

Resilience in Recovery: Alina Gonzales's Stroke Rehabilitation Journey

Alina Gonzales's stroke recovery story is one of patience, progress, and resilience, inspiring stroke survivors to keep pushing forward.

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Introduction - Alina Gonzales Recovery Journey



Bill Gasiamis 0:00

For those of you who have found relief, encouragement, or simply benefited from the recovery after stroke podcast, I've just recently set up a Patreon page to help keep the podcast running. Since 2017 I've been covering all the costs myself, but now I'm reaching out to our amazing community for a bit of support. If this podcast has helped you on your recovery journey, joining our Patreon is a way to give back and ensure it stays available for others who need it.

Bill Gasiamis 0:32

Your support will help cover the costs of recording, editing, and hosting, so we can keep bringing you the content that's made a difference in your life. It also supports the transcription of episodes into subtitles on YouTube, making the podcast accessible to listeners with hearing challenges. Memberships start at just \$6 per month. If you'd like to support the podcast, head over to patreon.com/recoveryafterstroke. Your help makes a big difference and I'm so grateful for your support. Thank you.

Bill Gasiamis 1:07

Now this is episode 328, and my guest today is Alina Gonzales, who has appeared on the podcast in the past. Alina is a resilient stroke survivor who has made a significant stride in her recovery journey. Since we last spoke, Alina's story highlights the realities of stroke recovery, from the challenges of rehabilitation to the power of community support. With unwavering determination, she's made incredible progress in areas like communication and mobility. Join us as we explore Alina's inspiring journey and her message of hope for stroke survivors everywhere.

Bill Gasiamis 1:46

Alina Gonzales, welcome back to the podcast.

Alina Gonzales 1:49

Thank you.

Bill Gasiamis 1:51

It is so good to have you back on the podcast, it has been almost a year since we spoke last time.

Alina Gonzales 1:59

This year, time flow is flown by a year.

Bill Gasiamis 2:05

Time has flown? Has it also gone slow?

Alina Gonzales 2:10

Yeah, very slow, because recovery in my mind, I thought that pushing ankle over here, long and recovering like that, and it takes take a couple of weeks, but a very long process.

Alina Gonzales - Stroke Experience and Initial Deficits

Bill Gasiamis 2:29

Yeah, in your mind, recovery was going to happen quickly. These things don't happen quickly, it's one of the things that stroke survivors get impacted with. Is that the understanding that this could be a bit of a longer process than first thought. So you had a stroke in 2022 is that right?

Alina Gonzales 2:56

2020 actually.

Bill Gasiamis 2:57

In 2020 and what happened to you Alina?

Alina Gonzales 3:02

I was driving, and then I had ringing in my ear, and I called 911 because my vision was a little bit blurry and severe ringing in my ear. So I didn't know was going on, I had no idea.

Bill Gasiamis 3:20

And what was the underlying cause of it?

Alina Gonzales 3:24

In AVM.

Bill Gasiamis 3:26

Arterial Venous Malformation as well.

Alina Gonzales 3:29

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis 3:31

When you when you got out of hospital, what were the deficits that you were left with?

Alina Gonzales 3:36

I had a stroke and a G-tube and a difficulty on my left side.

Bill Gasiamis 3:46

And difficult on your left side the trach, is that what has made your voice a bit croaky.

Alina Gonzales 3:53

So when the hospital just at the Craig, for so long I've paralyzed vocal cord as a result.

Bill Gasiamis 4:04

I have a paralyzed vocal cord because they left the trachea in too long.

Alina Gonzales 4:12

I received very poor care at the hospital, but partially, I think, because of COVID.

Bill Gasiamis 4:20

Yeah, you were right in the thick of things. So how long have you been home now?

Alina Gonzales 4:30

Like, three or four years now.

Alina Gonzales - Progress and Challenges in Recovery

Bill Gasiamis 4:36

I remember last time we spoke, and for people who are watching and listening, they should go back and check out the first podcast interview that we did. All the links will be in the show notes, your mom had to be involved in that discussion.

Alina Gonzales 4:54

Yeah, for a long time I have very, A difficult time speaking, and I think is better, a little bit better with time and practice.

Bill Gasiamis 5:12

Your your recovery has improved a lot, like, compared to what you were last time, I'm noticing a massive difference, your level of communication, understanding, your independence, everything has changed a lot.

Alina Gonzales 5:32

That's so good to hear.

Bill Gasiamis 5:34

Have you noticed that it's changed a lot? Where are you at with it all?

Alina Gonzales 5:38

No, I'm good. Like, moving out and then that scope and now realize the gains that I've made. It's very difficult to be in your own mind and those changes that you've made.

Bill Gasiamis 5:56

It's very difficult to notice the changes that you've made when you're in your own body, feeling and experiencing how it's, how it now, how it is now, how your body kind of so when you left hospital, were you able to walk, or anything like that?

Alina Gonzales 6:19

No, I wasn't able to walk, I have a very difficult time walking right now. I don't have drop or anything like that, but have issues. So I have a lot of balance issues, and so it makes it very difficult to walk.

Bill Gasiamis 6:37

You have vestibular issues, so your balance is affected, and you don't have drop foot, but the challenge with walking is related to your balance.

Alina Gonzales 6:48

Like my body space, like recognition of one of my bodies in space.

Bill Gasiamis 7:00

I think they call it proprioception issues. Your body on the left side doesn't, isn't able to report back to the brain as to where it is in space.

Alina Gonzales 7:12

Correct, yes.

Bill Gasiamis 7:13

Okay, so that puts you off balance, and it makes the body overcompensate, and always kind of put you out of whack with your compared to your right side.

Alina Gonzales 7:25

Yes, unfortunately, I'm very strong, though I think I'm very strong and capable and love ways, but disabled to walk in. Yet it's a keyword.

Community Support and Participation

Bill Gasiamis 7:37

Yeah, is the keyword. I love it, your spirit is amazing. When you were on the podcast last I thought it was pretty cool to have you on because you were in a bad way compared to where you are now, I think you've improved tapes, like I said, but you're still more interested in being on the podcast in the hopes that you're going to help raise awareness and help other people. So how have you been occupying yourself in the last 12 months?

Alina Gonzales 8:16

A participant with a group, a support group, which I can't emphasize enough, is so important for other survivors to be part of so I'm a member of different groups that talk about brain health and effective treatments for brain health as well.

Bill Gasiamis 8:41

Can you community is very important as made a big difference in how you navigate this.

Alina Gonzales 8:49

Yes, for sure.

Bill Gasiamis 8:53

Are those communities online or are they in person?

Alina Gonzales 8:58

Unfortunately, there's not much around me were people interacting person because of COVID, taking time?

Bill Gasiamis 9:12

At least there's online. I mean, online is a very good way for you to access community without being in a position where you have to travel, where you have to make a lot of effort to get to anyway.

Alina Gonzales 9:25

Yeah, it's true here.

Bill Gasiamis 9:29

I noticed a few times when you've spoken just now, that you put your hand to your

throat. Is there a reason for that? Does that help you in some way?

Alina Gonzales 9:37

By drinking, when they took it off, I had to cover up the hole and she took that habit I have in my mind, I saw how the hole sort of have it.

Bill Gasiamis 9:55

But it's healed.

Alina Gonzales 9:56

Yeah, fortunately, it dropped. Doctor, I had to go get the surgeon, close it up with a couple of stitches, because it wasn't here to open wounds, I was like a deep hole, and they switched it up, I think you use like four stitches, not many.

Bill Gasiamis 10:25

Just a quick break, and we'll be right back with more of Alina's journey. I'd like to take a moment to talk about something that's been a big part of my own recovery journey, my book 'The unexpected way that a stroke became the best thing that happened. In it I share my personal story and that of nine other stroke survivors who have turned their challenges into opportunities for growth.

Bill Gasiamis 10:47

If you're looking for inspiration and guidance on your path to recovery, this book is for you. Get your copy on Amazon or visit recoveryafterstroke.com/book. And then it's a gaping wound, and then it heals by itself, and it kind of closes over, and it connects, reconnects.

Alina Gonzales 11:08

It's supposed to, but it tells us why the surgeon went in and used to cool out the hole.

Bill Gasiamis 11:17

Okay, so normally it heals on its own, but for you, it didn't and they needed to sew it up.

Alina Gonzales 11:22

Correct, right.

Bill Gasiamis 11:24

Okay, right, and does it feel strange now? Is it always kind of feel a little bit

different in that spot.

Alina Gonzales 11:34

Like I'm always, I see, but it feels normal. I'm very lucky.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and Its Impact

Bill Gasiamis 11:41

It sounds like you've done a lot of rehab, also with your voice. Have you been doing speech therapy?

Alina Gonzales 11:48

I went to a speech therapist for a long time, and she was very patient with me. She did the stimulation on my face, to work on the symmetry of my face, and to work on my voice. So that was very helpful, and she was very patient with me.

Bill Gasiamis 12:08

Very patient with you? Why did she need to be patient with you? Just because of your level of inability to talk?

Alina Gonzales 12:15

Yeah, I think that was perfect, and also deal with my insurance.

Bill Gasiamis 12:21

Your insurance making things hard as always.

Alina Gonzales 12:25

Yeah, as always, unfortunately.

Bill Gasiamis 12:29

Okay, are you still dealing with the insurance? Or have they stepped away?

Alina Gonzales 12:35

I'm still dealing with them, but I don't go to speech therapy or anymore.

Bill Gasiamis 12:42

And are they covering some other therapies?

Alina Gonzales 12:43

Right now, I'm not going to have the therapies? But probably so in a couple

months, because they were giving me a hard time, I was going to physical therapy, and they stopped coverage. And so I have to take a break and then restart and get a whole new referral from my primary care physician, and then restart. I got to do that very soon, but I took, like, a month and a half off to do the hyperbaric chamber. I did hyperbaric for about a month and a half.

Alina Gonzales 13:12

Yeah, hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

Alina Gonzales 13:26

Correct, yes.

Bill Gasiamis 13:27

Tell me about that, what was that like?

Alina Gonzales 13:30

That was I think it was very relaxing. Overall, it was very relaxing, but I'm just very hopeful that helps in some way, but the therapist said that I was a big patient with the results, so I'm just waiting for for the results to kick in.

Bill Gasiamis 13:53

Okay, so this particular hyperbaric oxygen therapy sessions that you've done, were they in consultation with some kind of a doctor, a medical professional, or was it just a private place locally to you, and you can just go and book some time into in the session there on your own.

Alina Gonzales 14:19

The physician that was there, and I booked a couple of sessions. Actually, I booked like I went twice a day, so I called the morning for about an hour and a half, and then in the afternoon by another hour and a half. That's what they were my first drug patient.

Bill Gasiamis 14:40

And you went twice a day for an hour and a half each session. How many days a week?

Alina Gonzales 14:49

Five days a week, my mom was a saint. She would drive me for over an hour away and wait for me to go and then, during my session, then we go grab some food

and then come back.

Bill Gasiamis 15:12

So five days a week, that's a big commitment, but it seems like it's worth it, right?

Alina Gonzales 15:18

I think so, yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 15:20

Did you notice any immediate changes, any changes in your cognition, in your clarity, in the way that your head felt?

Alina Gonzales 15:28

Not really, not yet. I'm very hopeful that I feel so dangerous very soon.

Bill Gasiamis 15:35

Yep, is that a therapy that you need to continue, that you'll be able to continue Alina?

Alina Gonzales 15:41

No, they say that first stroke patient, so I won't be doing it anymore, I reached my limit.

Bill Gasiamis 15:54

There's a limit. Okay, I didn't know that. So when you're in the in the oxygen chamber, what are you doing in there? What's the How does it work? What do you do?

Alina Gonzales 16:09

You lay back, and then you have a mask over your face, and you breathe oxygen, pure oxygen, for about an hour and a half.

Bill Gasiamis 16:21

Okay. And in that time you can read a book, sleep? What do they do?

Alina Gonzales 16:28

For you to read, but not sleep at all.

Bill Gasiamis 16:33

But not sleep?

Alina Gonzales 16:35

Yeah, they want you to use your brain as much as possible.

Bill Gasiamis 16:40

To try and stimulate things happening.

Alina Gonzales 16:43

Right, good.

Bill Gasiamis 16:45

Okay, that's really cool. Is it expensive?

Alina Gonzales 16:50

Yeah, it was expensive. I'm still paying it off now, it adds up very quickly, but if it works, it'll be worth it.

Daily Life and Adaptations for Alina Gonzales

Bill Gasiamis 17:00

Yeah, absolutely. I think hyperbaric oxygen therapy is just good overall for people who can experience it and can go into the chamber, I think it's good overall. I'm not, it can be overused in the wrong way of course, there's definitely that, but under controlled and monitored versions of hyperbaric oxygen therapy, I feel like there is not that much downside.

Alina Gonzales 17:32

No, I agree with you, there were other patients there that were cancer patient or had plastic surgery, and we're going for a different therapies for the appearance and getting bigger.

Bill Gasiamis 17:51

You mentioned earlier that you were having something to eat after these sessions, and then coming home, is eating? Okay? Is your throat been impacted in any other negative ways other than the the trach?

Alina Gonzales 18:07

Yeah, it's very difficult for me on now. I can't stuff my face like before I get to see any I can't I have to focus on chewing before I would just have my face and not think about her great year, I refer tongues liquids as well as to have them taken

every time. Love coffee, I love coffee, I like to take it every time.

Bill Gasiamis 18:41

And is it just difficult swallowing? Is that that because of that paralyzed part of your throat? Is it swallowing? And that's the risk there, getting choking?

Alina Gonzales 18:53

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis 18:59

So what so what do you have to focus on? More do you have to focus on when you're chewing something? Is it like chewing it down to a good size, so that you can swallow it easily? Or do you have to actually pay attention to the actual swallowing part of the process.

Alina Gonzales 19:16

That's a chewy down to like mush, pretty much, and then focus on time, it's a much more focusing session, I chew and chew and chew, then fighting, and time as well, now we really have to focus.

Bill Gasiamis 19:41

Yep. Understand, and do you also have another challenge there with regards to your mouth and the way that it works, and also with saliva?

Alina Gonzales 19:54

I do, yes, somebody else mentioned that they think that with stroke patients that the saliva is impacted, the glands are impacting, you all have a lot of saliva, a lot of extra than before.

Bill Gasiamis 20:16

A lot of a lot extra than before.

Alina Gonzales 20:19

Yes, it's correct. A lot before it's a tough thing to manage.

Bill Gasiamis 20:27

And does that also then risk choking or anything like that, or is it just the the uncomfortable part or the annoying part, where it then leaves your mouth?

Alina Gonzales 20:40

It's annoying, because I feel like I drool a lot.

Bill Gasiamis 20:45

And are you drooling? Or do you just think you're drooling?

Alina Gonzales 20:49

I think it's a little bit of both, because I feel like my imagination.

Bill Gasiamis 21:03

There's a little bit of that as well.

Alina Gonzales 21:05

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 21:06

That's alright. Well, that's and then it just requires you to pay pay attention to that and have a tissue handy and just make sure that it's all clean.

Alina Gonzales 21:16

Yes.

Bill Gasiamis 21:18

I hear you. So tell me about what's new like, tell me about you. What have you been up to the last 12 months? I know there's been a lot of rehab and a lot of recovery, but what else? What else have you been up to?

Alina Gonzales 21:33

I'm just trying to find a solution to all this, I would really like to start working again. I have a new apartment that I was able to purchase, and I can enjoy it the way I want to because of this event.

Bill Gasiamis 21:51

The new apartment?

Alina Gonzales 21:55

Overall, I really just want to walk again on my own and be more independent.

Bill Gasiamis 22:04

Walk on your own. Driving is on the on the to do list of walking is on the do list and be more independent.

Alina Gonzales 22:15

Yes, it's correct.

Bill Gasiamis 22:16

Yeah, the new apartment that you have, you're living there on your own.

Alina Gonzales 22:22

No, I'm not allowed to share on my own yet.

Bill Gasiamis 22:27

Doctor's orders.

Alina Gonzales 22:28

I did with my mother, majority at the time, and then I come down to the apartment.

Coping with Stroke and Future Goals

Bill Gasiamis 22:36

Okay? So doctor's orders, you're not allowed to stay alone.

Alina Gonzales 22:41

Correct, yes.

Bill Gasiamis 22:42

What are they concerned about?

Alina Gonzales 22:45

About my mobile, like I can't do much for myself at this point.

Bill Gasiamis 22:56

So they're afraid of your falling, getting stuck in a position where you can't help yourself. Okay, so in the evenings, is that immobility difficult to deal with, handling getting up and being uncomfortable in bed or needing to go get a drink of water? Is that a challenge.

Alina Gonzales 23:21

Having to go to the bathroom in the morning is very careful. I don't want to make anybody up, but I have to go.

Bill Gasiamis 23:33

You don't want to wake anybody up, but you have to go.

Alina Gonzales 23:35

But I have to go, and have to go, and it's very careful.

Bill Gasiamis 23:43

At the beginning of this whole saga for you, there was a lot of challenges that you hadn't overcome yet. What are the some of the challenges that you've worked on and have been able to overcome?

Alina Gonzales 23:54

I think maybe to communicate one thing that's got a lot better, and my ability to eat food is another thing. I think those are two big things that I was able to overcome, and I'm just looking forward to being able to speak to you again, to tell I'm walking, I'm driving, living my life. I was talking to a friend from high school, and he said 'What do you want as a one normal life again? That's it. But you want normal, healthy, good life, that's it.

Bill Gasiamis 24:41

Yeah, fair enough so your communication is a lot better. Like I said, was your communication difficult at the beginning because of the lack of rehabilitation to that throat area? Was paralyzed, or was it also cognitive? Did you also suffer from aphasia or something else?

Alina Gonzales 25:06

I think I had a little bit of aphasia, but I couldn't communicate at first at all. I think it was like my inability to speak at all as a combination of aphasia and my paralyzed vocal cord.

Bill Gasiamis 25:33

And now, with time, the aphasia has settled down, that part of your brain seems to be healing and recovering, and the vocal cord, although it's not perfect, it seems to have also been rehabilitated and working in your favor.

Alina Gonzales 25:49

I think I don't tell like myself 'Oh, so it's really difficult for me.

Bill Gasiamis 25:57

You don't sound like your old self.

Alina Gonzales 26:01

It's part of my identity that's gone, I guess.

Bill Gasiamis 26:08

Your identity has been impacted by that for sure.

Alina Gonzales 26:12

Yeah, yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 26:16

What kind of work were you doing before the stroke?

Alina Gonzales 26:20

I've worked in biotechnology. So I was working with newborn babies and premature babies and babies with lung disease. So I was in the hospital in the NICU, and that was very rewarding, I love it, I love my bosses.

Bill Gasiamis 26:45

Do you see when you're back at work? Do you see yourself transitioning back into that field again or into a different field?

Alina Gonzales 26:52

I hope so, I just want to help patients out in any way that I can.

Bill Gasiamis 26:59

Yeah, your bosses, have you spoken to them in the last couple of years?

Alina Gonzales 27:06

Yes, I have. I spoke to my most recent boss, and he's very supportive of everything. He's frustrated with the fact that I go through this, but he's very supportive.

Bill Gasiamis 27:21

Yeah, he's also frustrated.

Alina Gonzales 27:25

Yeah, and he kept in touch with my mom while in the hospital, because I don't know if you remember, but they told my Mom that I was a bad survivor.

Bill Gasiamis 27:42

And what's it like hearing that, that they thought that you weren't gonna survive?

Alina Gonzales 27:52

Sometimes I'm like 'Okay, I'm not. I don't feel the same way, but before, I'm like 'If it happens, it happened to everybody. So it's like, I still have a lot to live for, so that's part of it. But then, yes, certainly, it's like it happened to happen.

Bill Gasiamis 28:15

Yeah, you've got a lot to live for, but you've contemplated your mortality.

Alina Gonzales 28:20

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 28:24

Most of us have, I think most people have had a stroke, definitely contemplate their mortality. How old were you when you had the bleed?

Alina Gonzales 28:30

40 years old when I had my stroke, very heavy and health conscious.

Bill Gasiamis 28:40

That's the thing about AVMs, they're just born. You're born with them, they're just in your head that you don't know that they're there, and you don't know when that happens, it's a real surprise, the same thing with me. I was 37 when mine bled for the first time, I had brain surgery when I was 40. Did you have to have brain surgery? How did they resolve the bleed?

Alina Gonzales 29:02

That connects from my brain to my heart, I can feel it. It's up here, whereas in the hospital, they had a shave half of my head down and towards the hover shunt in my head right now, but that's the only surgery that I had.

Bill Gasiamis 29:29

What does the shunt do? Are you able to explain it?

Alina Gonzales 29:36

It simply filters some of the excess blood out of my brain, out to my heart.

Bill Gasiamis 29:46

It filters the excess blood.

Alina Gonzales 29:49

Correct, yes.

Bill Gasiamis 29:52

Why is there excess blood in there?

Alina Gonzales 29:56

From the extra fluid and extra blood.

Bill Gasiamis 30:04

So it's related to the AVM, this additional fluid or blood that's in there, and is it that there's no way out for it, and you need the shunt to sort of cycle that out?

Alina Gonzales 30:19

Actually, I'm not sure about that.

Bill Gasiamis 30:22

Okay, I hear a lot of people have shunts in them, I don't specifically understand what they do. That's why I was asking, maybe somebody who is listening or watching can leave a comment in the YouTube video and let me know what perhaps the shunt is doing. What have you? Have you done any type of rehabilitation or other therapies that have really been useful and helpful, that you've enjoyed, other than hyperbaric?

Alina Gonzales 30:53

I've worked with a physical therapist virtually, his name is Daniel West, and he was very challenging. He helped me with different exercises. He's a physical therapist by trade, but he's very motivational, and very strict.

Bill Gasiamis 31:17

Strict? How?

Alina Gonzales 31:21

I feel like I do the exercise, I feel like right now I'd like my physical therapist very much.

Bill Gasiamis 31:39

So although he was strict, you felt like it was supporting and helping you with

your rehab, whereas now you feel like your physical therapist is a little less strict.

Alina Gonzales 31:53

I guess, yeah, in a way, because I feel like you really was focused on my recovery and walking and getting better, and this physical therapist just smiled and said 'Okay, we're gonna do this today. She has her plan, and she always sticks to it, not listening to what I say at all.

Bill Gasiamis 32:21

Doesn't take you into consideration?

Alina Gonzales 32:24

No.

Bill Gasiamis 32:31

So your mom does a lot for you. What are some of the things that she helps you with?

Alina Gonzales 32:36

She helped me walk, there's a primary thing. So she helps me to go the bathroom, and she cooks for me and pushes my wheelchair everywhere I go, everything.

Bill Gasiamis 32:54

She does everything, with your balance and your vestibular issues. Is there anyone that you've been able to see about that? About the vestibular recovery?

Alina Gonzales 33:08

Doing some research? I think that the most important thing I can do, I'm doing some research, trying to find something that may be able to help.

Bill Gasiamis 33:20

Have you by any chance, listen to my interview with Cheryl Shiltz, episode 200?

Alina Gonzales 33:28

No, why?

Bill Gasiamis 33:30

Because Cheryl is not a stroke survivor, but she had damage to her vestibular system that was caused by medication, and she had her vestibular system completely gone.

Bill Gasiamis 33:43

It was totally gone, and she bumped into by chance at the university that she was attending, the researchers who were working on retraining, believe it or not, the tongue to take over the job of the damaged vestibular system, and she had no balance and she had no ability to she had dizziness and vertigo, and she had no ability to walk, and they were able to retrain her tongue to take over the job of the vestibular system, using Neuroplasticity.

Alina Gonzales 34:28

Episode 200?

Bill Gasiamis 34:29

Episode 200, yeah.

Alina Gonzales 34:30

Okay, yeah, thank you for that.

Alina Gonzales - Final Thoughts and Encouragement

Bill Gasiamis 34:33

Yeah, Cheryl continues to advocate in this space. She's an amazing person, and our interview is called Neuroplasticity and sensory substitution, and some of the work that she was involved in was groundbreaking research, and the original work, the rehabilitation that she received, the work for that and the research for that. Started in the 1970s and in the 1980s and by the time Cheryl got to experience that particular rehab, she was the first patient that it was tried on.

Bill Gasiamis 35:15

And now there's a whole bunch of research that's come after that. So she would be, I think, more than happy to chat to you, and also the interview is definitely worth listening to.

Alina Gonzales 35:28

What's her last name again?

Bill Gasiamis 35:32

Cheryl Shiltz, S, H, I, L, T, Z. For anyone listening and watching on YouTube, there'll be links in the show notes to that episode, but for for you, I'll send you the

link, and then you can watch my interview with Cheryl on YouTube. She's just had a remarkable outcome because of that particular rehabilitation technique.

Alina Gonzales 36:03

What medication was she had?

Bill Gasiamis 36:07

She had an infection after a surgery, I believe, and they put her on antibiotics. And this particular antibiotics, one of the side effects for some people, very rare side effect is to to cause damage, I'm not sure, directly to the vestibular system, but to impact people in a negative way, in some, some way. And it did for Cheryl, so she was really stuck in this really difficult place of not having any balance after this infection was treated, and then she was able to get that back, they were able to rehabilitate that.

Alina Gonzales 36:55

Do you know how much money for rehabilitation process?

Bill Gasiamis 37:01

I don't know exactly. It took a while, though, because it was all experimental, so I'm not sure exactly of the process, but you'll get more more insights when you listen to the episode, and then, if you feel like it, you could reach out to Cheryl. Her contact details are available on the on the links, so you'll be able to you'll be able to find her.

Alina Gonzales 37:27

I'm very grateful. Thank you so much.

Bill Gasiamis 37:30

You're welcome, no trouble at all. I wonder if you might share with us what you feel is the hardest thing about stroke for you?

Alina Gonzales 37:41

I think the hard thing for me, my lack of independence, our future, working and making my own money, and coming and going as I preach and socializing and doing everything that I want, traveling food and drinking whatever one so it's very difficult now, everything is different.

Bill Gasiamis 38:12

The lack of independence and the way that things have to be done differently.

Alina Gonzales 38:18

Yes, unfortunately, the typical child, for me.

Bill Gasiamis 38:28

Yeah, what would you say that stroke has taught you?

Alina Gonzales 38:34

Well, I think stroke has taught me to be patient and appreciate what you have. I think that's one point to be patient and appreciate everything that you have.

Bill Gasiamis 38:54

Were you not so patient previously, or was it just something that wasn't in your awareness?

Alina Gonzales 39:02

I guess, but then like patient the way I am now, with my recovery and my interaction with other people.

Bill Gasiamis 39:16

You have to be patient with them and yourself, because I imagine other people who have never met you before would make assumptions, and they'd be ignorant about what your situation is.

Alina Gonzales 39:33

Yeah, it's unfortunate, but I think people are overall very ignorant about close survivors, they think 'Oh, you're too young to have had a stroke. So it's very difficult, because most people think I'm just full of it.

Bill Gasiamis 39:57

Even though you've told them you've had a stroke and you clearly have their deficits. They think it's not true, or?

Alina Gonzales 40:06

I think, they think that I'm just like 'I don't know what I'm talking about.

Bill Gasiamis 40:12

They don't know what you're talking about.

Alina Gonzales 40:13

They just don't understand it.

Bill Gasiamis 40:15

I think they don't understand it, more than anything. And also, maybe, perhaps Alina, they don't want to understand it, because then what will happen is maybe they have to think about themselves in a difficult situation like then they can't imagine it.

Alina Gonzales 40:37

That's very true.

Bill Gasiamis 40:39

Patience with other people, patience with yourself as well.

Alina Gonzales 40:43

Yeah, because, like I said, we first started talking, I thought my recovery was just maybe a couple of weeks. Obviously, it's one thing as the other.

Bill Gasiamis 40:57

Yeah, the type of patience you're talking about is not the kind of patience that you would have had to practice before stroke. I mean, you have to be patient for certain things, but this is different, isn't it? This is a lot more deeper level of patience.

Alina Gonzales 41:14

It's very different, because you have to have clear understanding of what you want to accomplish and be more realistic about the time that it takes to get there.

Bill Gasiamis 41:28

Yeah, frustrating as well.

Alina Gonzales 41:33

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 41:34

What do you want to tell other people who are listening to our interview here?

Alina Gonzales 41:41

I know that it's very difficult, but not to give up and to keep fun every day because

there's divorce at the end, say it goes in glasses and keep fighting. Don't give up, never give up. I think that's amazing.

Bill Gasiamis 42:01

Yeah, never give up, keep fighting, go after your goals.

Alina Gonzales 42:10

Yeah for sure.

Bill Gasiamis 42:12

Yeah, with the with the time that's passed. Now, do you how do you set your goals? Do you set them? Day at a Time, month at a time, years ahead, like, how do you set them?

Alina Gonzales 42:29

My thing, I've had to adjust them because, like I said, I have to be more realistic about how long recovery takes and the things take longer for you to get better, to recover, so I I set goals ahead month and month ahead of time.

Bill Gasiamis 42:53

Yeah, is it physically and you're is it physically and neurologically challenging to talk for an amount of the amount of time that we've been talking now.

Alina Gonzales 43:06

No, I'm okay.

Closing Remarks and Resources

Bill Gasiamis 43:07

Okay, so you've overcome that part of the, well, some people struggle with the concentration and the focus and the talking.

Alina Gonzales 43:19

Yeah, very lucky, I'm lucky and lovely.

Bill Gasiamis 43:24

Fatigue?

Alina Gonzales 43:26

No, I'm okay.

Bill Gasiamis 43:29

Fatigue is not an issue?

Alina Gonzales 43:30

No pain, no fatigue. And I'm able to use both arms and hands, and I just have one more time to hand me to work on my walk, and that's the main thing I'm focusing on now.

Bill Gasiamis 43:53

They're good things, they are all good things. So the blessings, I suppose, I mean the fact that you're not dealing with fatigue on top of everything else, that's awesome.

Alina Gonzales 44:09

I know that there are people that deal with a lot of pain and fatigue, and it's very challenging, so I'm very lucky.

Bill Gasiamis 44:22

Do you? As a result of what happened to you, have the doctors prescribed any medication?

Alina Gonzales 44:28

No, no medication right now, thankfully.

Alina Gonzales 44:31

None at all?

Alina Gonzales 44:34

None at all.

Bill Gasiamis 44:38

Yeah, that's excellent. So that means that you're generally in good health.

Alina Gonzales 44:45

Yeah, I just have to get better again.

Bill Gasiamis 44:49

Get better again.

Alina Gonzales 44:51

Yeah, for sure.

Bill Gasiamis 44:53

Yeah, that is good. That's one of the things that I also didn't have to deal with was any medication, and even though I've got a couple of little deficits and balance issues and all the things that I have, it's it's really good that I don't have those other underlying causes like some people, which is high blood pressure, while the issues that are related to a bleed that some people experience.

Alina Gonzales 45:22

That's true, yeah, I think also recognizing where we are fortunate, in love with human takes for the health that we do have, yeah, I think they had to express some gratitude throughout challenge. Otherwise, you just say assignment, you won't progress.

Bill Gasiamis 45:53

Have you had any challenges with depression or anything like that? Have they those things popped up for you?

Alina Gonzales 46:02

For sure, yeah, I think it goes like of all the culture, some days are good, some days are awful. Yeah, it's very, very well done, very difficult.

Bill Gasiamis 46:18

When it's awful, how do you how do you come out of it? You just have to wait it through. Do you have to wheel yourself out of it?

Alina Gonzales 46:29

Keep pushing, pushing through and find a way out, and not giving up with it like before.

Bill Gasiamis 46:42

And not giving up, even though it's bad at the time.

Alina Gonzales 46:45

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 46:49

What about any other issues, like anxiety does? Has that ever been something that's turned up in your life?

Alina Gonzales 46:57

No, not really, I'm very lucky.

Bill Gasiamis 47:05

I love your attitude, I love the fact that you are like properly aware of the things to be grateful for, probably aware of how good your health is, even though you're dealing with the deficits that stroke has left you, and that you're aware that it sounds like you're aware that it could have been worse.

Alina Gonzales 47:26

Yeah, I know a lot of people that have different issues that I don't have so very aware of the way the thing could be. So I know I've run that a very difficult time with fatigue. Another friend that has really tough time with me, very difficult time with drivers as well.

Bill Gasiamis 47:56

Are they all stroke survivors?

Alina Gonzales 47:58

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 48:00

It's amazing how many stroke survivors we know these days. All of a sudden, we end up finding a whole bunch of extra.

Alina Gonzales 48:12

Yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 48:14

Yeah, are these people that you see one on one locally or again? Are they online?

Alina Gonzales 48:19

All online, yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 48:21

All online?

Alina Gonzales 48:22

Yeah, all online.

Bill Gasiamis 48:27

How do you guys support each other? What is it? How does it help you to get together and have these conversation?

Alina Gonzales 48:33

I think when you talk to other people and talk about your experiences or your thoughts and feelings, then you realize you're not alone at all. Yeah, talking to other people to be beneficial overall.

Bill Gasiamis 48:59

Is it understanding, isn't there, there's a deeper understanding.

Alina Gonzales 49:04

Great good.

Bill Gasiamis 49:11

Under that's I find it difficult to have those conversations with people who don't, well, thankfully, haven't been there as well, that they haven't had a stroke, so that they don't understand. They used to frustrate me, but like, I understand now why they don't understand it's because they haven't been there, and we don't want them to go there, and it's really good to find other people who you can have a conversation with, and then they can I don't know it makes you feel at ease, I suppose.

Alina Gonzales 49:45

Yeah, for sure.

Bill Gasiamis 49:47

Yeah, Alina, I really appreciate you reaching out to join me on the podcast again, it is actually really heartwarming to see how far you've come in the last 12 months, and I'm looking forward to chatting to you again in the next 12 months, so that again I can see how, how much further you've progressed.

Alina Gonzales 50:13

Yeah, I hope so. I hope to give you a call or send you a message 'Hey, I'm walking and tell you about that. I'll send you a video.

Bill Gasiamis 50:25

I'm going to be very keen to receive a video like that, and like you said, I think it's

a word there were the goals of keeping in your focus and going after, and I love that you also make it about other people that you're keen to share so that other people can get better and improve.

Alina Gonzales 50:50

If you could can come here, or everything else, come reach out to me, feel free. They can always reach out to me.

Bill Gasiamis 51:02

We'll have the links to your socials in the show notes so that people can go to recoveryafterstroke.com/episode, and download that stuff and just thanks once again, I'm going to send you that link to that interview with Cheryl Shiltz and maybe a couple of others that I think will be beneficial for you to to listen to or to watch and yeah, just thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

Alina Gonzales 51:31

Thank you so much. Good to see you and talk to you.

Bill Gasiamis 51:36

That's a wrap for Episode 328 I hope you found Alina's story as inspiring as I did. If you enjoyed this episode, please consider supporting the podcast by subscribing to our Patreon page at patreon.com/recoveryafterstroke. Your support helps us keep bringing you these valuable stories and ensures that the podcast remains accessible to all stroke survivors. Remember to check out the show notes at recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes for links to Alina's social media, full interview transcripts and more.

Bill Gasiamis 52:11

If you haven't already left a review, please consider leaving a five star review on iTunes and Spotify and do please give a thumbs up on YouTube and leave a comment in the comments section beneath the video. I respond to all my comments personally. Thank you so much for being here, and I'll see you in the next episode.

Intro 52:34

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Intro 53:04

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Intro 53:28

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Intro 53:55

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