Spontaneous Vertebral Artery Dissection – Steve Molter

Steve Molter was 33 when he experienced a stroke as a result of a spontaneous vertebral artery dissection. Since then he has overcome much and considers the stroke one of the best things that has ever happened.

Instagram

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Steve 0:00
We have to say, Hey, it's okay to fail. It's okay to make mistakes. It's okay if I don't have all the answers. And it's okay to rely on people who feel like they might be unreliable. But maybe they're not because we have to give them a chance.

Steve 0:12
And I can sense for you that there was a lot of pressure on you at the time. And it sounds like there's a lot of growth happening for everyone as well. But, you know, I didn't have that experience.

Steve 0:25
But I did have the pressure on myself to be well, and I had no control of that, really, you know, I did of course, I do eat well, and not overexert myself on these types of things. But at the end of the day, I still hold myself to a very high standard, and I still have to cut yourself some slack. You know, a lot of the time

and I don’t do that. And that’s not fair.

Intro 0:54
This is the recovery after stroke podcast, with Bill Gasiamis, helping you navigate recovery after stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07
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 a stroke and build a stronger future.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18
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 be stuck in hospital. I knew if I wanted to get back to the life I loved the for my recovery was up to me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:31
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 1:48
If you enjoy this episode and want more resources, accessible training and hands on support, check out my recovery after stroke membership community created especially for stroke survivors and caregivers.

Bill Gasiamis 1:59
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.

Introduction – Steve Molter



Bill Gasiamis 2:13
But for now, let’s dive right into today’s show. This is episode 171. And my guest today is Steve Molter, who experienced a spontaneous vertebral artery dissection, aged 33 which caused a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 2:30
This episode was recorded the day after Thanksgiving. And it begins with giving thanks for some of the things important to us. Steve Molter, welcome to the podcast.

Steve 2:41
Thank you, Bill. It's awesome to be here. I'm grateful for the time, It's been a few months since I think we started corresponding. And finally, I felt like oh my gosh, I have time. And here we go. So it's the day after Thanksgiving here. But it's a very chill day. So I'm glad we got to chat.

Bill Gasiamis 2:59
Happy Thanksgiving for you. And all the American, Canadian people who have Thanksgiving. Tell me about that. Actually, what's Thanksgiving about because people in Australia don't have that. Because it had something to do with a specific event in America. And as a result, we don't know what that is.

Thanksgiving

Steve 3:24
Yeah. I mean, you know, if I can go back to my grade school days, remembering what I was told, it was about the Native Americans, spending time with the settlers, the early settlers and sharing a meal and spending time together in community.

Steve 3:44
So I treat Thanksgiving a little differently than I think the typical family would maybe I'm not a big fan of holidays, I don't know why I just like don't really get the spirit, you know what I mean?

Steve 3:56
But for Thanksgiving, when I was single I would just write music by myself, I would just like, shut myself away, write music all day. And just do that. That was like my way to celebrate.

Steve 4:07
And now I'm married and we kind of just chill. We actually just got back from a trip yesterday. So on Thanksgiving, we flew back and just hung out played with

our cats just relaxed, had some food, a couple drinks, you know, chill out.

Steve 4:19
So for me, it's like providing that gratitude space to my wife especially, but to the people that I care about, you know, just want to show thanks. So I guess it does come full circle. You know.

Bill Gasiamis 4:31
I love that idea of just doing nothing and just chilling out for once. You know, one time a year. I mean, it's such a great thing. And I think I share your sentiments about the holidays is because people make such a fuss about one day and it takes so long to get there. And I go over and over and over and it's like, by the end of it. It's I think everyone is missing actually what the day is about.

Steve 4:59
It becomes so stressful, right?

Bill Gasiamis 5:00
Yeah.

Steve 5:01
You know planning and coordinating and cooking and the whole thing. And it's like so much work.

Bill Gasiamis 5:07
And I'm happy to have people over. But for me, in my mind, it's like, on this day, come over for lunch, and stay as long as you want. And that's it. And if you can make it, come. And if you can't don't, if you can bring something, bring it, if you can't don't.

Bill Gasiamis 5:27
That's what I'd like to do. But that, of course, that doesn't go down well, in my world, we have to fuss about it and make a whole song and dance about it, and then becomes about all the other things.

Bill Gasiamis 5:41
And it's not about having other people over, that you want to have over or you want to see. And then it's like, what time can we come over, because we've got to go over there. And then we're gonna go there. And it's like, oh, my gosh, guys, I'm

just gonna be here. And I'm telling you, if you can just come over. That's it.

Steve 6:01
That's the way to go. So I live in Los Angeles, California, right now, I grew up outside of Boston, Massachusetts. So it's like the other side of the country. And when I was living in LA for a very long time, and I go back to visit, and it was so challenging to see everyone because of scheduling.

Steve 6:18
And so I would just be like, Alright, I'm going to be at this place, from this period of time to this period of time, come hang out, if you can't, I would love to see you. And if you can't, that's okay. We'll see you next time I will talk or whatever. And I feel you deeply with that.

Bill Gasiamis 6:32
A friend of mine is moving from Melbourne, Australia, to Queensland, Australia. And she's somebody that we just interact with on Facebook, because we grew up together, we went to school together, but we haven't really hung out for 25 years or so.

Bill Gasiamis 6:46
And there's a group of people on these Facebook groups, you know, similar from a similar place in our world, in our mutual world. And she basically said, Look, we're going to be moving to Queensland, and I'd love to catch up with everybody.

Bill Gasiamis 7:01
But she made the one fatal mistake. She didn't say, on this day, I'm going to be in this bar for this many hours. If you're in Melbourne, and you can come I'd love to see you. So what should this she put it out there to about 10 people? What are you guy's availability?

Bill Gasiamis 7:17
How about this bar? And how about that bar? And I just switched off all the notifications. I'm going to go back in, I'm going to check the date. If it works I'm going to go if I can't, I'm just going to send her a message and say all the best and leave it at that. See you on Facebook.

Steve 7:36
Exactly. It's the way to go. Absolutely.

Bill Gasiamis 7:39
Before we get stuck right into the episode, I want to actually talk about Thanksgiving, it falls on the anniversary of the day that I had brain surgery.

Steve 7:50
Oh, wow.

Bill Gasiamis 7:51
So I didn't realize that until just this year. How about that. That's an awesome way for me to remember, the anniversary of my brain surgery was also the day of the Patron Saint Catherine.

Bill Gasiamis 8:05
So in Greece, it's a big deal this St. Catherine's Day or any patron saint day. So you know, everybody who is a Catherine celebrates that name day, I suppose. And I'm thankful for a really good outcome after surgery. I'm thankful for the stroke. I'm thankful for all the roadblocks.

Bill Gasiamis 8:29
I'm thankful for the podcast and I'm thankful for the people I've met through that thankful for the people that have asked for help. Who have come forward to say, you know, can we get coaching I'm thankful for that entire nine-year journey since February 2012, which is when my journey started.

Bill Gasiamis 8:49
And I'm thankful for the shitty shit that goes with it. Because it just reminds me that I'm alive, you know, and I'm ready to solve more problems, all I got to do is continue to solve problems. And some of those solutions aren't the best, but they're solutions you know, and I get, I get to move forward and I get to kind of put them behind me.

Bill Gasiamis 9:15
So that's what I'm thankful for. And then today, finally, I'm thankful for you being here right now in California and I'm here in Australia in Melbourne and we're sharing this amazing technology that brings us together from so far away I mean that's next level.

Steve 9:34
it's It's unreal. I really appreciate you calling out the gratitude for the strokes

themselves, you know, we'll get into the whole thing but when I meet people and I tell them I'm a stroke survivor and I go, Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry.

Steve 9:47
I'm like no it was like, probably one of the best things that's ever happened to me outside of like meeting my wife, you know, one of the best things that's ever happened because it showed me who I was, you know, and I was able to learn what I was made of when I was in the point when I was like, oh, like, This doesn't look good.

Steve 10:06
But I didn't know. And you know, there's like a sense of I don't want to use the word humor. But there was definitely a sense, I brought a sense of humor into the hospital when I was in there, you know what I mean? And I was grateful that the nurses and the doctors were able to share that space with me that they weren't so serious, but it felt serious, right.

Steve 10:31
But we were able to kind of go into a space of joy, even though it was scary times. So I'm grateful that you bring that up, you know, we shared our initial strokes in the same year. So mine was September 11, 2012. That's when I had my first stroke. Yeah, exactly.

Steve 10:51
And it's funny because that day will always be shared, right. And that's fine. But I celebrate on mine, I have like a party, you know, generally just have some friends over and we just celebrate my survival. And it's great. We just do nothing special. But it's a special day.

Steve 11:15
But I've I share that with such a, like you said infamous day, it's kind of tough to say go out and celebrate loudly. So I just kind of do it on the subtle. But I'm grateful that I have the opportunity to celebrate do that I have the opportunity to do something positive on that day, which is so brutal, you know, for so many.

Bill Gasiamis 11:35
Yeah, it's your day too right? So you're entitled to celebrate it however you want. And you're not being insensitive. Actually, what, what I love about a lot of non-greek people is that they celebrate life on the day of somebody's funeral, or death

or whatever they actually celebrate the life of the person.

Bill Gasiamis 11:57
And in Greek culture where my parents come from, there isn't that you actually mourn. And you don't really celebrate the life you don't speak about where their person came from, what they achieved what they did, you just get together and you're being miserable about it.

Bill Gasiamis 12:12
And it's kind of there's a use for that as well. But I can see the other side of celebrating life, right. And just because this historical event happened, doesn't mean that you can't celebrate your recovery. I mean, if I was involved in something like September 11, and I survived that, I would be celebrating the heck out of that going, Man, I made it out of there, you know?

Steve 12:39
Absolutely. Yeah, that's the morning. There's a there's a grief period, right? There's absolutely a period that you have to explore your grief, allow your grief to come in. But you can't live there, you can't stay there, you have to move on, you have to grow, you have to change, you have to flourish, right? That's what life is.

Steve 13:02
It's for people to flourish for people to shine. And you know, I was alone at the period when mine kind of took place. And so like, I didn't have a wife, I didn't have a girlfriend, I had just one family member in LA.

Steve 13:19
But I still felt protected. And I still felt safe. Even though I was like, Well, I'm not sure if this is gonna, you know, I don't know what's gonna happen. But I still felt safe. And that's the thing I celebrate, right, that response, that connection that I have with people that I've made since then and had made prior right. So yeah, it's an interesting process of grieving. And then celebrating when you are no longer grieving, right?

Stroke At 33

Bill Gasiamis 13:47
How old were you?

Steve 13:50
My gosh, now I'm gonna tape myself 33. I was 33 at the time. So I was like young ish. And what I learned at the time was that it's actually not that young, like, statistically, it's not terribly unlikely for someone in their 30s to have a stroke. It's not the majority.

Steve 14:12
But I was 33. And I had just gotten back from a wedding. One of my best friends got married, and I was his best man. And I was on the boat. It was in Catalina, which is an island off the coast of California. And we were on a boat the two nights before the wedding.

Steve 14:29
And we were just, chill, just chill. Like having a couple of drinks. Having a couple laughs listening to music hanging out. And all of a sudden I just got like a really bad headache. I felt like nauseous. I was like I'm just gonna stop drinking. I'm gonna chill out sit on the side of the you know, just sit down.

Steve 14:48
And I got back to the hotel not the hotel we were saying in a friend's house, got back and I just took ibuprofen to like, maybe it was a headache or migraine, I don't know. Took ibuprofen and it doubled the pain a little bit.

Steve 15:00
But it was this deep, sort of like ache in my neck in the back of my neck just below the base of my skull on the right side. And that just began the whole process of like, you know, that was the beginning.

Steve 15:15
And then five days later, there's so much detail and I'm not going to go into every detail. But you know, the wedding went off of that hits, I gave my speech, it was awesome. We danced, we laughed, we had fun, everybody had a great time. And then we got back to California to LA.

Steve 15:30
And it was like, five days later, it was September 11. And I went to work, and I just started getting like blurry splotches in my vision, just like, I was like, what was that? So I went to my eye doctor, he's like, I don't see anything.

Steve 15:44
You know, I can't tell. He's like, I just don't see anything. And then I went to lunch, and I was working on a speech, I was actually another best man. Like the following month, I was gonna be another best man for another one of my best friends.

Steve 15:58
And I was working on the speech at lunch. And I worked in Santa Monica at the time, and just like overlooking the ocean of beautiful, and I was walking back to my office. And I remember seeing a tree like a palm tree.

Steve 16:12
And the palm tree was really tall, and they were cutting it down. And so the way you cut a palm tree down, is you take off the head first. So there's like so they go up and they like be headed. And so I thought that was funny. And I was like, Oh, that's funny. They're like be heading the tree. And so I took a picture.

Steve 16:28
And the second I took that picture, my vision went to like a pinhole, and I got nauseous and headache and you know, the pain hit. And I didn't lose consciousness, but I was able to find myself to a bench and ultimately get help and get to the hospital.

Steve 16:46
It was scary. You know, I mean, you know, it's scary to be like, I thought it was a migraine. You know, I had no idea. And I'm like, trained, I was trained at the time to recognize stroke. But good luck on doing it on yourself, you know, because I was just like, there's no way it can be anything that bad. You just don't believe it. I didn't believe it at the time. You know?

Bill Gasiamis 17:07
What kind of training did you have?

Steve 17:10
So it was like, you know, I honestly don't remember what it's called. But it's like emergency training. So recognizing stroke, how to deal with like people who have heart attacks, strokes, CPR, that type of training, first aid. That's the word I should know by now.

Steve 17:28
So basically just kind of standard first aid training that a few people at the office got trained on every year, and I was one of those folks at the time. So, but I was completely subjective. You know, I was like, I don't know it must be a migraine, because this is what migraines feel like as what people told me.

Bill Gasiamis 17:47
You know, so that five days prior to that, did you have other signs and symptoms as well? Or was that initial thing that you experienced and then you decided to put the drink down? Was that it? Did it go away? Or did it kind of resonate?

Steve 18:04
It kind of stayed? And so it's a good question, because at first it was just like a dull ache. And so the ibuprofen kinda helped, but not really, I recognize now that it wasn't helping at all. But you know, the clot basically, I'll tell you exactly what happened in a moment, but, the symptoms that I were feeling was just like ache pain, and like I wanted to crack my neck, I wanted to like stretch it, you know, I just, felt like tight, and I just wanted to stretch it.

Steve Molter Had A Spontaneous Vertebral Artery Dissection

Steve 18:32
And when I got home and it was the morning of the night before the 11th. So the night of September 10. I went to sleep and I again took ibuprofen I tried to like sleep on my head so that it was stretched because I thought it was like a muscle thing. It was not.

Steve 18:39
And then I woke up the next day and you know, ultimately got to the hospital. When I got to the hospital, they didn't know what it was they gave me meds for migraine because I was like, I think it's migraine. They didn't know they couldn't see anything wrong.

Steve 19:02
I looked fine. I didn't have the, you know, loss of muscle. You know, it was just I looked normal. I can do all the things I could see when they did the visual test. I could see through my pinhole perfectly. So like my, you know, it was just like,

they didn't know what was going on. And it took until the next day when I had another stroke.

Steve 19:23
So it was the same injury but another, you know, stroke took place. And then they were able to pinpoint that was brutal by the way because they couldn't give me meds either because they were like you have to tell us how it feels and I was like, okay, it hurts really bad.

Steve 19:39
But, ultimately, the neurologist who helped me found the blood had already started to like reroute itself around the injury. So my brain was already like, oh, like fix fix. And it was this like tiny tear that happened called spontaneous vertebral artery dissection.

Steve 20:01
And so the dissection is when there's the tear in the artery, no idea how it happened and the artery, like tore and clotted, and then that clot prevented the blood going to my brain. And then, you know, two parts of my brain were like, see ya.

Steve 20:17
And it was challenging. So the the symptoms were strange, from my experience, from my understanding of what symptoms were for stroke. And that was challenging for me.

Bill Gasiamis 20:29
Yeah, it's challenging because oh, man, like everything about it is challenge, because you've never experienced it, you know, you're 33, you've probably been very healthy until then. And you don't have a reference point, sort of where to begin from, how do I tackle this? How do I manage it? And then you're hoping that somebody else is going to tell you these things and solve those problems for you.

Bill Gasiamis 20:54
And then they just say to you, look, there's this thing, we found that we fixed it, and go home, and you should be right. And there's still not that after sale service, you know, there's no after sale service, you know, we fixed that. And now what do I do with this thing?

Steve 21:17
You know, and I understand from what I know of your story, that was extremely challenging, and I'm curious to learn more about that from you. Because for me, it was like, I had my first stroke on the 11th.

Steve 21:28
The second one I had on a 12. And it was literally like that kind of showed them okay, like, now we kind of know, we thought we're gonna have to do brain surgery, but we're not going to. That was a big that was nice to have that because that was scary. But like, after I had that second stroke, I was very much like, am I gonna die?

Intro 21:48
If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind, like, how long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid? In case I make matters worse, and doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 22:13
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 recovery after stroke.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 22:32
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.

Steve 22:51
Like I don't know, I really don't know. And the doctor couldn't guarantee that I wouldn't. Because he was still figuring it out. And so there's that like, brief moment. And thankfully, my moment was brief, when I was faced with this mortality of like, okay, this is it.

Steve 23:07

And I legitimately thought this is it. It's, I might die tonight. And that's a scary thought. And I went through the whole process of like, you know, my brother is married, he had two kids, his his daughter, my niece who had just been born like two months prior, and like, I would never have met her, my nephew would probably never remember me.

Steve 23:32
You know, except for pictures and stories. And, you know, it's a challenging phase to be alone in that and I was just in the hospital bed by myself thinking this is it. So I like wrote notes to my family. And it was like, you know, it was a it was it was tough. But it was brief.

Steve 23:50
And when the doctor came in and told me, here's the deal, here's what we're doing, we're gonna fix it, and we're not gonna have to do surgery. I think everything's gonna be okay. Man, what a relief. You know, but I'm curious. Like, so for me. After that I got sent home.

Steve 24:03
And it was scary. And honestly, the scariest part of this whole process was the first night I was alone and not in the ICU. Because I was like, trying to sleep but I'm like, if anything goes wrong, I'm dead. 100% But in the ICU, they're like on you, you know?

Bill's Recovery Story

Steve 24:19
And so I'm curious for you like what happened when you got out? You know, like you had the setback, which was pretty severe. I would love to hear about what your thought process was during that. You know okay, good luck, you know, send you off.

Bill Gasiamis 24:36
I'm gonna use the word oblivious because I wasn't oblivious. I acted oblivious, and it's sort of kind of helped. So the first time wasn't actually the first time I think now right so I reckon back in September of 2010. I had a massive migraine, three days out of action. Couldn't do anything for three days.

Bill Gasiamis 25:01

And you know how you guys have the NFL Super Bowl, what we have here the AFL Grand Final, it was the week of the grand final. And I went to the grand final and my team was in the grand final. So I spent the entire time you know yelling and screaming and urging them on and hoping that all the rest of the team broke their legs so that we would win right? of the other team right?

Steve 25:27
Classic sports, man.

Bill Gasiamis 25:31
But that was a Saturday and then by the Wednesday of the following week are still really bad. And we drew that game actually ended in a no result. And back then what they used to do was they would replay it the following week.

Bill Gasiamis 25:47
Now 100,000 People get to go there. And I had tickets to that event because of my brother, he got me tickets to that event. And then he also said to me, I've got a ticket for next week. And I'm like, oh my god, like, I can't believe it.

Bill Gasiamis 26:06
But I'm not gonna go Harry, I'm not gonna go. He said why not? I said because of this headache man, and I'm afraid that it's gonna get worse, I'm gonna make it worse. I don't know why it happened. But like, it's really bothering me.

Bill Gasiamis 26:18
And what I had done is I went to a hospital on that Wednesday, and they did a scan, they did a lumbar puncture. And they did a CT. And because there hadn't been a bleed yet, what the AVM I reckon had done is it had just kind of swollen or enlarged or something.

Bill Gasiamis 26:40
And it started to interfere with my brain. And because it hadn't bled yet, they missed it on the scan, they did a lumbar puncture, there was no blood in my cerebral spinal fluid. And they said, just you know, go home, you'll be right. And sure enough, a week later, I was fine. And then I was fine for the entire time until February 2012.

Bill Gasiamis 27:03
I woke up with a numb sensation on my toe that spread over seven days, I ignored

it, you know, like you I made up a couple of different reasons as to why it was happening. I went to hospital, they said we found a bleed on your brain.

Bill Gasiamis 27:16
And I'm like, okay, and then they said, we found a shadow in your brain. And we don't know what it is. It might be caused by a bleed, it might be a tumor, the tumor might be benign, it might be cancerous. And I'm like, did you need to give me all the options. Could you just like, leave it at we found something that and we're gonna work it out, you know?

Bill Gasiamis 27:48
And that was the scariest moment for me. Because then he left. He gave me that and he just left it goes it was 11pm on a Friday night. He says is there any question? Do you have any questions? I'm like, no, I don't have any questions. But whatever, you know. So I had to sleep through the rest of the night, woke up in the morning, and had to tell my family and that was difficult because I know that they're not mild mannered, they're not calm and collected.

Bill Gasiamis 28:25
And my biggest issue in this whole process was managing the emotions of the rest of my family. My God. And that was so annoying, but it was the biggest job if I could keep them calm, then that would help me remain calm and take control of my emotional state right?

Bill Gasiamis 28:44
So at that time, what I did was I just went through life thinking no matter what happens, we're going to solve these problems. We're going to overcome it. I was kind of always a problem solver. I was always this kind of guy who glass half full always never had any of those types of issues where I was leaning towards the negative or the doom and gloom never ever, I was just always super positive.

Bill Gasiamis 29:15
And I would always do this. Okay, what's good about this situation, or what's something that's funny about this situation and I would find things to distract me from the potential downfall of, you know, the spiral into the abyss, you know, so I wasn't scared.

Bill Gasiamis 29:36
And I realized I was mortal. But that didn't scare me. What bothered me was that

I knew I had done some wrong things. In the past I had done some wrongs and my ego finally let go and I was able to notice through my heart that what I need to do is rectify those situations.

Bill Gasiamis 29:59
So I did describe it as my head completely switched off. It allowed my heart to come online. And then I was able to rectify a lot of those issues that I had created with the loved ones, especially my wife and my kids. And my parents and my brother and everybody who I felt that I played a part in some of our difficult interactions, which of course I did, but for the first time, I was able to admit it and go, okay, I've got to make this good.

Bill Gasiamis 30:29
So I just started being the person who I actually wanted to be. I started apologizing, telling them that I loved them. And I started doing all these things that I should have done years and years before that, that I couldn't do because they were wrong. And they had to apologize first. It's like the kids that just freakin 12 and 15, or something, and 16.

Bill Gasiamis 30:58
And it's like, they don't know how to interact with their father like that yet, because I haven't led the way. In that example, I've been the opposite. So they're doing what I'm doing. And I've got to make it right. So what I did is I did a lot of retracing my steps apologizing for these things. And then when I got to the point of the second bleed, then it was just a lot of what am I experiencing? And how can I overcome it? What do I need to do right now?

Bill Gasiamis 31:03
Like, what's the most important thing to do right now what's the next first step? And that was just okay. So if that meant do nothing all day, that meant do nothing. If that meant do a little bit extra tomorrow them into a little bit extra, I still try to run my property maintenance business, my dad would pick me up and take me for quotes.

Bill Gasiamis 31:58
I didn't win any work. And I imagine it was because I was actually turning up. And I must have sounded like I was drugged. Yeah, but in my mind, it was normal. But of course, I wasn't interacting normally with anybody. Everybody knew that I

wasn’t normal. But I thought I was. So I just went about business.

Bill Gasiamis 32:22
Now I couldn’t actually physically work, I couldn’t drive, I couldn’t do any of those things. But the whole time, I didn’t think about I wasn’t afraid of dying or death or any of that stuff. I just wanted to make amends and put things right. And then when I did that, I was fine. So I set up my in 2013, we traveled to the states. And for the first time I did my will and testament and all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 32:55
So that if we didn’t make it back for whatever reason, then everything was gonna be okay, the kids were all sorted, all that was organized. And that was a real big relief to me that I had also done that and tick that off. So that people aren’t wondering what my intentions were what I was thinking, and I’m not leaving it up to others to make difficult decisions in a difficult time.

Bill Gasiamis 33:21
So I wanted to lead, I wanted to start to lead by example. And the previous example was work like an idiot, as many hours a day as you can do everything yourself, never delegate anything, and then struggle and suffer and complain that you never have any time for yourself and blame everybody else for it.

Bill Gasiamis 33:43
So it was time to not do that anymore. But I only got caught into that zone. I was only in that zone for it’s still a long time. By the time I was 37 I was in that zone for about 10 years. And that was my trying to discover like what happens when you don’t work for somebody else who gives you everything on a platter and tells you just turn up this is your task for the day do that task.

Bill Gasiamis 34:14
All I had to learn how to be a business person but a successful one I didn’t realize meant that you don’t actually have to do everything and work 18 hours a day. You have to find ways to solve problems. And when I was in hospital the second time after the second bleed I had done it by the time I got there which was six weeks after the first bleed I had delegated all my quoting all my work everything to a whole bunch of other people they were doing it for me I was just turning up and meeting with the client.

Bill Gasiamis 34:52

I had notified the clients that I was unwell. So they were happy to see me and just chat about things and the business was turning over more money than ever. We had more work than ever. And I was doing way less than I had ever, ever done. And it's like, what the hell like everything got flipped over.

Bill Gasiamis 35:19
And I was sicker than I'd ever been. I had less energy, I had fatigue, I had all these things. And everything else was just skyrocketing. I was like, how did I end up in this situation? And why did I have to wait till a couple of bleeds in the brain to get to this point.

Facing Mortality – Steve Molter

Steve 35:36
There's so many things that you shared there that resonate deeply with me. The first thing is that you weren't afraid. And that was something that I had experienced as well. I was like, I might die tonight. I'm not afraid to die.

Steve 35:54
But I'm sad that I will not have these experiences. Right, but my niece and nephew, for example, seeing them again, for the first time for my niece. But as you told that there's sort of a roller coaster, right? Because it's like progress isn't linear, right, you don't just get better, you don't have a problem and then get better.

Steve 36:17
It's like, up and down and over here and back. And that's the hardest thing. The thing that I feel like helped me the most was letting go of all of it. And saying, you know, I can't do these things. I couldn't like you, I couldn't do any physical labor, I couldn't walk down the street without being fatigued winded, you know.

Steve 36:42
And so I couldn't go grocery shopping, I couldn't drive for 90 days or something like that. Months, a couple of months. I couldn't go grocery shopping, I had to rely on people, I had to ask for help a lot. And like you, I was extremely self sufficient. I had been single for a long time, I did it all myself, I was happy to do it.

Steve 37:02

And then when this happened, I couldn't. And asking for help is very vulnerable, you know. And I had to dig more deeply into the vulnerability, something I was cultivating prior to the strokes. But it was still something that was challenging. I love the way you talk about delegation, because I'm a manager in my life, I'm a design manager.

Steve 37:26
And the best thing I can do is to delegate to the people who know best and get out of their way. Right. And in situations when we are unwell. And like I was and like you were, we can't do it, we are the worst person for the job in a lot of sense. So we have to give it to the people who are the best.

Steve 37:46
I felt like that in the hospital, I was like, I'm not a neurologist. So I'm just going to keep my mouth shut and try to have a good attitude as best I can. Because I don't know what I'm talking about. The nurses, I don't know, anything that they're doing, I'm just gonna do the same thing. The challenge that I hear you had was, or the way you described it, it sounds like you had to kind of be the one to maintain the stress level.

Steve 38:08
Right, you had to keep your family distressed. I was lucky enough that the folks directly in my circle, my cousin, my best friend and his wife, or his fiancee, they were the ones about to get married. They really kept like a, they kept me insulated from that stress. They never told me what they went through until I was long passed into recovery.

Steve 38:39
And it you know, it's challenging, because when you're the one, the only thing you have control of is your response. And so you have to say, You know what, I need to be cool. And I told my parents like you cannot come out here because they live in Massachusetts at the time, you know, 3000 miles away.

Steve 38:59
So they were like we're gonna come out I was like, Absolutely not, because that's stressful, just like, you know. And so I was lucky to that I could get the space. It was challenging because I had the space too at the same time on the flip side of the coin.

Steve 39:15
But I was able to navigate, and I was able to maintain and I was able to be calm, and to face and cope with the challenges that I had to, you know, without adding any extra on. So it was just the recovery. That was the thing that mattered to me. I was very lucky for that. very appreciative for that.

Bill Gasiamis 39:37
So, I love that. Just the recovery.

Steve 39:41
It's just the recovery. I have to ask. I've spent some time in Melbourne and two of my friends one isn't Essendon supporter and one's a Bulldog supporter. And so I have like merch from both of them somewhere like koozies and scarves and things somewhere around here but I'm curious who you support not that I know a lot.

Bill Gasiamis 40:00
I support Collingwood. It's one of the most famous clubs in the world. It's one of the most supported clubs in Australia. And we have a the luck when we get to the grand final, we have the same luck that the Buffalo Bills have in the NFL right. And I'm a Buffalo Bills fan, just simply because they have the name Bill right?

Bill Gasiamis 40:26
So I picked up the bills in the 90s. And, and I felt like I had done the worst thing for them, because as soon as I discovered them, they just kept attending and losing, attending and losing.

Bill Gasiamis 40:42
My team has made the most grand finals, and it has lost the most grand finals. Right, and we have not won the most. We're very close to having won the most. But we have lost the most grand finals. I was like I don't want to, you know, I don't wanna be associated with teams like that. But they're my teams you know what can I do?

Steve 41:07
Yeah, totally. Oh, that's awesome. I bring it up just because Melbourne has a space in my heart, for sure. I spent like a month there back in 2016. And had the best time I have good friends who live there. And are raising families there. And it's a beautiful place, I love it, I can't wait to get back.

Bill Gasiamis 41:29
It’s a beautiful place, it’s a chill place, there’s a lot of resources, it’s a very great place to have a stroke, because facilities are amazing, the best hospitals in the world.

Steve 41:39
I’d love to have a stroke there. I know the feeling.

Bill Gasiamis 41:44
But what’s interesting about you know, your journey, and the whole football thing is that that whole mentality is, you know, is all about. And football teams are starting to now be a little bit smarter in the way they approach things, you know, they analyze a little that they understand, you know, how it’s important to control emotions, you know, we’re in the old days, all in brawls, and spontaneous.

Bill Gasiamis 42:14
Just crazy non football events would be happening on the football field. And you kind of started to see how all of society’s moving away from just emotionally responding to learning that it’s really important to get a grip and hold your emotions at bay when it’s important at the right time at the right place.

Competitive Mindset In Stroke Recovery

Bill Gasiamis 42:35
And what’s also interesting about my team is is that they may have the most losses in a grand final, but they also have the most wins. And that is because they have the most attendances in the grand final. So, what it becomes later becomes a numbers game. So, for us why that’s relevant to us in recovery is that the more attempts you make at recovery, the more chances are that you’re going to have setbacks, but then the more chances are, you’re going to have wins as well.

Bill Gasiamis 43:14
Right. So it’s what you said it’s about right now, if you don’t have the distractions of everyone’s emotional state, and you just have the mindset of a recovery and nothing else, you’re going to get a better version of recovery than you would have if you had to deal with all the rest of the junk that’s going on in the periphery that’s not important or relevant to recovery, right? It becomes a really selfish time.

Bill Gasiamis 43:42
And it's okay to be selfish then and make it about you. And those people turning up that used to come and used to make it about them. Oh man I sprained my foot the other day, like, I know what you're going through. It's like, no, you know, no shit. Like, you sprained your foot, you know, there's nothing inside your brain.

Bill Gasiamis 44:02
And there's something in my brain that's hurting, that doesn't work and I might die tomorrow and you're gonna sprain for and you reckon that now's the time to compare that to me, it's not, be quiet, leave go away. I listened to the Jordan Peterson podcast every once in a while, and he has this saying that it brings up from time to time and I'm pretty sure it's in his books.

Bill Gasiamis 44:27
He talks about if you're going to turn up to a funeral, be the best person at that funeral for people to come to who need solutions to what the hell to do at a funeral or how to behave or how to deal with the tragedy and all that kind of stuff. So it's about taking responsibility and discovering how you need to behave appropriately at the correct time for the circumstances that people are experiencing.

Bill Gasiamis 44:58
And it's like you yeah, like, I want to be that guy. I want to be the best guy at the funeral. But I want to be the best guy when it comes to me dealing with my own stroke recovery. And I think one of the challenges that I always have with religion, and it's not that belief in God or not, it's that religion outsources most of the time responsibility on some thing happening in your life to some being out there that we can't really see.

Bill Gasiamis 45:26
Like, if you want something good to happen, ask God, if it didn't happen, it wasn't God's will. Well, you know, maybe you didn't get off your ass and try for it enough. Or maybe you didn't go back when you got the setbacks, maybe, you know, that was issues. So I said, this underlying tone in my family and in the families that we hang out with, is this whole, you know, I'm gonna go and pray for you.

Bill Gasiamis 45:57

That’s great. Don’t pray for me. Pray for you. Pray for you to be the best person that you can be. So that when I need you, I can call on you. Because when I was in hospital, the first time my dad got the news, got ready to come see me didn’t take his medication, or took his medication on an empty stomach or did something wrong with his medication. Is this guy is six foot one or two and is like 100 and something kilos.

Bill Gasiamis 46:34
Which is? I’m not sure how many pounds couple 100 pounds. He’s a big guy, right? And he collapses at home. My mom is half his size. And now my mom has got my dad on the ground in the courtyard, and her son in hospital, and it’s like, what the hell’s going on? And now she’s got to get the ambulance there to pick him up. And come and visit me right? And she comes to visit me and I said to her where’s Dad? He’s downstairs. What do you mean? He’s downstairs?

Steve 47:11
He’s down the hall.

Bill Gasiamis 47:13
Tell him to comeup. No he’s downstairs in emergency he fell over, collapsed. I said, What do you mean? Well, he collapsed because he didn’t do some of his medications and dadada.

Bill Gasiamis 47:24
So my dad lost his shit emotionally. couldn’t think straight, couldn’t do anything. Didn’t do the right thing, collapsed. And now my mum’s now managing that whole process with me, and my dad both in the same hospital. So I’ve said to the nurses, right, wheel me down to my dad, I want to go see my dad, you know, get me out of here.

Bill Gasiamis 47:46
And I went down and had to see my Dad while this thing is in my brain bleeding, doing whatever the hell it’s doing. So that was that right? Now, my wife’s real stoic, she’s real amazing lady. She’s great. She’s not the best at managing her emotional state, but neither is her entire family. Right?

Bill Gasiamis 48:03
They really struggle with that. And she went through a lot. And when I had my third bleed. I think within two weeks after that her mom passed away. So she was

going through a very stressful time. And a week before my surgery, my brain surgery, we had to bury her.

Bill Gasiamis 48:27
So it's horrific circumstances. So we've done that. And she's not looking after herself. Properly. As you can imagine, people might not do that. And then when I go into brain surgery, come out of that. And then I'm in recovery. She collapses, and now I'm in hospital. And I'm calling nurses over, and I'm saying my wife is collapsing.

Bill Gasiamis 48:56
And she's in the bedroom, in my ward next to me. And some weird reason is they won't take her and care for her. They said you have to go to emergency so she had to walk down to emergency admit herself and say I'm not feeling well, I've collapsed or something like that.

Bill Gasiamis 49:17
So she then does that, right? She goes there. And they admit her. And I don't know where my wife is, and I'm in recovery with a wound on my head, I can't walk. I can't do any of these things because my left side is gone. And then I want to find out where my wife is in she is in a bed, connected to the heart monitors and all these other monitors and all that sort of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 49:45
And I'm in there in my wheelchair, two days after brain surgery. And my wife, I said to her look, do they know what happened? What's going on? She goes I don't know they're doing tests etc. And My brain surgeon, my neurosurgeon walks past us. And looks just as he, as it does in all, you know, boards probably.

Bill Gasiamis 49:51
And then he does a double take. And he goes, what the hell's going on? What are you two doing down here? I said to him well, I'm here because my wife's unwell. We don't know what's wrong with her she collapsed.

Bill Gasiamis 50:29
And he's going well, let me find out what's going on. Let me get you guys some answers, etc. So my challenge is, you can see it's like really was about trying to manage the other people around me because they were dropping like flies.

Preparing Yourself

Steve 50:48
I don't mean to laugh you know, it's been so long and like, we go through those things. And I can see you have a smile as you're telling the story. And I definitely don't mean to laugh. Because what an awful time for everyone but like, that people just like literally I mean, it's like Unreal, like a farce. It's like a joke. You know what I mean? It's like, How is this even happening right now? It's unreal.

Bill Gasiamis 51:13
Yeah. And, that's the point is like, you need to prepare in your life, you need to prepare for the shitty moments, because they will happen. So when they happen, you need to have done a little bit of homework to prepare, so that if you can't do anything else, at least you can feed yourself and hydrate yourself appropriately just so that you can be well enough.

Bill Gasiamis 51:38
Now. I don't want to give my wife a hard time. Because I wouldn't want to go through what she went through three years of the shit that I put her through, at least until brain surgery, then her mom passing. Like, she deserves a break, right? Let's give her a break.

Bill Gasiamis 51:55
But at the same time, it's like, okay, everyone needs to do what they need to do to get through as well as possible. Because if she's gone, and I'm gone, what are my kids gonna do? And then we had to tell my parents, obviously, we had to tell my parents about all of this stuff, they're losing their shit.

Bill Gasiamis 52:20
And my brother is a great guy, but he's a bit of an emotional, you know, never gonna be kind of guy like, he can't do those really emotional things, right. So I feel like I can't rely on them. And I've got to step up again. And I've got to rise above it again. And I've got to bring everybody calm and show Hey, guys, I'm alright, I'm good.

Bill Gasiamis 52:44
So I prepared for three years for brain surgery. I told my team of doctors while I was getting an eighth antis for them to open my head up. I told them I've

prepared for this for three years, I am the best patient you're ever going to have. My body is a vessel that gets ready for this surgery.

Bill Gasiamis 53:12
I'm going to be the best patient you experience and we're going to have the best outcome. So I've done my job for you. I've done the preparation, what you guys need to do now is your job. And I know you guys are prepared. So we're gonna have a great outcome. I'm telling them this. They're injecting me with an anaesthetic. And then I'm gone.

Steve 53:33
Totally Yeah, that's amazing. That to me is exactly, sorry, go ahead.

Bill Gasiamis 53:39
And I was gonna finish by saying the feedback after the surgery was the surgery went for way shorter than we expected. And you bled way less than we expected. I haven't had somebody hypnotize me to tell my body to bleed only the appropriate amount that was necessary to purge bad blood and do all those things and not a bleed unnecessarily. Because it wasn't going to be helpful for surgery.

Steve 54:11
See, that's the stuff that you have to bring into any traumatic situation you go through, right. And my stroke. That whole thing was the most traumatic thing I've ever gone through by my as a firm myself. I've had other experiences that were extremely challenging.

Steve 54:36
One that shook me to the core, and it's still the scariest moment of my life that I won't talk about here, but I've had a lot of issues, a lot of situations where shit hits the fan, and you have to be prepared. You have no idea what's going to happen. So you can't be prepared for the exact thing. You can just be prepared to know that when something goes on. I won't know what to do, my instincts will take over my intuition will take over.

Steve 55:05
And I will allow those things to drive me at that point. And, and I look at that when, you know, I don't know, like I think about it's such a weird analogy but like I think about performing as a musician. And I remember performing, there was a show in Seattle that we played.

Steve 55:22
And we drove in, and we set up. And then we had to go park the van somewhere. And I went out to park the van with like, our merch guy or photographer, I don't know. And we were driving around, couldn't find a spot anywhere and time was ticking. And I had to get back to the show. And I remember like parking that like parallel parking a van with a hitch in downtown Seattle.

Steve 55:43
And like, you know, running to the venue coming in the back door and getting on stage. And I had to now perform, I had to go into the space, I was super stressed. And I got on stage and I turned and I looked at my bass player who's all warmed up and he was like, are you ready? I was like, Yes, I am.

Steve 56:01
Because this is what I have to do now, this is my job right now, not parking the van, not worrying about if we're going to get a ticket, all I have to do is turn on and perform. And so it was like if I hadn't been if I hadn't prepared myself in so many different ways for that specific scenario being ready to perform, I would have just, I mean, I would have had a bad show.

Steve 56:22
And that's not a fun time. So it's like, you know, that's a very low stakes analogy. But the high stakes stuff rings true. And I've been in those situations where it's just, you get in it and you just do the thing you have to do. And I say the words that need to be said, and that's it. You know.

Steve 56:39
And remember, when we, you know another analogy, my wife and I went out to do some errands came home and our cat broke her elbow. And we had no idea. And we were like, like she would we had just gotten her it was like a month after we got her. And we had to go to the hospital. I just like when I allow myself to focus on the task at hand. I don't get emotional.

Steve 57:05
Because there's no time for it. I'll be emotional after. You know, when we're at the hospital, when she's in surgery, when she's doing the thing, and the doctor says this thing will be good. Or when I get on stage, I'll be fine. And then after the show, I can be like, guys, let me tell you this story about trying to park the van.

But it's like the emotion can come later. Right. There's no time for it in the moment. And it seems like we both have that experience, which is important.

Bill Gasiamis 57:30
It's so important. And you know, how you said those low-stakes events are low-steak but they're the training for that big event that's coming that we don't know that's coming. And that's what's really great about these low stakes stuff. So the cat broke its elbow man, that's pretty high stakes to me anyway.

Steve 57:53
It's really high stakes. Yes, it was very much.

Bill Gasiamis 57:58
Yeah, right. And animals in distress. And what you need to do is you need to become so that you can keep it calm and decrease the pain and suffering and whatever right and get the solution and solve it right. So it all add up to training you to expect to deal with a thing that's coming that we don't know.

Bill Gasiamis 58:21
And I have this other thing that I live by is like expect the best prepare for the worst. Right. So I'm forever expecting a great outcome. But if it doesn't come, I've got 25 solutions waiting in the wings some way to solve that problem. And it's a bit frustrating because what happens is then people come to me for the solution instinctively because they know that I've got and it's like, freakin hell.

Bill Gasiamis 58:51
I wish you guys had the solution one time, you know, just so that if I did, croak it if I wasn't here anymore. I feel comfortable that you guys all right, that I'm gonna let you know that you guys are going to overcome your life, you know, whatever. And it's been really interesting because with my son, my oldest just moved out.

Bill Gasiamis 59:12
He's 25. And even up until the day before he moved out, he'd be asking me, I say lovingly to him now, right? Like the stupidest questions. You know, where should I park the car outside the house? Like dude, wherever there's a spot, just park the frickin car. You know, why do you have to ask me that.

Bill Gasiamis 59:36
But what I realized was while he was living under this roof, this guy's a successful

guy at work. Like, he doesn't need his dad giving these answers. But while we were under the same roof, we're playing the role of father, you know, at the top of the hierarchy for example, son beneath him, you know, needs permission for everything and all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 59:59
And I'm like going crazy, I would try to let him run free and trying to let him grow up and become an adult, you know. And it couldn't happen, he needed to move out for that to occur, you know, there needed to be this metaphorical death of his father so that he doesn't come to me to solve problems, like, where should I park the car like, seriously man.

Steve 1:00:26
There's like, you know, I don't have children. So I can't speak to parenthood, but I manage teams. And so I can speak to management, people management.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:36
They're the same man they're like your children.

Team Management

Steve 1:00:40
Yeah, and like, there's a, you know, I manage a team of designers right now. And I want them to succeed, my goal is for them to do good work, to be able to do the work they want to do, to provide them with work streams to do so and to be able to provide them tools to evaluate themselves, so that we can talk about their future and how they can grow.

Steve 1:01:05
And I have to get out of their way. And I have to let them do their thing. And sometimes that's, going to be making mistakes, it's natural, and it's okay, and I'm willing to take that risk in certain situations. But I want to train them provide them space to do the things they need to do.

Steve 1:01:21
And that's that training, that's the low-stakes stuff, I can measure what's low-stakes enough that if it goes wrong, it's all good, it's not a big deal. And I'll take credit for going wrong, right. But when they're successes, that's all them, they do when they when I'm there to help and go, yay.

Steve 1:01:41
But when we lose that's on me because that means I didn't have the foresight to figure out, you know, what was needed, or how the how the team should be configured. And that's fine. That's what I signed up for, it's what I do, it's my job. But when I have, when they come to me with those types of questions where I'm like, It's okay, you can make a decision, you're allowed, I'm going to give you space to make the decision you're going to do, it's going to be all good.

Steve 1:02:05
Because we can always pivot, you know, we're not brain surgeons here, right? To be relative relevant. We're just, you know, we're designers like designing stuff for aviation, like, it's pretty low stakes, like, we're not gonna, you know, anyway, all that to say, we have to provide that space for ourselves, as well, going through that space, we have to say, Hey, it's okay to fail.

Steve 1:02:31
It's okay to make mistakes. It's okay, if I don't have all the answers. And it's okay to rely on people who feel like they might be unreliable. But maybe they're not. Because we have to give them a chance. And I can sense for you, that there's there was a lot of pressure on you at the time. And it sounds like there's a lot of growth happening for everyone as well.

Steve 1:02:51
But, you know, I didn't have that experience. But I did have the pressure on myself to be well, and I had no control of that, really, you know, I did, of course, I do eat well, and not overexert myself on these types of things. But at the end of the day, I still hold myself to a very high standard, and I still have to cut yourself some slack, you know, a lot of the time and I don't do that.

Steve 1:03:19
And that's not fair, because I treat my employees and like my team members, like, they can do no wrong, you know, because they're trying, they're doing their best, and they're really good at what they do. But I don't give myself that same amount of respect. And it's terrible, you know, it's not going to be beneficial for anyone.

Steve 1:03:38
And I kind of sense that you have a little bit of that too where you feel like you need to do it. And then when you can't, or you don't, maybe you feel like you let

yourself down. I don't know, I don't want to put words in your mouth.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:51
Yeah, that's pretty close. What I realized is that I'm the biggest obstacle to my own recovery. And sure, the other people are too. But the story I tell myself about the other people is just a bullshit story that I'm telling. So that I am the biggest person who gets in the way of my recovery the most I either don't sleep well eat well enough.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:15
I work too much. I stress too much. I don't meditate enough. I don't take time out for myself to do the things that I love that are my passion. So I am the biggest person that gets in the way the most of my life, lifestyle, recovery, whatever you want to call it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:32
So yeah, I've got a go meta I've got to observe myself and how I'm impacting myself in my world, and I've got to go. Okay, enough, enough of doing things that you dislike you don't get pleasure out of enough of saying yes to people that you should be saying no to enough of doing all that kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 1:04:54
And it's hard because I did that yesterday, right? So in these lockdowns in Australia, what In Melbourne, we've had the most lockdowns than any other, any other city in the world, right? And it's been, oh God, man, it's the hardest two years of my life almost, it's harder than then stroke almost this whole thing, right? Because other people were impacting my ability to move.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:21
And regardless of what the underlying reason was, which was, theoretically a great reason, because we don't want to spread the virus and all that kind of stuff yet, you're still dealing with being told you can't go anywhere by somebody else. Right? So in that time, we struggling with work, we're struggling with all these things.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:42
And somebody says to me, Look, I need this handrail installed on some stairs. And I'm like, Yeah, no worries, I'm happy to come and do it. I haven't got any work. So you know, come and do it. So but there's no directions placed on whether you can

enter somebody's home and who can work and under what conditions you can work. And unlike the restrictions are now that I can't come in here can't do this.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:08
This was about three months ago. And we had a snap seven day lockdown that lasted for two and a half months, you know? So I never went back to this guy. And I said, and then he calls me a couple of days ago, and he says, can you come and do this? Quiet for this handrail, listen, I can't because what's happened in Australia, I know, it's like the rest of the world.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:37
But in Australia right now is we rely a lot of international guests to come and work here. And fill positions that normally can't be like normal can be filled by the locals, because there's not enough of us. And there's this labor shortage. So it doesn't matter how much work you have, you cannot find people to do the work, we have ad out, and you can't get people to do the work.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:03
So we've got more work than we can handle for months and months and months in advance. And it's like, I can't come? Because I can't get through the work that I've got. And I'm stuck. That was a difficult conversation to have. So I don't want to let him down. I want to go and do that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:22
But I actually can't. It is important to me. But so are all the other people who have paid and are waiting for me to deliver an outcome. And I had to tell him that and he got really mad. And it's like, that really mad part that people do? Is the part that makes it hard for me to say no.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07:47
Because I don't like making people mad. Not that I did. He made himself mad. But I don't like to be involved in that interaction. And the old me would normally go. You know what? Let me come. Let me come and sort it out.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:06
I'd hate the whole time I was going there. I'd get annoyed when I had to order the parts and then go and install them. I'd get annoyed when he hadn't paid like the initial deposit on the time.

Bill Gasiamis 1:08:17
And then I'd get annoyed when you hadn't paid the follow up money on the time. And like, I'd be doing that work all day every day. And I'd never would say no, this one. And then it's like, Well, I hate my life. And I blame them. I blame all of them.

Steve 1:08:34
Exactly. Blame everybody else. And that acknowledgement of like creating those stories of bullshit stories, as you refer to them is so real. We create the stories, our ego creates the stories to allow us to be perfect, we're perfect. I'm perfect. That guy got mad. Forget that guy.

Steve 1:09:00
You know, like, what's my responsibility, it comes back to your didn't talk that you had the thing that you said earlier about, like going to a funeral and how to act at a funeral. Nobody's there for you, you know, nobody cares that you're there. In reality, if you didn't go, no one's gonna miss you.

Steve 1:09:17
So when you're there, be quiet, be respectful, and move on. Right? These are like the things that oftentimes it's all you have to do. Just be quiet, be respectful and do your thing. And it's like, but we have to allow ourselves that space to acknowledge the bullshit that we create. I create so much and for me it was always in relationship.

Steve 1:09:38
And so I've been married. Just over a year actually. We got married like, for us it was the peak pre vaccine of the pandemic. Just us and two friends because we don't want to be unsafe. But, my bullshit stories came in relationship. And now my wife is unreal, she's amazing. And she provides me space to see the bullshit that I'm creating. Do you know what I mean?

Steve 1:10:08
I'm always like, you know, I don't always not always. But the moments of my ego comes in. And it's like she said something mean, she's the worst, right? That's my ego talking. And I'm like, wait a second. Was that really mean? Did she really mean that? What did she say? How did she say it? Would she do that? If she gave me any evidence for me to believe that she would say or do anything to hurt me?

Steve 1:10:33

No. Okay, so shut the fuck up. But, and I have to tell myself that when those things happen, and that I think is like, it ties into the recovery, you know, I'm saying, I need to focus. And all the fears that I have are unfounded. Because I have a good team of doctors, I was lucky to have a good team of doctors, I had support from friends.

Steve 1:11:01
And it wasn't like my experience was my experience. But it was not at the severity of so many other experiences like mine, and I had to recognize that. And I remember one of my neurologists, who was like on call one day came in and was checking in on me in the hospital.

Steve Molter Dealing With The Deficits

Steve 1:11:18
How you doing ? And my vision, because I said on my vision went down to a pinhole, it actually came back mostly now it's reverse. So I have a blind spot. But it's pretty nominal. I can play tricks with it. Like if I look at the ground, and there's a penny on the ground, I don't see the penny, if I look at a certain angle, you know what I mean?

Steve 1:11:36
So it's weird. But ultimately, my vision mostly came back and I have a small blind spot. And I was like complaining about it to him in the hospital's like, is just weird. And he was like, Have you ever seen the Diving Bell and the Butterfly? And I was like, Yeah, I have. He's like, you were like, you could have been like centimetres away from that happening.

Steve 1:11:56
So is this really that bad? He was like, trying to bust my chops, rightfully so. And I was like, You're right. Thank you, you know, thanks. And I think about that all the time. Because, you know, I'm so lucky. And I'm so grateful from what I experienced. And that that was the severity. That was the, as far as I got. But I need to give myself space to feel those things to not live in those feelings, you know?

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:24
And you're allowed to feel those feelings and move on from them. Experience it.

Go, oh, that was an interesting feeling. Alright, let's just move on from it. And let's find another one that's more serving to us, more serving to our relationship, better serving the recovery, better serving us in life and other people around us.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12:43
And it's like, okay, I'm entitled to feel those feelings. Well, let's just do it for as little time as possible, and then move on to something else. Yeah, I agree with that. And I love what your doctor says, because some of the things that I get feedback from people who are recovering from deficits on one side is that they've got this comparison that they do.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:04
So the fact that they've got the comparison is like, that side that doesn't feel correct. Should be feeling like this side. Well, no, it should be feeling like the shitty side that it feels, because that's what a stroke does to it. If you didn't have a stroke, then that's fine. And if there was no reason for it to feel different than that's fine, what you're saying.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:26
But the fact that you have had a stroke, like, it should feel shitty. And I'm not saying that you're going to love that on it's going to be amazing, or it won't be painful or won't be annoying. Unfortunately, that's what it's supposed to feel like. I don't know what to do about that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:43
But right now, because we might not have the answers for that. But if you can accept that, that's what happens when you have a stroke. And now you have to deal with it. That's fine. Every single day, my left side, if I had to compare the two, I'm a perfect Gemini.

Bill Gasiamis 1:13:57
Now like, I'm born in June, my star sign is Gemini. I am completely two different people on one side of my body and then the other side of my body, I feel it. I experience it. They walk differently. They move differently, they feel differently. Everything about it is different. And one side experiences pain more dramatically and cold more dramatically in the heat more dramatically. I even perspire sometimes on one side of my body and not on the other side of my body.

Steve 1:14:25

That is insane. And it is what it is.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14:31
And it's not pleasant. But what the hell am I gonna do about it? I can't change it. Yeah, and by overthinking it, I can't change it. It doesn't change. It doesn't get better. So yeah. You had a spontaneous vertebral artery dissection. So where's it at now? How did they manage that? How have they resolved it?

Steve 1:14:57
Yeah, so there was a the fear for me that they were going to have to do surgery. They didn't. Basically what they did is they put me on Coumadin. And what's the other one? Oh my gosh, I forgot. That's good. I forgot, it's so long. There's another blood thinner. That's like you can only use in hospitals, I forgot what it's called.

Steve 1:15:19
But I was on Coumadin and this other thing, I'm really happy that I don't remember it. To be honest, that means the story is going so far away that it's not defining me. But anyway, I was on Heparin, that's what it is, of course, anyway, I was on these two drugs during my stay at the hospital, which basically just like, you know, thinned my blood out, so that they, the blood would just cruise right through, bust the clot.

Steve 1:15:42
And the blood would just go right through to my brain, and then the artery healed on its own. So it was able to, to to do its thing, you know, as arteries do. And then I went in for MRIs every couple months, just to make sure everything is good. And I was on Coumadin for like, I think four months, which is pretty brief, you know, given what I went through.

Steve 1:16:03
And then I remember taking my last dose of Clomid, and it was basically good. Now I just take baby aspirin every day. And I haven't had many, the first like year or two, there was stuff, you know, it was a roller coaster. And then since then I've only had one point of fear. Well, two, one was an experience at home that I had. And this is like right after I had met my wife, she was my girlfriend at the time, and I had an episode.

Steve 1:16:33

And it wasn't related. But I didn't know. And she freaked out, understandably, she knew that I had the strokes. And it's a scary thing to introduce a partner to oh, by the way, you know, I've had strokes. And that means I'm more likely to have one in the future. Cool. And then another time I was traveling, and I was in Rome, and two weeks of just terrible headaches.

Steve 1:16:56
And my friend, amazingly, who I was staying with her, unfortunately, her mother passed from a stroke many years prior, but she still had contact with those doctors. And so she was like, if you need a doctor, like I got a guy for sure. And so I was under her care and kind of her and her boyfriend helped me and just made me feel safe.

Steve 1:17:17
That if anything did happen, they had the right thing. But that was just headaches for two weeks. And that was it. And subsequently, it's standard stuff. I get super lightheaded when I stand up. If I sleep wrong, it's just always exacerbates right here. You know, it's pretty minor, given everything, though. So I'm very lucky to be where I am today.

Bill Gasiamis 1:17:39
I remember traveling as well to Greece. Maybe I think it was a few years after the I'm pretty sure it was before brain surgery. And I was in Greece and feeling like maybe I'm having another one you know, and it's so scary. And traveling to the states and buying the most expensive insurance you could get so that in the event, you know, anything went wrong.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:09
And then I had the fear that had to ever come of being in an aeroplane for 30 hours before we got to California. And it's like, if it happens, I've got 30 hours. Like if it doesn't happen in the plane, you know, whatever, after that. If it happens anywhere else we're okay.

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:28
But and that whole idea of trying to be excited about the flight and not give away that I was afraid of it, you know too much. But then I wasn't involved in the organizing of the of the trip, my wife was doing it all and she was trying to work out why isn't this guy keen? You know? Like, why doesn't he want to go down that

path?

Bill Gasiamis 1:18:52
I'm crapping my pants and I don't want to get to this situation again. And I don't know if the situation is resolved. Now I did have the blessing of my doctors but I wasn't taking any medication. There was nothing to do for this bleed. It was just hope to God that it didn't bleed again for three years.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:15
And, anyway, we got away with it. But yeah, it's a little bit terrifying. And I can understand why people would be reluctant to have an experience. Because they're thinking what if it happens again, and I want to say that that's normal, and people who are listening and watching, I want to make sure that they're comfortable going.

Bill Gasiamis 1:19:37
There's this thing I'm noticing that strange, and I'm not sure what it is. So I don't feel good about it. So you know what, let's go and get that checked out. Go to the doctor, go to the emergency room, go wherever you need to go. To actually ease your concern and allow you to start to understand the difference between the stroke and this thing that you're experiencing that's not a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:00
I was in the hospital every second week if I had to be because something happened and I wasn't feeling quite right. And even though I haven't had any real dramas since 2014, when I had surgery, I still went back in the last couple of years, before all the lockdowns before COVID, I remember going back and going for a checkup because I had this massive headache or something was going wrong.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:32
And I went to the ER, and I said to them, listen, I'm a former brain surgery survivor, I've had, you know, three bleeds and I had an AVM and this stuff's going on. And I don't know what it is. And because of my history, I thought I'd come and get a checked out.

Bill Gasiamis 1:20:50
And they're like, Okay, fair enough. So, we went through the process. We ruled all of that stuff out. But it was the smart thing to do. Because previously, when I had

those weird, strange feelings, I said, It's nothing. I'll be right, off to work.

Steve 1:21:04
Exactly. Yeah, exactly. I had the same experience when I got out of the hospital. And for the first stretch, the doctor was like, you feel anything, just come back, just go to the ER, it's all good. Like, no worries. And thankfully, I had really good insurance. So any Americans watching or listening, like, they know, the challenge of insurance.

Steve 1:21:24
And I was very grateful to have amazing insurance. That was huge for me at that time. But I went back to the ER, like, the week, within a week after I got out, because something was funny. And they checked me out, and they did the whole thing. And like, you're okay, it's just your healing, and you can feel it.

Steve 1:21:41
You know, I was like, Okay, and so I learned that, okay, my vision is gonna act funky, until it's settled, right, my vision would still like, move a little weird. And then I would get pains in my neck. And I had to recognize that Oh, I was, I was healing and you can feel healing. And that's good. That's a good pain.

Steve 1:22:00
And then your vision is finding its space to settle. Right. And these were the things that I had to learn how to an ophthalmologist, optometrist, brain doctors, you know, I went to did MRIs, like I said before, a few times with contrast the whole mind. And at a certain point, it was like, you're good, you know, and like, go do your thing. And you're gonna be okay.

Steve 1:22:24
If anything comes up, you feel anything weird? Here are the tests you can do at home. Right? And it's like, the squeezing the hands and like the, you know, pushing, pushing the knees and all these different things. And then, if you need it beyond that, go to the ER, and it's totally okay. It's, perfectly acceptable to be afraid. No, I still get afraid. And it's okay. When I wake up in the morning, and I have pain I go, there's the split second of not again, and then No, no, it's not that. And I move on.

Bill Gasiamis 1:22:58
Yeah. And it's been a long time. And this is the thing, like, people need to

understand that stroke recovery is ongoing, it kind of never ends, and you're always going back to that moment, or some space in time. And you're always thinking about, and it's okay, if it's fleeting, then it's all right, you know, it comes into your mind and spends a little time there, and then it goes away.

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:18
You know, if it's not, then you need to work out why it's still in your mind and how you can ease that, what you need to learn to overcome that, you know, how you need to upgrade your skills, or your emotional state or your mental state, you know, who needs to get support from?

Bill Gasiamis 1:23:35
Well, I've been in counseling, since I was 25. And I go still. And in lockdown, we weren't able to go to counseling, and that was a real drama. But I'm in counseling, and I go there. And that's where I go to get somebody to give me a third perspective, give me another perspective of my behavior, how I act, what I'm feeling, is it legitimate, you know, so that we can just hash it out and see if we can, you know, see if I can evolve further continue to evolve my way of approaching response.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:14
And my way of responding to, to the world and to my situation and to the situation around us and to COVID at the beginning, I was terrible. I was like, so bad, with the political aspect of how COVID has been dealt with in Melbourne. And then towards the end, it's like, I'm still dissatisfied with a lot of things, but I'm not interacting with that stuff now,.

Bill Gasiamis 1:24:41
And I'm not letting it occupy my mind as much because it's out of my control. I've control the controllables I can control my response and how I behave. And what an example I'm setting, but I can't control what the politicians are doing. Let's be honest, they're going to do what they want to do.

Steve 1:25:00
That's a great quote, control the controllables.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25:03
Yeah, right. It's not my quote, I think it came from, you know, one of the ancient philosophers or something, but I hear about it. I hear about it a lot from a guy

called Ryan Holiday, who wrote a book called, which I have right here, which is called the obstacle is the way.

Seeking Out Support

Bill Gasiamis 1:25:24
And check that out. Yeah, it's a great book, actually amazing book. And we're at that point, I'm at that point where, you know, you seek help out to ease your mind about that thing that you felt, I do that as well. And then I also seek out help to go and get another perspective of this part of me that I haven't mastered yet.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25:50
You know, this, this need to go into the rabbit hole of, you know, nuttiness or craziness or anger, or, you know, whatever it is. So that's what we're encouraging here. We're encouraging seek out support or help from wherever you can.

Steve 1:26:08
Yeah, I've been going to my therapist since I was, Oh, my God, probably 27, 28 years old and 42. So however long that is. And he's been amazing to me. And during this time, I remember, oh, man, it was so funny. I had to call and cancel an appointment. Because we had our standing appointment, and I missed it because I was in the hospital.

Steve 1:26:29
So I had to call him and he was like, yeah, like, where are you? You're okay. And I was like, Oh, I'm in the hospital, I had a stroke. And he was like, Oh, my God. And this is in September, right. And so towards the end of the year, I still met with him during that period. But he ended up waiving all my fees, because he was like, you went through something terrible, don't worry about it.

Steve 1:26:52
I mean, like, that's like a serious. I mean, we were like, best friends at that point, you know. And I still talked to him, I talked to him just a week and a half ago, I talked to him regularly. And I need him. You know, I need that space. He's, a person. He's a great person.

Steve 1:27:12
But he's going to retire at some point, you know, but I need that space, a third party, that unbiased opinion, who, who cares? Just enough, right? And who will

tell you how it is from a psychological perspective, because I'm not a psychologist, just like, I'm not a neurologist. I'm not a psychologist. That's not my job. Here's what's going on in me. Help. Tell me what you think, you know. And so it's that delegation again, right?

Bill Gasiamis 1:27:42
It's so valuable. And it's non judgmental. That's why I sought it out initially is because I always felt like a little bit of a black duck in my family, you know, I had these ideas and these thoughts and this method of approaching life and it didn't always work at home, like it didn't fit in.

Bill Gasiamis 1:27:59
And it was weird. And I always used to feel like, they don't get me and they don't because they go about life differently. Right. And I used to go there nonjudgmental. And I had a relationship with this lady for 20 something years, and I thought she was never going to retire or always be around. And she passed away about a year and a half ago.

Steve 1:28:23
I'm sorry to hear that.

Bill Gasiamis 1:28:24
Yeah, thank you, man. She was 83. And she passed away, in practice, like helping somebody. And it was like, it was nutty. I had spoken to a few weeks before that. And we were at that stage where the family had been there, my wife had been through my kids had been through all together or separately, you know, all over the place over the years.

Bill Gasiamis 1:28:46
And that one relationship was kind of the one solid guiding, always had my back kind of relationship that I could always go back to to reroute and to readjust and to re sort of revisit all the stuff that was bothering me or that I thought I was annoyed about that was somebody else's fault or whatever, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:29:15
And when she passed away, in this last sort of 18 months, or whatever it's been, I can't remember I think it's been nearly a year or more that's when the I missed that opportunity to go and see her therefore I struggled through those early phases of COVID lock downs and all that type of thing and then recently picked

up another amazing counselor and things are starting to settle down a bit as the restrictions have lifted everything sort of come together again, you know.

Bill Gasiamis 1:29:46
So it's, I think one of my most valuable relationships. I'll miss her forever. And she was just an amazing, staunch lady. She had my back all the time and And I never once did it feel like even though I was paying her for a time, never wants to feel like this whole thing that some people do is like, you know, why would I go and pay somebody to sit there and really give a shit, right?

Bill Gasiamis 1:30:16
Well, they do give a shit. That's, why they have this career. That's why they spent 12 years at university or wherever to become somebody that you can go to, and get support from unbiased without judgment all the time. I mean, no matter what.

Steve 1:30:39
The response to therapy that I run into, in the past from certain people is, why would I exactly what he said, Why would I pay someone to tell me what's wrong with me? And I'm like, no, he's never told me what's wrong with me. He doesn't tell me anything. He allows me the space to make the connections myself. He allows me the space to see myself through his unbiased eyes.

Steve 1:31:43
And you can't have a relationship of a psychologist without a psychologist, like he has to be that person. If you hate exactly, if you hang out with him outside of the practice, then he's a friend. And the relationship has changed. And it's evolved.

Bill Gasiamis 1:32:25
And it's no longer this non judgmental. non bias, you know, always got your back kind of space, it's a different space, things are different because you're interacting together iin a more usual way or common way, you know? So where are you at with the whole recovery now? How's the band going? How have things changed over the last nine years as you're coming into your 10th year?

Steve 1:32:57
I mean, things are amazing. My life is fantastic. Like I said, I got married just over a year ago. Our life has been fantastic. We have two awesome little kitties. And I know you have at least one cat, right?

Bill Gasiamis 1:33:11
Yeah.

Steve 1:33:12
Yeah. And so we have two cats who keep us occupied. And we love them. I have like, 1000s of pictures, and I just take pictures of them all day, you know. And then as far as music goes, I've been working. It's been a challenging to time during COVID for music, because I've always been writing and COVID kind of hit and I just kind of struggled a little bit in that space.

Steve 1:33:37
And it was like, hard for me to find any inspiration, which is natural. And as I talk to people who have creative spaces, they would say the same thing. Well, it's been difficult, right? Some people were able to turn it on and just go nuts and put stuff out. And that's awesome.

Steve 1:33:49
I wasn't, but my wife and I play in a band together. And we're working on music, slowly but surely. And it's a hopefully going to be ready for the light of day, next year, mid next year, hopefully. And you know, just kind of always seeing what kind of projects are out there. But for me, one of the biggest accomplishments that I've had in the last few years is finding my role in that design manager space.

Steve 1:34:12
And that's been really grateful. This is the first time in my life it's been a grateful opportunity. But It's the first time in my life that I love my job. And I've always just worked to get paid and that was it. Because I don't make a living on music or photographer or These are these other things I do.

Steve 1:34:33
But finding design and becoming finding my value in that space has been wonderful. It's also one of these things that like, you know, I consider myself a very social person. I love people I love getting to know people. I love these types of situations where it gets into learn people stories, and in a role of people management and design.

Steve 1:34:55
There's this great crossover where I'm always meeting people and helping people and provide A space for them to be seen and heard. And also learning a whole ton

myself, because I only know this much. And these other people have access in depth of knowledge that I have no idea.

Steve 1:35:12
So it's fun to learn from everyone. And that's been great. I'm really lucky in that space. Yeah, I mean, overall, it's like when that when the anniversaries come, we celebrate, like I said, we hang out with friends and kick it have a couple drinks, you know. And next year, we'll be 10. And it's gonna be, it'll be interesting to see where we are at that point. You know, I'm looking forward.

Finding Joy In Passion

Bill Gasiamis 1:35:37
Yeah, that's awesome. How important is to have this passion project on the side that you guys are working on. It's a long distant project, and there's always something that it's gonna happen in the future. But you're not getting paid for it. So what's the point of it?

Steve 1:35:53
Yeah, that's a great question. That's the question. I always asked myself, Why do I do this? Right? For a long time, the answer was because I have to, you know, I felt the need, I had to make music. And now, it's coming back to because I want to, and that's, I'd rather be there.

Steve 1:36:15
There was, you know, when I first started playing guitar didn't know what I was doing. It was the child's mind. And it was beautiful. And I just made stuff up. And it was something was good. Something wasn't good. It didn't matter. I didn't care if it was good or not. I just wanted it to come out of me and have my colleagues and my bands, think it was good.

Steve 1:36:33
And then I got really focused on trying to make music that maybe other people are really gonna like. And then I started thinking about why am I doing it? Because, you know, I don't get paid a lot. I mean, I get paid streaming royalties, which are, like, insignificant, and that's a whole other conversation.

Steve 1:36:51

But now, I feel like, you know, I have to write music again, because I want to, you know, and finding that joy in that space is really valuable to me. And I want to find that joy again, because it's been gone for a few years, you know, not that it's been not joyful. It's just harder to tap into regularly.

Bill Gasiamis 1:37:12
Yeah, when there's a lot of emotional turmoil happening around us, because of all the stuff that's going on in the world. It's hard to be creative. I mean, that's, I think, where creativity really lives is in the heart, right?

Bill Gasiamis 1:37:24
And if you can't connect to your heart, well, then you're going to be struggling to be creative. You can't think a song into existence, you have to feel it as well. You know, you can't just write down the notes and then get somebody to sing it without any heart. Like this just doesn't work.

Steve 1:37:44
Agreed. Agreed. And that's part of the challenge. Where is my heart? What do I want to say? What do I have to say? Is is valuable? Do I even want to put this out there to be heard. And I have to figure that out? You know, so it's part of the process.

Bill Gasiamis 1:38:01
Steve, it's been amazing getting to know you and chat with you. And I really want to thank you for being on the podcast and for sharing your journey and your story. I think this is a really valuable episode for people listening. If you're kind of listening, and you haven't really paid attention to many things, that's fine as well.

Bill Gasiamis 1:38:21
But go back and listen a couple of times, because some of the stuff that we've shared here, is really important to your recovery is really important to your life going forward. But not only your life like everybody's life that you're interacting with, and that you impact.

Bill Gasiamis 1:38:34
So hopefully you get as much out of this episode, as I got out of it. I've just absolutely thoroughly loved this. And, yeah, I wish you well, man, and with the 10th year of with the anniversary coming up in the next 12 months. So hope is a smashing year now that things are sort of starting to settle down.

Steve 1:38:56
Thank you, Bill, it's been such a pleasure to talk to you. I'm so grateful that you've made the time and we finally got to connect. And I agree, this has been very helpful for me to get your story and to talk to you and to share with someone who knows, you know, I don't meet stroke survivors that often. So when I do, I'm always like, you know, and I'm glad you took the time to share your story, too. So thank you so much for having me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:39:18
Thanks for listening to the show. I hope you got a lot out of it and learn something new. And I hope that it's giving you a bit of an insight into some of the things that go on in the mind of somebody who's had a stroke, reflecting back after eight or nine years, so that you can get an understanding of how far you can come especially if you're early on in your recovery phase.

Bill Gasiamis 1:39:47
Now, 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. The road is both physically and mentally challenging from reclaiming your independence to Getting back to work and rebuilding your confidence and more.

Bill Gasiamis 1:40:03
The symptoms don't follow rulebook and as soon as you leave hospital, you no longer have medical professionals on tap. I know for me it felt as if I was teaching myself a new language from scratch with no native speaker in sight. 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.

Bill Gasiamis 1:40:24
I've created an inclusive, supportive and accessible membership community called recovery after stroke. This only one support and Resource Program is designed to help you take back your health into your own hands.

Bill Gasiamis 1:40:37
This is your guided book 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 for just $1 Head to recoveryafterstroke.com thanks for listening and see you on the next episode.

Intro 1:40:52
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 1:41:10
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 is intended to complement your medical treatment and support healing.

Intro 1:41:26
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 1:41:47
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 1:42:12
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