneurisms. And it wasn't until I got to Charlotte, that they told me no it's only one aneurysm and you have the dissection above that, which are both extremely serious, you're in

critical condition.

Bill Gasiamis 7:59

Yeah, dissection is maybe not imminent of causing a stroke, because it causes blood clots, mostly to create behind the flap of the dissection, but also sometimes the blood vessel can break off and then that causes the blockage. So you had that going as you also had this aneurysm, all in the same location. And the ticking time bomb, kind of saying is really apt here, definitely apt?

Jeffrey 8:36

Yes, I was, without a doubt a ticking time bomb. I was in a room for 10 days, with a nurse looking through a window 24-hours a day at me. Every time they would come in every four hours to give me medication. I had to go through the series of questions of what day of the week is it? What year is it? Who's the president of the United States?

Jeffrey 9:02

Those types of questions before they would give me my medication. And they were also lowering my blood pressure from 120 over 80 down to if I recall, 70 over 50 to try to reduce the aneurysm in that manner. However, it wasn't working.

Bill Gasiamis 9:24

And how old were you?

Stroke Even With A Healthy Lifestyle

Jeffrey 9:25

49 and in the best shape of my life. Worked out every week. Lots of cardio scuba diving, very active, very healthy, ate well, nothing wrong. And when I asked the doctor about that, while all this was going on, he just said sometimes it just happens. You were doing everything right. Had you not been doing everything right. You probably wouldn't be here right now.

Bill Gasiamis 9:58

Yeah, absolutely. That's the one thing that I find with a lot of stroke survivors who I interview is this whole idea that just because you're fit and healthy and you do all these things, it doesn't mean life's not going to happen to you.

Bill Gasiamis 10:11

It doesn't mean that you're immune from life and from wear and tear in other parts of your body that are not related to your lungs and your fitness and your muscles and all that kind of stuff. And especially when you have an aneurysm, it tends to be something that you're born with this weakness in this one spot that just happens to get weaker and weaker over time, which is similar to an arteriovenous malformation, or a cavernoma.

Bill Gasiamis 10:41

So there's a whole bunch of reasons why this outward appearance of health isn't necessarily accurate to what's going on. And it's not to say that just because you have an aneurysm, or an AVM, you're not healthy. It's just to say that it doesn't mean that you're immune from life.

Jeffrey 11:00

Very true. One of the things I kept thinking about was, I was so glad I wasn't someone with high blood pressure. If I went into this with high blood pressure, what would the outcome have been? With this? I was so fortunate that I did have good blood pressure. And yes, I had health going for me. But this was out of my hands. Fate was totally in control and at the wheel here, and all I could do was just let things unfold, and hope for the best.

Bill Gasiamis 11:38

Are you in hospital actually doing that hoping for the best praying for the best outcome, I didn't go down that path at all. I just accepted my fate. I'm not sure whether I was going to be happy with the outcome if it ended, in me passing. But I definitely just accepted it. I accepted my whole situation.

Bill Gasiamis 12:02

And I don't know why or how I got there. So people asked me, I haven't really contemplated how or why I got there. But over the three years and three black brain blades, and then brain surgery, I just accepted every single aspect of it. I never fought it. I never said Why me? What were you like?

Jeffrey 12:21

I didn't fight it. Thankfully, at that point in time in my life, I lived a good life, I traveled the world, I spent time in the military, traveling the world with the Air Force, spent time with a few different cargo airlines flying worldwide. So I really

lived a very good life with no regret at all.

Jeffrey 12:46

And yes, I accepted. If this happens, it happens. I wasn't living a life full of regret. I wished I had done this or I wished I had done that. I was fully accepting of if it happens, it happens. But if it doesn't happen, I'm not going to let this define me.

Jeffrey 13:06

I hope it doesn't happen. I want to continue on with my life. But if it does happen, I'm going to find another way around and I'm not going to live my life by I can't. I'm going to continue on and live this life of mine.

Bill Gasiamis 13:21

Yeah. So you're in hospital 10 days, they're trying to settle things down. And then what happens? Do they decide that? Now we've got to operate? How does the next part of the phase go?

Jeffrey 13:35

So they finally figured out as the 10 days was going on, the aneurysm was not decreasing in size and the doctor was having to weigh every day do I go in and do the surgery now?

Jeffrey 13:53

Or do I try to give it a little more time each day knowing that the aneurysm could burst or something had happened with the dissection in the artery right above it. So the decision was finally made. Let's do the surgery.

Day Of The Surgery

Jeffrey 14:12

So I did that on the morning of July 9. And when I woke up, I realized I couldn't move anything. I could tell my brain or my brain could try to tell some part of my body to move. But it wasn't moving. And I quickly realized that I was paralyzed. I was having great difficulty breathing because it affected my diaphragm and my ability to inhale and exhale were very difficult.

Jeffrey 14:44

I felt like I had a thick leather strap wrapped around my chest with somebody pulling it as tight as they could, making it more difficult for me to breathe. So the

first few hours were extremely difficult. Claustrophobia takes over. You can't move your body fight or flight is in full gear.

Jeffrey 15:06

And now you've got to figure out what's next. Are you going to let this define you? Or are you going to start figuring out how to move forward? And the next piece of that was, hey, there's no instruction manual for this. As far as what do you do first? What do you do second?

Jeffrey 15:25

How do you find your way through this? And that was when I started saying to myself, I need to find my way forward through this. And I think what I'll do is, I'll write an instruction book about this. So I'll figure out someday how to journal about everything going on. And maybe I can write something to other people that are just starting this and trying to figure out how do I move forward through this journey now?

Bill Gasiamis 15:55

So you said exactly what one of my previous guests said. So I interviewed Dr. Bradford Burke, who is a spinal injury survivor. And he said that when he was in hospital, the first thing that came into his mind was, how about the book he was going to write about his experience.

Bill Gasiamis 16:25

And it was episode 164. So not that many episodes ago. And I just said to him, how does that become the first thing in your mind, and you've got all this other stuff that's going wrong. But of course, as a spinal cord injury survivor, he was also paralyzed from the neck down. And that's the first thing that came to his mind. So I find this really bizarre.

Jeffrey 16:55

Yeah, I I told myself with everything that was with the trauma that was coming into my brain, making it difficult to think clearly, and to start formulating a plan, I didn't need to let that take over. So I needed to put my brain someplace where I could start formulating a plan.

Jeffrey 17:26

And I thought, if I can keep my brain there, then I'm not going to lose it. So start building this mousetrap in your brain. And keep thinking about that. And don't

think about this other thing that is horrific beyond words. So if I could keep doing that, then I could maintain myself and not lose it.

Bill Gasiamis 17:54

So it's a survival mechanism. But is that your training as well? Because if you have been a pilot, if you've flown for the defense forces, and commercial and all that kind of stuff, surely they're teaching you that, you know, you got to remain calm, and you got to find your way out of a difficult situation. Should you find yourself in one, is that something that you think played a role with this place you found yourself in?

Jeffrey 18:26

Yes, it absolutely played a role. Survival School and the military played a role in my training. That definitely played a role in that it taught me who the inner me was it that training, let a different Jeff out. And when I was face to face with that person, I knew what I could do if I set my mind to things.

Jeffrey 18:56

And same thing with flying, when you are, in certain situations, flying into mountainous terrain, and South America, or some of the other things you deal with around the world with weather and terrain as an example, you've got to keep flying the airplane, no matter what, you've got to keep flying, you've got to fly that thing all the way down to the ground, and figure your way out of whatever's going on. So yes, to answer your question that absolutely played a very large role in my recovery,

Bill Gasiamis 19:27

I've become familiar with this stoic saying, you know, from the ancient philosophers 2000 years ago, they talk about the obstacle being the way and you know, for bad weather is a perfect example of that you're in the obstacle, the obstacle is right there.

Bill Gasiamis 19:48

And you've actually got to go through it. You can't do anything. You can't turn around. You can't go back to base you got to continue your mission. You got to go through around above I'm not sure how but you got to get through the obstacle.

Bill Gasiamis 20:03

And that stuff that's laying on the other side of the obstacle is where you're

headed no matter what. And you wouldn't just stop walking on a, you guys call it a sidewalk, we call it a footpath, you wouldn't just stop walking on a footpath. Just because there was a big boulder on it.

Bill Gasiamis 20:22

You'd pay attention to the boulder, you'd find a way around it, over it, under it, whatever. And then you'd continue walking on that footpath with no real difference in your mindset as to where you're heading or going. Does that relate?

Jeffrey 20:42

Oh, yeah, absolutely. It even related. Months later, well, the end of that year, I promised my niece and nephew that I would be with them to go to Paris. And no matter what I was going to figure out how to walk. And if I couldn't walk, well, then it's the wheelchair.

Just Make It Happen - Jeffrey A. Morse



Jeffrey 21:02

It was ugly. But I was walking while I was over there. And one day we find ourselves at the top of the Notre Dam Cathedral. And once we're at the top, it's time to take the spiral staircase down. And I find the handrails on the wrong side of the spiral staircase. So I needed the handrail on my left, and the handrail is on my right.

Intro 21:30

If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and

confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. Like now long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid? In case I make matters worse, doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 21:55

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

Intro 22:14

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

Jeffrey 22:33

So I knew this wasn't going to work. So now how do I facilitate getting down to the bottom and getting out of the cathedral? So all I did was turn around and do the spiral staircase backwards.

Jeffrey 22:45

So just make it happen. Don't sit there and languish over it. Figure out a way to build a better mousetrap and make that thing happen and enjoy it along the way. So yes, it's totally relatable to everything that you're saying. Absolutely everything.

Bill Gasiamis 23:03

And the French are going these Americans look at them walking back.

Jeffrey 23:07

That's right.

Bill Gasiamis 23:09

How could they do that, they would have had a specific hustle or cuss word specifically just for that situation.

Jeffrey 23:19

Well, and it was funny, because my niece along the way said, you know you're walking too slow. I'm going to go on ahead, I'll see at the bottom and just left me and my nephew there. So yes, you know, great time, but this is all part of living your life, figure out how to make things happen. So you can continue on and be happy.

Bill Gasiamis 23:41

I'm gonna get back to that fringe trip. But before we get there, I just want to understand so the timeline. So you wake up, you're, you can't feel from your head down. Nothing's working. Are you locked in? Do you have the ability to speak?

Jeffrey 23:55

Yes. Yeah, all my cognitive abilities were still there. Breathing was difficult because of the diaphragm. But I could speak I could think eye movement, all great. No sense of temperature, pain or any of that anymore. All that was gone.

Jeffrey 24:16

I could communicate quite well. One of the other things that was funny about that was a few days later, a cognitive specialist came into the room. While a friend of mine was visiting one of my scuba diving buddies, Charlie Brown, who was.

Bill Gasiamis 24:37

Snoopy's friend.

Jeffrey 24:38

Yes. So he was at the time a police officer and the hospital was in his patrol area. So he would come visit every day. And on that particular morning, the cognitive specialist comes in and says, Hey, we need to check your cognitive ability, one of the first things we're going to do is have you count back from 100 by seven.

Jeffrey 25:06

So by the time I finished, my friend Charlie's still stuck at 86. Trying to figure out what the next number down was. And we just laughed about it. So yes, I couldn't move. But I could sure do math awful well, so none of that seemed to bother me.

Bill Gasiamis 25:23

Yeah, that's what a perfectly useful thing to have the ability to do. When you're paralyzed from the neck-down.

Jeffrey 25:33

At least I can do math. Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 25:35

Calculate the number of days I've been here or the number of days to my release, or I'm not sure what but I know where you're heading with that. That's great. So how long did you spend in hospital?

Jeffrey 25:48

I was in the hospital six weeks, when I woke up from the surgery. The surgeon told me, I have good news, you survived the surgery, however, it appears you're paralyzed from the neck down, you may never walk again. And I looked at him right in the eye. And I said, I'll walk out of this hospital.

It's Gonna Get Ugly

Jeffrey 26:10

And he tapped me on the shoulder with his hand and walked away. So I made that promise to myself. And at the end of the six weeks, on August 9, I walked out of that hospital, they wheeled me up to the front door, I grabbed my walker. And yes, it was ugly, but it was still one foot in front of the other. And I made it out to the car and made my way home.

Bill Gasiamis 26:38

I love that. Yes, it was ugly attitude. Because that is the attitude that's going to get you to France, it's going to get you to a trip around a lake in a boat, it's gonna get you to a cafe, having a coffee with family and friends.

Bill Gasiamis 26:54

It's gonna get you to all the places that you need to get to as human being to experience just the small joys of life like, and I've noticed what I've missed the most during lockdowns and COVID. And all that kind of stuff is just getting out and connecting with people.

Bill Gasiamis 27:11

And now that we've come out of the most lockdown city in the world, I think, you know, something like, couple 100 days or something, some ridiculous amount of time. It's a bit of a struggle to get back into the routine. Nature of, hey, we're gonna go somewhere and do something and catch up.

Bill Gasiamis 27:34

And it's bizarre, that even me, I find it weird that I haven't been able to bounce back into that thing. But when I was recovering from stroke, no matter what condition I was in, as long as I had the energy to do it. I never said no to anybody, whatever. Somebody wanted me to go somewhere, do something, say something always said yes.

Bill Gasiamis 27:57

The only thing that stopped me was fatigue. Did you have fatigue issues as well, because I imagined that walking in a walker after six weeks of rehabilitation is going to be pretty draining on, on you physically and mentally. And maybe even emotionally. I'm not sure.

Jeffrey 28:16

Fatigue definitely was a factor. So when I got home, one of the things I started noticing was my brain was all in and wanted to go do things. But my body was saying, Hey, I'm fatigued. I can't do what you're asking for.

Jeffrey 28:34

And what I found that that was I had a good, honest, four hours a day where I could do movement, and then my body would say I'm done. I need to rest. The other thing that I found that manifested itself during that time was something called phantosmia.

Jeffrey 28:55

So phantosmia, that's your olfactory system hallucinating, and I would start smelling what smelled like burnt toast. And anytime my brain was fatigued, the phantosmia was there over time that went away. But to this day, I still notice it when I'm getting a little bit more back.

Jeffrey 29:24

And my brain is figuring out how to talk to this new part of my body. A part of a muscle, bringing a couple of muscles together to start working in unison together. I'll notice the phantosmia kick in a little bit there. And it's continuing to tell me that, hey, things are still getting better. So it's a good sign. But yes, in the beginning, I definitely had issues with fatigue.

Bill Gasiamis 29:53

Yeah. So what about now do you have any days where you feel strange and out of

it, and kind of woowoo? And all that type of thing? I know, it's nearly 10 years later. How are you doing today? So just to paint that picture for people that perhaps starting this journey or have a little bit of a way down their own journey, what's it like nearly 10 years later?

Jeffrey 30:28

It's a lot better, I still notice the fatigue a little bit here in there. I work for an airline, I'm an instructor at an airline. So I spend eight hours a day in a classroom, standing, walking around talking, at the end of the day, go home, do a little workout, do a little cardio, and then call it a night.

Jeffrey 30:52

If I want to go out and do something, I'm going to do something for yours then to this with all of the work that I was doing my own therapy program, with things like Pilates and neuromuscular massage therapy. I finally got to a point where I was finding for years, then what was holding me back was the medication.

Jeffrey 31:21

It was the side effects of the medication that was holding me back more than anything else. And once I got the medication out of my system, things change drastically. As a matter of fact, when I did that in June of 2016, I finally decided three months later, when I got off the medicine, it's time to take a trip.

Jeffrey 31:42

And I planned a trip to Nepal, a two week trip to Nepal. So and I lined up all sorts of activities to do. And I told myself, you know, hey, if I can do those activities, great. If I can't, well, that's fine, too. At least I tried. But that was four years in now I feel monumentally better.

Jeffrey 32:05

Do I still feel fatigue? Do I still have limitations and restrictions? Sure. But they're nothing compared to what they were in the beginning. And the the one constant I found of this throughout, is the neuromuscular massage therapy. And what I found of that is when I get that done breaking down the fascia in my system, which appears to go rampid when the sympathetic nervous system is trying to protect you, it's constantly trying to give you that stability through the fascia.

Jeffrey 32:45

But what's the other thing that fascia is doing? It's cutting off the circulation to

your nerve endings, or your nervous system. And with having that broken up, it's giving me the ability to regain those muscles regain the nervous system doing what it's supposed to do. So I've been doing that for over six years. And to this day, I still see a gain out of that.

Bill Gasiamis 33:14

Yeah, I find myself my left side is the affected side. And it's the nobody would know if they saw me. But it gets tight and a choice to keep me upright all the time. It overcompensate and tries to help stabilize me and keep me balanced, which in fact, causes the opposite effect.

Bill Gasiamis 33:34

And when it gets really bad, it starts to hurt way more than it's ever hurt. And the only thing that relieves it is some real deep tissue massaging. And it's pretty interesting to go and have the conversation with a masseur who has never touched my body before and they're going well, I've never had somebody who's so tight on one side, and so loose on the other side.

Bill Gasiamis 34:01

So I really relate to what you're saying about how having muscle work done and lengthening the muscles and stretching the muscles and moving them in these different ways support stability and support, core strength and support all those things that help keep us upright.

Pilates Helped Improve Balance - Jeffrey A. Morse

Jeffrey 34:23

Yes, you know, and the other thing I found it over time. I was trying everything from going into a gym, trying tai chi for balance, yoga, pilates. Pilates workout-wise was the absolute best because it was working those smaller stability muscles. I didn't need to work, the larger muscle groups I needed the smaller muscle groups and I found I was in a very safe environment doing that type of workout.

Jeffrey 35:01

And that in conjunction with the neuromuscular massage work was perfect. The other thing that I found that was really great was dry needling, the dry needling

would break down the fascia as well. And those three things, they were the peanut butter, jelly, and bread all together, all three of them work perfectly. And those were the three things overall of everything that I tried. That worked the best.

Bill Gasiamis 35:33

Dry needling, I've had the experience. It's pretty cool, bizarre and weird, but at the same time strangely relaxing and comfortable and definitely felt positive or something positive happen because of that session.

Jeffrey 35:56

Yes, yes. It's amazing what it releases, what all three of them do the neuromuscular massage work, above all the things that I tried that walking away from one of those sessions, 90 minutes later, or two hours later, what I felt in my body, the reduction in the restrictions, how I felt overall, mindset wise, I felt more positive, I could breathe easier. That made things a lot nicer as well. So I still do that every week. And the results are always spectacular.

Bill Gasiamis 36:44

Yeah. Let's go back to the medication that you said you started to reconsider. How did you get to that? What made you think that this is something that we need to look at?

Jeffrey 36:57

Well, I couldn't get over how rigid my body was. I was having so much difficulty moving a leg forward. Forget trying to bend the leg at the knee as you're attempting to walk. I was extremely rigid, I noticed the depression, and a number of other side effects. So I just decided, while I was trying to learn anatomy, so I could speak the same language as the massage therapist or the person working with me and Pilates.

Jeffrey 37:37

I wanted to find out about the medication as well. One of the other things I found was every time the massage therapist worked on me, she was finding it, it was like trying to massage a walkway as cement walkway, she couldn't get into my muscle structure. So I started finding the side effects of the medication. With some of the meds were causing muscle rigidity.

Jeffrey 38:06

So one of the next times I went to see the doctor, I asked about it, and the subject was instantly changed. And it was suggested that I consider having Botox injections in the back of my right leg and into my hamstring muscles. It was equally suggested that I consider having my Achilles tendon sliced numerous times to release the rigidity there.

Jeffrey 38:40

So that's nice that you're suggesting that but then what do I have to deal with for the rest of my life? After that, now I have dropped foot for the rest of my life. I'm going to be in a boot as a result of that. And what did it really fix? Nothing. So I asked again about the side effects of the medication. And again, the conversation was changed. So I just decided to take it upon myself to stop taking the medication.

Bill Gasiamis 39:11

Let's stop there for a sec. We do not advocate anyone stopping the medication on their own.

Jeffrey 39:18

No, not at all. Not at all. I just found with me with some of this that. Did I really need some of this and I didn't. So a week later, all of a sudden, the muscles were pliable again. So yes, that's just my case. Apologies.

Bill Gasiamis 39:38

No, no, don't apologize. I understand why and how you got there. We're not advocating it.

Stopping The Medications

Jeffrey 39:46

No, not at all.

Bill Gasiamis 39:46

Everybody else. Speak to your doctor about it. And I get the issue that you have the frustration that you have with your doctor, because many doctors go down that path. It's very rare for me to hear from somebody who said, I spoke to my doctor about x, and we had a great deep conversation about it.

Bill Gasiamis 40:08

And then I made an informed decision very rare. So I get why you did that. Now, I've also previously before this part of my life, where I had a stroke and became a podcast host and all that kind of stuff I used to coach people, as a life coach. And one of the people who are coached, was telling me that they were on a medication, and this particular medication they were on for 10 years or something.

Bill Gasiamis 40:38

And it was to treat an issue that happened 10 years prior. And I was, okay. And has that issue resolved itself? She said, Well, yeah, I don't think I have that issue anymore, or something along those lines, have you ever spoken to your doctor about stopping the medication or changing it or decreasing or or something like that?

Bill Gasiamis 41:03

He said, No, no, I said is there a reason why? She goes I just haven't thought of it. I take it religiously every day, and refill the prescriptions and just go down that path. And I just thought that was so bizarre. And I said to her, well, do you think maybe because some of the issues she was having were physical issues in other places and emotional issues and psychological issues.

Bill Gasiamis 41:30

And I just thought, look, maybe you want to speak to your doctor and reconsider this medication, because you've been taking it for so long. And the issue that you had back then is no longer an issue. And it was news to her that she could even do that. And that she even should do that.

Bill Gasiamis 41:52

Nonetheless, she had that conversation. And they both agreed that she didn't no longer needed to take that medication. So I don't know how many years of unnecessary prescriptions she was filling and taking. But she was and she just did not give it a second thought.

Jeffrey 42:12

My only point with it was I was trying to get to the root of a problem to try to solve a problem in my body. And every time I tried to broach the subject with a physician, the subject was changed. And all I was trying to figure out was how do I get to the next level of improving myself and, maybe reducing some more of

these restrictions?

Jeffrey 42:39

So yes, I took it upon myself to do something. And what I found afterwards was, lo and behold, this particular thing I was concerned about was actually true. So you know, I was able to move on from it. So it worked.

Bill Gasiamis 43:03

Yeah, it's important that people do read the side effects of prescription medication of any kind, so that they just know that what's happening isn't perhaps them, it's not their lack of being mentally strong or emotionally stable, or all those things is potentially being influenced by something else. And it's enough to tip some people over the edge and go into depression and go into all these places.

Bill Gasiamis 43:29

So I remember when I was first diagnosed with the blade in my head, I was prescribed dexamethasone. It's a steroid, to reduce inflammation. But it has a list of about 40 side effects. And let me tell you, I experienced about 20 of those side effects within the first week or two. And before we got curious as to what the hell these drugs do, we just accept it as maybe it's part of the stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 44:00

Maybe it's part of this, maybe it's part of that we didn't know what it was part of what was causing it. And then we googled it. We found it online and then we discovered that okay, a lot of these things are related to the medication. The decision was made that you stay on the medication for a number of weeks because it was a critical time in my head to try and decrease the swelling and then they wean you off it.

Bill Gasiamis 44:28

But they have to wean you off it they have to cut the dose down by half and then by half and then by half and then by half and then get it to the point where you're taking none of it because it was that serious, and they're strong. I was having hallucinations at night.

Bill Gasiamis 44:43

I could feel like stuff's crawling under my skin. I was eating 24 hours a day, seven days a week I put on I think it was eight kilos in two weeks, which I think is about

four or five pounds. I was angry, I had insomnia, and I thought it was all related to the stroke at the beginning to what happened in my head.

Bill Gasiamis 45:17

So I'm glad we spoke about that. And I'm just gonna reiterate one more time before we move on. Please consult your doctor. About any medications that you decide not to take.

Jeffrey 45:31

Be your own advocate and do the right thing. Yes, have the conversation.

Bill Gasiamis 45:35

And if you don't like what your doctor has to say, get a second opinion for God's sake. Secondly, your doctor and get a second opinion and find somebody that will work for you, or with you. And the way that you like, I certainly did that at the very beginning as well.

Bill Gasiamis 45:50

I got rid of my doctor and found somebody that was going to work with me the way that I wanted to. That whole issue that I have with doctors is that they that perhaps it's their training, and I don't have a real issue with them, I have an issue with some of the things that they do.

Bill Gasiamis 46:10

Especially that you may never walk again thing, because I know that not everybody's like you, Jeffrey, they're not all going to go, screw you. I'm going to walk again, it might get ugly, but I'm going to do it. Some people take it to heart. And that really bothers me that they don't take into consideration the possibility that the next person, they say that we might be the one that's taking it to heart. Sure, some will get motivated by that. But a lot of people will take it to heart.

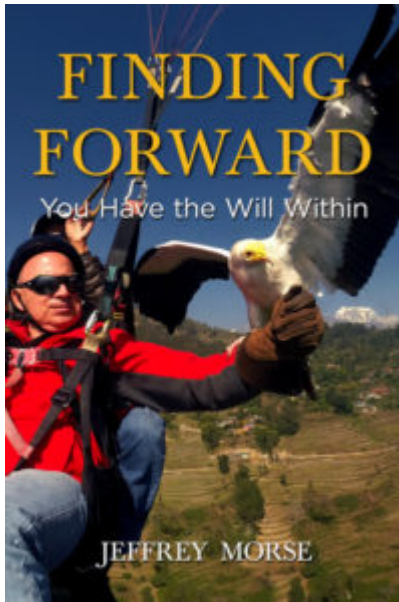
Jeffrey 46:40

And that's my concern is they're not in your body. They're making assumptions. Yes, they're very trained. Yes, we need them for the obvious reasons we need them. But at some point, you're getting out of that hospital, and you've got to take it upon yourself to take control of your life and say, Okay, that's just one person's opinion.

Jeffrey 47:06

Great. You've got letters in front of your name, but it's still your opinion, this is my body. And I'm not gonna live with that. I want to continue living my life. So yes, you've got to be your own advocate and find your way through.

The Book Finding Forward By Jeffrey A. Morse



Bill Gasiamis 47:22

Yeah, completely agree. So how long after all of this saga? Did you start writing the book Finding Forward?

Jeffrey 47:37

After I returned from Nepal in December of 2016, I met my ghostwriter, I hired a ghostwriter to sit down with me. And I began writing the beginning of March of 2017. And five months later, I finished.

Jeffrey 47:57

So I had everything in my mind about what I wanted to speak to the audience, I was trying to speak to each of us that suffers from what we suffer through with these debilitating effects. And I wanted to speak to everybody about that and say, Hey, your life's not over. And there are other means of going about living your life.

Bill Gasiamis 48:24

Yeah. Do you have a copy of the book there?

Jeffrey 48:29

I do not. But I do have a copy someplace of the cover if everybody can see that.

But there's the cover the book.

Bill Gasiamis 48:40

Pretty wicked cover photo they tell us about the cover photo.

Jeffrey 48:45

So one of the days in Nepal. I went up to the top of Sarancot mountain to go paragliding with an Egyptian Vulture and 6000 foot mountain. It was myself and another lady who I found out later was also a survivor.

Jeffrey 49:10

So we're standing at the top of the mountain waiting early that morning waiting for the winds to come up and the two gentlemen that are going to take us out to do this. The owner of this company this para Hawking company was asking me what brought you to Nepal I told him my story.

Jeffrey 49:33

And the lady the other lady going out, overheard me and she came over and introduced herself and lo and behold, I find out she is a National Geographic photographer, who many years earlier had a life threatening event over in Laos.

Jeffrey 49:54

She was going to cover a story and a she was on a switchback mountain in a bus, bus coming in the other direction hit her. And now she's telling me her story, as we're sitting there, and the owner of the para hawking company was in total awe.

Jeffrey 50:13

And what I found it was, this was the first time I met another survivor. And one of the things I found very interesting about it was, we were completing each other's sentences. Right down to the breathing, and how difficult breathing was in the beginning. So it was real special.

Jeffrey 50:35

They rigged me up, and they told me, okay, we're going to run down the hillside here to go airborne. And I said, Well, I can't run. And they said, that's no problem, we can make that work. So the gentleman controlling the paraglider for me asked two of his friends to grab the harness on either side of me, and they ran us down.

Jeffrey 51:04

And next thing we know, we were off the edge there. And I'm feeding this Egyptian vulture that they use to help them find the thermals so we can enjoy the gliding experience. So while we were doing that, the Egyptian vulture was going back and forth between our paraglider and the other paraglider.

Jeffrey 51:27

And we got to feed it in flight, look out to the north towards the Himalayan Mountains, and enjoy a nice 20 minute flight down to the bottom. And when I finished, I went back into town, got on a bus went back up to the top of the mountain, and went zip lining for the first time in my life.

Bill Gasiamis 51:51

Far out, man, I'm looking at the image of you in the paraglider in the harness and the bird is sitting on your arm. And somebody was in the right place at the right time to take a photo of that.

Jeffrey 52:10

Well, he had GoPro cameras positioned around where he could take those pictures while we were flying. So it was numerous pictures that he was taking while we were doing that. So yes, it was very fascinating.

Jeffrey 52:31

And I got to feel adrenaline and living again, all the hard work. Got me there. All the people that helped me get to that point. allowed me to experience that again. And the other part of this book is me saying thank you to each and every one of them for getting me to that point to be able to do that.

Bill Gasiamis 52:57

It's a hell of a cover photo. It's just absolutely amazing photo there of, of just somebody experiencing life. And it doesn't have to be what everybody does. It's definitely not I, I can appreciate how amazing it would be.

Bill Gasiamis 53:17

But I can't find myself either jumping out of a perfectly good plane, or falling off jumping off a cliff. I just can't find myself doing that. And I appreciate the people that do. And I think you guys are amazing, but I just don't think that I'd be able to do it Jeffrey.

Jeffrey 53:37

Yeah, the the whole trip was one adrenaline rush after another. And it was finding my freedom again, finding life all over again, meeting new people doing things that some would say I would never do again. And I went there to do them and you know, to find enlightenment, and I found all of that.

Bill Gasiamis 54:04

So before that you would have experienced some isolation, just as part of the course of being somebody that's going through what you're going through. And then being on the recovery side, say even out of the hospital when you're still not able to get out into life yet. Did you deal with isolation well? Is that something that you experienced? Because I imagine that you would have had those feelings more intensely at some point, especially when you're waking up and you've got no feeling but beneath your neck?

Waking Up Paralyzed

Jeffrey 54:41

Yeah, it this was something that I dealt with a lot in the beginning I still deal with a little bit of it even to this day, but one of the hard things for me after waking up paralyzed, was closing my eyes. I found when I closed my eyes, my body no longer existed. So I couldn't sleep.

Jeffrey 55:12

Anytime the sheets would get pulled up over my body, my body disappeared, those things were very alarming. So I couldn't ever sleep with the sheets over my legs. That was very alarming to me.

Jeffrey 55:30

So, once I got home, one of the things I would find is I would wake up from a couple hours of just pure exhaustion, I haven't slept in 20 Something hours. And finally, I'm going off to sleep. And suddenly, I realize, Oh, my God, I'm waking up. And I'm realizing I don't know where my body is, I think I know where my legs are. And they're nowhere near the position, I think they're in.

Jeffrey 56:04

I couldn't sleep with lights off, I had to have the lights on. So if I did fall asleep, and then I was jolted back to consciousness, I could look down immediately and reestablish where everything was at where my arms were, where my legs were,

sometimes, I might have an arm underneath me pinned underneath me.

Jeffrey 56:27

And what happens when you do that when you're not paralyzed, and you lose the circulation in your arm. Now, I can't sense that. So all I can see is the arms pinned underneath me. And I have to ask for help to get the arm out from underneath me if I can't.

Jeffrey 56:50

So in the first couple of years, it was very traumatic for me anytime I needed to do that sleep thing. That was always very difficult. But the the alone thing that I was able to navigate. Just because I wanted to, you know, in the beginning, when I got back home, and I was still in a wheelchair, all I could use was my left foot to try to pull me along in the chair.

Jeffrey 57:23

And if I could do that, and managed to get over to the back door and figure out how to open the door, just so I could sit there and look up at the sky with nothing between me in the sky, I was grateful for that. I was grateful for little wins, not big wins. And if I could do that, each day, then I'm taking another step in the right direction. And those were the things that I would allow in those positive things to keep the negative things away.

Bill Gasiamis 57:57

The negative things take over sometimes, absolutely. That's just part of recovery, right? It is I'm having a terrible day and you're fatigued and you're exhausted and the negative thoughts come into your head. And I think if you don't give them oxygen, they they tend to fizzle away.

Bill Gasiamis 58:20

But what I mean by that is is that you just allow them to be there, you allow them to turn up and exist and let you know what their messages or whatever you acknowledge them for what they are, you don't make any meaning about them, you don't try and apply a meaning to this thing, just allow it to exist as something that's going to be fleeting, it'll be in, it'll be out.

Bill Gasiamis 58:44

And then from there, you can move into the next phase, which is a positive experience. And then when that positive experience comes there, then give that

oxygen give that hips of meaning, give that heaps of time and effort, and then the positive start to outweigh the negatives.

Bill Gasiamis 59:00

And then every once in a while a negative comes in and then you just allow it to exist for a little bit of time and then it goes away. I remember waking up at night and always having to go to the bathroom and then feeling and then having just really terrible negative thoughts in my head the entire time for years.

Bill Gasiamis 59:23

But I've been noticing recently that my thoughts at night when I wake up to go to the bathroom are trivial, if not silly, and they're not about negative things that just about weird stuff that I would not normally think on the normal waking hours. So it has shifted for me, but I was troubled at the beginning by some of those.

Bill Gasiamis 59:48

I know I suppose the the word is could they have been? Just not sure I can't even describe it that would just not nice thoughts, and then they were very quickly looping into even worse thoughts and so on. But eventually just gave myself the opportunity to know that they are just thoughts.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:14

That's all they are. And they don't mean anything, they're not going to come true. Something that's happening to me at the moment, and I was able to let it go, but I didn't wake up with the inability to move, you know, my entire body. So I don't know what that's like.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:36

And I don't know how good I would have been at the beginning to try and understand how to let go of control. And not that I was a real control freak, but you know, you're controlling most things in your life in some way, shape, or form. And then you wake up and you don't have control of your body.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:01

I can relate to your not knowing where your body parts are. I can relate to that briefly, because I kind of didn't know where my left side was. But at the same time, how do you give up control when you wake up? And the first thing you realize is you don't have the ability to move your body?

Jeffrey 1:01:25

When you first wake up to that you're screaming because yes, that control is not there. It's it's gone. And you have no control of when or if that's ever going to come back. So that's where you've now got to make the decision. Are you going to let that ruin your life, or are you going to move on?

Jeffrey 1:01:51

When I was moved from the hospital wing over to a rehab facility, days later, they moved me into a room with a gentleman that had diabetes, went into a diabetic coma while he was driving his pickup truck lost consciousness, wakes up two weeks later, and he's lost his right leg below the knee.

Jeffrey 1:02:21

And he was extremely depressed. He he was giving up, didn't want to listen to the doctors or the nurses for rehab. And every evening to three o'clock in the morning, neither one of us could sleep. I would talk to him and try to motivate him and tell him your life's not over.

Jeffrey 1:02:45

All you need is a prosthetic leg, and you can get on with your life. Little did I know at that time, the nurse's station was right outside of our door. And the nurses would sit there each evening, listening to me, trying to motivate him. And it started working. I did everything I could to talk to him. And here I am paralyzed from the neck down, trying to tell him look, life's not over.

Jeffrey 1:03:15

Now, for me, I've lived a full life at 49. I was accepting of if my life ends right now I'm okay with that. I don't have any regrets in my life. And I was very much a question mark every minute of every day during that period of time. But that wasn't stuff I was going to let in.

Jeffrey 1:03:40

All I was motivated toward was figure out what you're going to do next. Because there's no instruction book here. Eventually, they moved me out of that room because they knew time was coming for him. And it looked like he was going to lose his life. And they didn't want me in the room at that time. And it really depressed him when they moved me out.

Jeffrey 1:04:04

But I told him Look, I'll just be a few doors down. I'll come and visit. To go further forward from that. Yes, he did eventually lose his life. But as I was healing over the years, day after day, week, after week, month after month, and year after year, anytime I was having a bad time, I would think about that man.

Jeffrey 1:04:29

And no matter what I was feeling, I was not going to give up or give in to what he was allowing himself to give into I felt very bad for that. And I wished more than ever. I could have said more to help him get beyond what he was thinking. But I was not going to let this paralysis define me. I knew I could find my way through this and find my way back.

Jeffrey 1:04:57

Was it a question mark? Absolutely every day But that was not stuff I was willing to let into my brain, all I wanted to think about was finding my way back, when I would go into the physical therapy gym, when I would get wheeled in there each day, and sit in a sea of wheelchairs.

Jeffrey 1:05:21

And my therapist would come to take me to try to teach me how to walk again, I would tell her, I'm here to work, I'm not here to talk. So, you know, stand my body up, even though I can't feel it. And help me figure out how to move these things underneath me, so I can make this walking thing happen again. And she asked me at one point, what drives you?

Jeffrey 1:05:43

And I said, Do you see all those people over there with spinal cord injuries, who are never gonna walk again, I'm trying to put one foot in front of the other for each of them. To me, it's more about them than it is me. But that's my motivation. And those were the kinds of things that I kept in my head over the years to keep me moving in a positive direction.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:10

Pretty good man. Pretty fair approach, or there's something to be said of that real win at all costs almost approach, regardless of how battered and bruised and, you know, unable you are to continue in the exact same way that you came into the whole game. It's just win at all costs.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:39

And that attitude was something that perhaps I didn't appreciate, because I didn't like that idea of winning at all costs, because there's some stigma attached to it, which is, you know, basically doesn't matter who you leave behind, and the damage that you've caused, but as long as you win, you know, then that's great.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:04

And I can see how that can be construed as negative in a way because especially if winning at all costs means that you're leaving a lot of people emotionally traumatized or physically traumatized behind you, depending on what you're trying to win at, right.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:20

But here's a really amazing way to take that mentality, that when it all costs mentality, and just make sure that you win this particular game, and you end up getting back to your life in some way, shape, or form, in your own at your own terms. And I don't remember being so forward to my physical therapists at all, I don't remember having those types of conversations with them.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:55

But I was certainly motivated to walk again and walk out of therapy and go home early and do all those things. And I think I did pretty well considering. But you know, I'm just putting myself in your shoes, and I, I can't see myself with a my emotional and mental state had developed enough by me at the age of 37, when this all happened to me, to, to know whether or not I would have taken a path like you. I'll never know. And that's okay.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:33

But I'm just finding your conversations really interesting because it's making me reflect. And it's been a while since I've reflected on my own ability to do those things that you said the way that you're upset them, which is to win at all costs, almost you didn't say those words, but I love that approach.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:53

And maybe it's something for other people to contemplate whether or not they are being too passive in their recovery, whether they are going for it enough, whether they are telling people what they need to do to get to the other side.

Bill Gasiamis 1:09:09

And I'm not here for a conversation, for example, you know, the wrong therapist

might have thought Jeffrey's a bit of an idiot you know, talking to me like that. But hopefully she didn't take it that way. Because it wasn't about her really it was about you wasn't it? It was about we've got work to do. We got a job to do and let's get to it.

Jeffrey 1:09:30

Well, she would cry. She was amazed by my determination to not give up and that always shocked her that I had that motivation within me to do that. The the first day they wanted to put me behind a walker and say, hey, we're gonna stand you up now.

Jeffrey 1:09:59

And we want you to just see what it feels like to stand and hold the walker. And there's somebody behind me with a wheelchair just in case I fall backwards. And I said to her, what is it that I have to do to pass whatever I need to get out of the hospital as it relates to this walker?

Jeffrey 1:10:21

And she said, well, you need to be able to walk 50 feet on assisted. And I said, great, well, while I'm standing here, tell me where 50 feet is. And she said, well, from here to the door to the physical therapy gym, and I said, well, okay, then get out of my way. And I couldn't feel my legs, I could figure out how to put something in front of me one step at a time, but I couldn't feel either one of them.

Not All About You



Jeffrey 1:10:50

And I set out right there, right then to do the 50 feet. And she cried, the whole time I was doing it. She eventually took the wheelchair from the assistant, bashed it into the back of my legs and made me sit. But that was my motivation. The other thing that motivated me during those periods of time was, don't make it all about you.

Jeffrey 1:11:13

Everybody that comes to visit you they see your trauma. They sit in fear thinking, what if that had happened to me? What would I do? And for me, it was what can I do to get your mind off of that? Is there something I can say to get you laughing about something?

Jeffrey 1:11:34

Can we have a conversation where suddenly, we're remembering something? before all this happened to me, that we all laughed about, even if what we were laughing about was me. So if I could do that, that was positive fuel for me to help me on my quest to get things back. And I had to realize along the way that most of what I was doing was a leap of faith.

Jeffrey 1:12:05

Okay, you can't feel now fine. It doesn't mean you can't try. So do that. Don't sit there with the mindset of, well, I can't feel it, therefore I can't use it. redirect the energy now, build a different mousetrap. And okay, you can't feel. So you're standing there. Obviously, there's some signal starting to make its way through. So work with it, see what you can do with it.

Jeffrey 1:12:37

But don't let yourself get so locked in and focus to the physical aspects of it, that you forget the psychological aspects of it, which are, you got to live your life to, you've got to figure out how to move yourself forward, and move yourself away from the stuff that's depressing.

Jeffrey 1:12:56

What can you do to help facilitate that, and those were the things on my mind all the time. Try to help relieve some of the stress on everybody else. And if I could do that, and bring smiles to people's faces, then I know I'm still in the game. I'm still in that game of living. And, yes, it's gonna take a while to redefine things and figure out where that's going to go. Because it's all a question mark. But each day

is a gift. So be thankful for the gift, and be thankful you're still alive. So have that mindset.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:37

I like your goal. Where's the goal? 50 feet, where's 50 feet, it's over there. I love that visualizing the goal, knowing where the goal is, and then just going for it. And unless you know where it is now, and you know what you're working towards that was, I think a great question to ask.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:59

Time to get to the goal doesn't matter how many times you fall over doesn't matter how slow or how quick, doesn't matter as long as you know where it is, so that you can keep moving towards it. I think that's, that's brilliant, and what you said about focusing on just the physical part of it, and not paying attention to the emotional part of it, or the psychological part of it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:22

But that's really the two most neglected things in stroke recovery, emotional and psychological. Everybody does what they can see. Okay, Jeffrey can walk let's get him back to walking again. And I think that's really important because that does shift the psychology of the recovery to the positive that definitely does do that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:47

It doesn't necessarily impact in the same way, the emotional part of the recovery just like it does the physical and the psychological part of the recovery. So that emotional seems to be The most neglected thing, I asked my followers on Instagram, you know who here has paid attention to the recovery in these areas, you know, emotional, physical and mental.

Bill Gasiamis 1:15:14

And most of them said physical and mental, mental was a distant second, and emotional was like far away, like third. So it's a recipe, this recovery thing is a recipe, and you got to take absolutely radiant, you know, and you have to access it and add as much of it as is necessary. And you can't leave one part of the recipe out because you couldn't get a shit cake at the end of it.

Jeffrey 1:15:49

That's correct that's spot on.

Bill Gasiamis 1:15:52

We really need to add all the bits and pieces to the exact amount that's necessary. And you might not know the amount at the beginning of how much emotional recovery you need to make or how much psychological recovery you need to make, because you've never done it before you've never made the cake before.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:09

So you're trial and error, you're doing trial and error. And you got to get curious about if I've still got a shit cake at the end. How do I make this thing tastes sweet again? How do I make it actually rise and look like a proper cake and look like something that's appetizing.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:26

And this is the thing, this is what I think we don't spend enough time doing in life generally. And then we don't have enough of those skills from life. And now we're dealing with stroke as well. So we've got all this extra crap that we have to deal with.

Bill Gasiamis 1:16:43

And what needs to happen is we need to now we need to draw a line in the sand and go, I've got it evolve as a human being I can't be as dumb as I was before the stroke. I've got to be smarter than that now, because I've got more challenges to deal with.

Learning How To Live Life After A Spinal Cord Stroke



Jeffrey 1:16:58

Yeah, I found in the beginning, where I thought this was 80% physical and 20% psychological. And as time went on, I kept finding over and over again, it was the exact opposite of that. I'm beating myself to death physically to get things back and little by little things are coming.

Jeffrey 1:17:23

But I'm forgetting that other component of living. And what that means what that means socially with other people to get back into that game again and be social. And how do you do that with your restrictions? And feel like, yes, you're part of this thing, and you don't feel uncomfortable.

Jeffrey 1:17:48

Well, even if you feel uncomfortable, go do it. Keep doing it, and grow that muscle memory. So you get away from it being uncomfortable again, I still remember my neuromuscular massage therapist, Jackie telling me one day, after I learned how to drive again, she said, you need to go take a drive up into the mountains, and go take a drive up there and go to this one place with an overlook, and just look across the mountain range.

Jeffrey 1:18:22

Don't think about anything, just look. And I did that. And suddenly I started realizing more and more. I needed more of that kind of mindfulness, I needed to be aware of what was going on around me that component of living. So it's not turning into everything you just described there, which is absolutely spot on.

Jeffrey 1:18:44

How do we get away from that thing, and we have to learn those things. It's again, not something that's in an instruction book, we've got to figure that thing out on our own. And this would be where I'm so glad that you're doing what you're doing where people that are in the midst of our restrictions and disabilities and limitations.

Jeffrey 1:19:09

They can come and listen to your show. And they can hear these exact things that they're going through and realize, hey, I'm not the only one dealing with this. And here's some great ideas to help me succeed and move myself along into that place where I suddenly realize, oh, I remember now how to smile again and go enjoy my life and laugh. So it's important that we figure it out. And in the beginning. It's all chaos and confusion.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:44

Yeah. to say the least. So the book is called Finding Forward: You Have The Will Within it's available now Is it is it just out or is being released?

Jeffrey 1:19:59

It's going to be release next week, Tuesday, November 16.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:03

Okay, fantastic for people who want to reach out and connect with you where's the best way, was the best place to do that.

Jeffrey 1:20:11

You can reach out to me at my website, jeffreymorse.com, you can equally reach out to me on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, Facebook, Jeffrey A Morse, or just type in finding_forward for any of the social media and you can reach me there as well. And I'm happy to talk to everybody and anybody that wishes to reach out. Anytime.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:45

It's been a pleasure getting to know you for about an hour. I really thank you for your time. Thanks for reaching out to me as well and asked to be on the show telling me about your book. It's really important to me to connect with people from all over the world.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:58

Anybody that's listening that would love to be on the podcast, just reach out. That's all that Jeffrey did, they just reached out. And here we are. So I love to hear from people from all around the world, I've got this strange thing where I need to talk about my stroke, the strokes, other people's strokes, all the time, I can't do it with my family and with my wife.

Bill Gasiamis 1:21:23

I'm going to drive them insane. But I can do it with all these strangers all over the planet. So feel free to reach out, I will have all the links to be able to get Jeffrey's book. In the show notes, I will have all the links to Jeffrey's social media in the show notes so that you can easily find that feel free to reach out to me or to Jeffrey to get a copy of that book. And at the bottom of the book, at the end of the book in the last few pages is amazing images of that trip on the paraglider in Nepal. And they're pretty inspiring.

Jeffrey 1:22:10

It was a trip of a lifetime. I enjoyed every minute of it. And I'm so thankful every day for everybody in my life. It's such a pleasure to meet you. And to talk about these things. It's so important that we talk about it. That's what helps us to heal. It's very, very important. And I cannot thank you enough Bill for having me on your show. This was absolutely spectacular.

Jeffrey 1:22:38

It was a real honor and a privilege to sit and talk with you about all this. And I hope people will reach out and know that they're not the only ones going through this. And there is a way forward. There is a way into this new life of yours. So live it be grateful for every day that's given to you now, you survived and you're okay, that's the most important thing of all. So, thank you immensely.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:09

Thanks for being my guest. Thanks so much for joining me on today's recovery off the stroke podcast. Do you ever wish there was just one place to go for resources, advice and support in your stroke recovery? Whether you've been navigating your journey for weeks, months or years, I know firsthand how difficult it can be to get the answers you need.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:30

And this road is both physically and mentally challenging from reclaiming your

independence to getting back to work to rebuilding your confidence and more. Your symptoms don't follow a rulebook and as soon as you leave the hospital you no longer have medical professionals on tap.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:46

And I for me it felt as if I was teaching myself new language from scratch with no native speaker inside. If this sounds like you, I'm here to tell you that you're not alone and there is a better way to navigate your recovery and rebuild a fulfilling life that you love. I've created an inclusive, supportive and accessible membership community called recovery after stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:08

This is an all in one resource program. And it is designed to help you take back your health into your own hands. This is your guidebook through every step in your journey from reducing fatigue, to strengthening your brain health to overcoming anxiety and more. To find out more and to join the community. Just head to recoveryafterstroke.com See you on the next episode.

Intro 1:24:29

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

Intro 1:24:46

All content on this website at any linked blog, podcast or video material controlled this website or content is created and produced for informational purposes only and is largely based on the personal experience of Bill Gasiamis the content It is intended to complement your medical treatment and support healing.

Intro 1:25:03

It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice and should not be relied on as health advice. The information is general and may not be suitable for your personal injuries, circumstances or health objectives did not use our content as a standalone resource to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease for therapeutic purposes or is a substitute for the advice of a health professional.

Intro 1:25:24

Never delay seeking advice or disregard the advice of a medical professional your doctor or your rehabilitation program based on our content if you have any questions or concerns about your health or medical condition, please seek guidance from a doctor or other medical professional if you are experiencing a health emergency or think you might be call triple zero in Australia or your local emergency number immediately for emergency assistance or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Intro 1:25:48

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