

Sunny's Inspiring Stroke Survivor Story: A Journey of Recovery and Transformation

A Stroke Survivor's Journey: From High Blood Pressure to Personal Transformation

Introduction

The journey of a stroke survivor is often marked by a profound transformation—one that encompasses not only physical recovery but also emotional and spiritual growth. For many, this journey begins unexpectedly, as was the case for Sunny Kakaiya, whose life took a dramatic turn after suffering an ischemic stroke caused by high blood pressure. In this blog post, we explore the various facets of a stroke survivor's experience, from the initial shock to the ongoing process of recovery and personal transformation.

The Stroke Survivor Experience

Sunny's stroke recovery journey began on January 4th, 2021, when a blood clot disrupted the flow of blood to his brain. This event not only threatened his physical health but also challenged his identity and sense of self. For stroke survivors, the sudden onset of symptoms—whether it's loss of movement, speech difficulties, or cognitive impairments—can be disorienting and frightening. The experience often forces individuals to confront their own mortality and the fragility of life.

High Blood Pressure and Stroke

Sunny's stroke was directly linked to his high blood pressure, a common yet often overlooked risk factor for stroke. Like many others, Sunny was hesitant to take prescribed medications due to concerns about their long-term effects on his body. Unfortunately, this decision contributed to the severity of his stroke. High blood pressure is one of the most significant risk factors for stroke, and managing it is crucial for both prevention and recovery.

The Emotional Challenges of Stroke Recovery

Beyond the physical impact, stroke survivors face significant emotional challenges. Sunny's journey was no different. He grappled with feelings of frustration, fear, and grief—especially after the loss of his mother, who had been a pillar of support during his recovery. Coping with stroke-related identity changes can be particularly difficult, as survivors often feel like a shadow of their former selves. The emotional toll of navigating these changes can be just as challenging as the physical recovery process.

Meditation for Stroke Recovery

In the midst of these challenges, Sunny turned to meditation as a tool for healing and personal growth. Meditation has been shown to have numerous benefits for stroke survivors, including reducing stress, improving mental clarity, and aiding in the recovery of cognitive and physical functions. Sunny practiced meditation daily, using techniques such as pranayam and the Wim Hof method, which helped him regain control over his body and mind. For stroke survivors, meditation can be a powerful way to reconnect with oneself and foster a sense of inner peace.

Personal Transformation After Stroke

Sunny's stroke marked the beginning of a profound personal transformation. Before his stroke, he often postponed pursuing his dreams and goals, but the experience of nearly losing his life inspired him to live with greater urgency and purpose. Sunny's determination to walk again—despite being told it would take two years—exemplifies the resilience and strength that many stroke survivors discover within themselves. His journey is a testament to the idea that a stroke, while devastating, can also be a catalyst for personal growth and self-discovery.

Coping with Grief and Identity Change

One of the most difficult aspects of Sunny's recovery was coping with the grief of losing his mother, who passed away during his recovery. This loss compounded the emotional challenges he was already facing, as he navigated the identity changes brought on by his stroke. Through counseling and spiritual practices, Sunny learned to honor his mother's memory while continuing to move forward in his recovery. For stroke survivors, coping with grief and identity change requires patience, support, and a willingness to embrace a new sense of self.

Conclusion

Sunny Kakaiya's story is one of courage, resilience, and transformation. His stroke recovery journey highlights the complexities of being a stroke survivor—balancing physical recovery with emotional healing, managing the impact of high blood pressure, and ultimately embracing a new identity. For those on a similar path, Sunny's experience offers hope and inspiration, showing that even in the face of adversity, it is possible to find strength, purpose, and personal growth.

If you or a loved one is navigating the challenges of stroke recovery, remember that you're not alone. Whether through meditation, counseling, or connecting with other survivors, there are many ways to support your journey toward healing and transformation.

Inspiring Stroke Survivor Story With Sunny Kakaiya

Sunny Kakaiya shares his inspiring stroke recovery journey, from high blood pressure to transformation, resilience, and regained independence.

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Recovery After Stroke Patreon Page

Bill Gasiamis 0:00

Hey, there, everyone. I've got a little bit of news to share with you. For those who have found relief or encouragement or simply benefited from the recovery after stroke podcast, I've 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 little bit of support.

Bill Gasiamis 0:23

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. Your support will help cover the costs of recording, editing, and hosting, so that we can keep bringing you the content that's made a difference in your life.

Bill Gasiamis 0:23

It also supports the transcription of episodes into subtitles on YouTube, making the podcast accessible to listeners with hearing challenges. For those of you who appreciate that, this podcast exists for stroke survivors everywhere, Your support helps with web hosting, and maintenance, keeping everything running smoothly and ensuring the podcast remains a resource for everyone.

Bill Gasiamis 0:42

Membership starts at just \$5 a month, and every little bit helps. 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.

Introduction - Stroke Survivor Story With Sunny Kakaiya



Bill Gasiamis 1:23

This is episode 317 and today I'm thrilled to bring you the inspiring story of Sunny Kakaiya, a stroke survivor who has turned his life around in remarkable ways after suffering a stroke due to high blood pressure, Sunny faced immense physical and emotional challenges, but through determination, meditation and sheer willpower, he not only regained his independence, but also transformed his life. Join us as we dive into Sonny's incredible journey of recovery and personal growth. This is one episode you will want to listen to.

Bill Gasiamis 2:01

Sunny Kakaiya. Welcome to the podcast.

Sunny Kakaiya 2:05

Thank you, Bill. It is an honor to join you and talk to you. I see every video you posted on YouTube, and it's really motivating for me, also, from that standpoint, to see the journey of people who have gone through and how they overcome, and that has actually given me a hope that I will be soon completely fine like so I'm very positive about that. It's been three years when the stroke has happened, exactly Jan 4, 2021, first working day of the year.

Sunny Kakaiya 2:56

So we celebrated and everything was there with friends. And on January 4, I started my business, and the stroke happened. So I still remember that day, very, very evident. It is still in the front of my eyes. I actually visualized what actually happened. I do some meditation techniques. So I go back in that period and see what happened to me, how I reacted, how my mom reacted, my neighbors. So

everything I see, I try to heal myself from that standpoint.

Bill Gasiamis 3:47

So what exactly happened to you? Tell me, like, did you notice something wasn't going well? There was some issues with your health. What did you notice?

Sunny Kakaiya 4:00

There was a history that six months back from the time the stroke happened, I was at a business trip to Hyderabad, and when I entered the office, I started sweating and I was feeling uncomfortable. I immediately raised it to the medical assistant, and they took me to the hospital, and then I was admitted in ICU.

Sunny Kakaiya 4:02

They monitored my heart and stuff, later on the doctor told me that you have a high blood pressure because of that, you are experiencing this uneasiness and drowsiness, and so he told me to take medicines, and later on, I was back to my home location at Mumbai.

Trying To Avoid Taking Medicines

Sunny Kakaiya 5:08

I will tell you that I was little bit hesitant, hesitant to take a medicine, because putting a chemical in my body, that was something my past memory, my father had cancer, and the cancer was developed because of consuming medicine. He was have. He was having acidity issue, and for that reason, he was consuming one medicine continuously in the morning and the in the evening.

Sunny Kakaiya 5:43

So from that standpoint, I had in my mind that I should not put medicine in the body which will harm my body in long run, because I've seen my father's journey, because cancer is painful, six chemotherapies, and then the operation, the esophagus was stretched and removed.

Sunny Kakaiya 6:08

So everything I have seen it. So from that, I was scared to put medicine in my body. Then I decided not to take blood pressure medicine. And that was a fault. And I would say, whoever has a blood pressure, we have to take medicines, or we have to take alternative things where we can do, maybe prana, maybe meditations or exercise or yoga or something with that.

Sunny Kakaiya 6:44

So it doesn't impact our lifestyle from that standpoint. And it was a period of covid when this happened, so it was second lockdown in India, and we, we were not allowed to go out. But that period, for that specific one, two weeks, there was some ease. So I went to bank and I came, came from bank around 12 o'clock.

Sunny Kakaiya 7:21

I My mom was cooking food for a for the afternoon, and I went on a business call because my call was scheduled. The moment happened that. 10 minutes after that, I just lurched on the right hand side, and I completely lost in that pattern. Then I kept the call, I called mom, mom didn't understood what has happened to me.

Sunny Kakaiya 7:54

Then neighbor was called off. They took me here, then for 15 minutes, I regained my movements again, because of someone had given a massage of red chili powder on my legs, because they said, on your feet if you scrap the red chili powder with the water, this will regain.

Sunny Kakaiya 8:32

And actually it regained, and I was able to walk and go down I stay on the 4th floor. So I went till second floor, and again I lost my connection to the brain, and I was not able to so I my friend, school friend who was with me. He supported me, and then all the neighbors came to help, and it took me to the hospital.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:07

But that journey to the hospital was from 12 o'clock. It almost took one and a half hour I reached off hospital. One and a half after once I reached hospital, they started giving me an injection. They knew that I got stroke after examining me, and they started giving the injection which will break the clot.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:40

So from that time, they waited till eight o'clock. Twice, they gave me the injection. I was having some movements of my hand and legs, but it was, it was. Not that frequent, like a normal person, but they said to you, they sent me to relax, and then still started giving the injections. Once that was done, eight o'clock, they told my wife and my mom that we have to operate.

Sunny Kakaiya 10:22

And then they took me to the operation theater at around 12 o'clock in the night, and they started me so I just remember I was on an operation theater, and they gave me the anesthesia they counted from 10, 9, 8, and I went off, and then the operations happened. The strange thing is that when I woke up, I asked my wife what day it is.

Sunny Kakaiya 10:57

Because I went on Monday, I thought today is a Tuesday, but my wife told me it is a Friday. So on four days I was on ventilator. Doctor told my family and my friends that there is a 50-50, chance that he would survive until he comes conscious. So from that period when I came conscious, I asked my wife, mom, and family members at what day it is and where I am, right?

Bill Gasiamis 11:41

I was going to ask you do they know why you had high blood pressure?

Intro 11:47

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? Doctors will explain things, but obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 12:12

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](http://recoveryafterstroke.com). Where you can download a guide that will help you. It's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Intro 12:31

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.

Stroke Caused By High Blood Pressure

Sunny Kakaiya 12:47

Yes, I had a high blood pressure because we were in covid times, we were not having much of activity to the to be done. We were sitting at home, and for that reason, I developed high blood pressure.

Bill Gasiamis 13:14

Okay, so you've got high blood pressure, the high blood pressure caused the clot, the clot went into your head, yeah, and then to remove the clot, they tried to give you the clot busting medication, TPA, that didn't do the job 100% and then they went and operated. Did they go in from your groin, in your up into your arteries? How did they operate?

Sunny Kakaiya 13:41

They inserted the catheter in thighs, from thighs they it gave me till here. I still feel something when there is winter or rainy season, I can feel the pain over here, because still, right now, it is rainy season in India. So whenever it happens, it happens that I feel that there's something which is pricking me, or something that sensation is there.

Bill Gasiamis 14:19

What kind of work were you doing? What type of employment did you have?

Sunny Kakaiya 14:26

I was a consultant. I work for Accenture at that time. So I was a learning management consultant. Specifically, I lead finance and accounting learning management. So that was catering for Mumbai and across India.

Bill Gasiamis 14:48

And you say you're in Mumbai, you live in Mumbai, but were you one hour and a half from a hospital? So were you in a distant area away from the hospital?

Sunny Kakaiya 15:00

No the problem was at the covid time the there was no ambulance available to get me to the hospital, so my friends, had to call multiple times to different ambulances, and that ambulance took time to come to my place, and I waited downstairs for a while, so that was also an issue.

Bill Gasiamis 15:39

So you guys had to make your own plans and your own trip to get to the hospital, because the ambulance may have taken too long to get there. It's such an interesting thing because it's common everywhere. It doesn't matter who I've spoken to about their stroke, if it happened during covid, it was chaos. Doesn't matter what the scenario was.

Waking Up After A Coma

Bill Gasiamis 16:04

Stroke patients weren't able to get to hospital quickly enough, they weren't able to be seen quickly enough, they weren't able to access medical care, ambulances. It was such a difficult time for everybody, the whole world, but a lot of stroke survivors that I've interviewed have reported something very similar. So when you woke up after the four days, it's Friday, when you woke up, what did you discover about yourself?

Sunny Kakaiya 16:36

When I woke up, I felt that my right side was missing. I was not able to feel my right side. I was not able to move my hand and my legs. My speech was completely gone. I was like (stuttering) I was being like that so that that was a period. But then I was in a hospital. I was for 15 days, I and then I was discharged, and I came home.

Bill Gasiamis 17:13

And when, when you were discharged, yeah, what was your left like? What was your body like? How were you able to experience your body? Was there deficits that you had to deal with?

Sunny Kakaiya 17:28

To be very frank, I was not thinking from that standpoint. I was in a fight mode with my brain that how can I improvise myself from this situation? So when I woke up, Doctor told me a doctor asked me about my memory. So he just parted a joke that you have taken a gold for your wife, but you are not taken a gold for your mom and just joke for but I said, No, that's wrong.

Sunny Kakaiya 18:12

Actually, I bought a gold jewelry for my mom, and I specifically that I mentioned

that gold jewelry, and after that, they asked me about your Do you remember your email ID? Do you remember your passwords? Do you remember your credit card passwords and everything? So I recollected everything, and I said, Yes, I remember everything. I have not forgotten all those stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 18:45

You didn't give them your password details did you? They weren't trying to scam you were they?

Sunny Kakaiya 18:50

No, they were just checking my memories, because these are the immediate thing which you do in day to day life, right? He asked me, did I remember my Facebook password? Then I remembered everything. I remembered all the conversation I had so it was just four days. Four days is still missing in my life. I meditate every day. I try to go in that four day period, but it is blank.

Bill Gasiamis 19:33

Did you so you had your memory that was still there, what about your physical body?

Stroke Survivor Story And The Physical Deficits

Sunny Kakaiya 19:40

My physical body. It was still. I was not able to make movement. I tried to get up by my own. My doctor and told me that, don't try. Experimentation right now, because your back has been very much stiff from last 14, 15, days you are in a hospital and your back has completely frozen that will regain a little bit. So just allow some time to regain yourself, and you will be okay. But he told me that two years, you will not be getting up from the bed. So that was a trigger point.

Bill Gasiamis 20:34

Because you didn't want to believe him.

Sunny Kakaiya 20:37

Yes, he told me, when I woke up and in the evening, he said to me in briefing that it will take two years to you get up from the bed. So that hit me to the core. I told him, Doctor, you are telling two years I will give you example that I will within one and a half, I will get up and I will try to walk I said to him. He said, that's impossible, because what we have operated, and I know the medical conditions

from medical terms, I don't see that you will get up very soon. So that hit me, that really hit me to the core. He actually challenged me. You will not do it.

Bill Gasiamis 21:38

Did you prove him wrong?

Sunny Kakaiya 21:40

Yes. Within one month I actually started walking with the help of stick.

Bill Gasiamis 21:50

That is fantastic. So why do you think he was telling you that you're not going to walk for two years? What do you think is going on in their mind? Are they trying to protect you? What are they trying to do?

Sunny Kakaiya 22:06

Yes, from the precautions perspective, they were very much that I should not get a stroke again in the midst of this, and I was really bulky at that time. That's the reason he said this that.

Bill Gasiamis 22:29

You're much heavier, how heavy were you?

Sunny Kakaiya 22:36

Around 120kg.

Bill Gasiamis 22:40

120 kg. And how tall are you?

Sunny Kakaiya 22:44

I'm 5.5

Losing Weight And Regaining Speech

Bill Gasiamis 22:46

Okay, so for somebody who's five inches, yeah, 120 kilogram is very heavy, okay, and I just want to see what it is in pounds, because a lot of our listeners would be listening in pounds. It's 264 pounds, and then how much weight have you lost? Have you lost some weight?

Sunny Kakaiya 23:14

Yes, over a period of time of six months, I have lost weight down to 75kg.

Bill Gasiamis 23:27

So you're down to 75kg from 120 kg, 75kg is 165 pounds. What a difference. Okay, so, and have you found that that has helped improve your recovery after the stroke? Has that made things easier for you?

Sunny Kakaiya 23:54

Yes, it has done good to me. I altered all my diets. I started consuming raw foods. I started consuming proteins, maximum proteins. So from that time, I very much I was on a diet perspective. It was planned, and from that way I have reduced over a period of time. And there were some exercise which is given to me. I do squats every day. Then I do, I do cycling, which was a part of regime physiotherapy, you should tell me.

Sunny Kakaiya 24:41

So there were lunges also I was to do, then bridges I need to create. So all the type of exercise I was performing at that time. So in that six months period, I was able to lose it and to be very frank, I regain my speech first. That was 100% within one month, I regained my speech. I went to another doctor, which is Ayurvedic medicines. He mentioned me, if you want to regain your speech, you have to utter a word in some particular format.

Sunny Kakaiya 25:30

So I will let you know what was that I was doing it. Aah, Ee, Ooh, so, this muscles will get stretched and it will get activated and that I have to do it continuously. So I was seated in a room, and I was continuously uttering that word, continuously. I was doing this, and that's the reason I regain this 100% so I didn't, get a stammer. I don't have any issues right now. I can speak easily.

Bill Gasiamis 26:23

So you regained your speech, and then with your you got up within a month, you proved the doctor wrong. Yeah, but were you able to walk successfully on your own after the first month, or did you still need some support? Whether it's some other things that you use to support you.

Bill Gasiamis 26:41

Just a quick break, and we'll be right back with Sunny's incredible journey. But first I wanted to take a moment to talk about something that's been a big part of

my own recovery journey. That's my book, *The unexpected Way That A Stroke Became The Best Thing That Happened*.

Bill Gasiamis 26:57

In it, I share my personal story and that of nine other stroke survivors who have turned their challenges into opportunities for growth. If you are looking for inspiration and guidance on your path to recovery, this book is for you. Get a copy on Amazon or visit recoveryafterstroke.com/book now, let's get back to Sunny's story and continue to be inspired.

Sunny Kakaiya 27:21

I needed, needed a stick to walk, and there was a wife and my brother beside me, because I need to make a balance between right inside and left hand side. I need to, again, teach my brain that you have to walk a walk this way. So I was a body of 37 year old. But I was again a kid of two, three years I was back to that zone. So doctor explained me very diligently.

Sunny Kakaiya 27:58

He said that right now you your one side is 37 year old, but your ones the one side is almost a kid. So you are to train that it from the kid perspective again. You have to grab things again. You need to try everything. What you have done in your kid, Kid time in your child time. So that's the reason he, he taught. Told, taught me everything from that standpoint.

Bill Gasiamis 28:30

And what happened with work? Did you notify work? Did you spend some time away from work? How did that go?

Sunny Kakaiya 28:39

Yes, that's something very interesting. I took a break of six months, but my director and my team helped me out financially. They gave me advanced salary of six months and to do my treatment, I'm really thankful to them at that time when they provided the advanced salary.

Sunny Kakaiya 29:14

There are many good thing has happened with me. At that time, I had taken a home loan, and I've taken the insurance also from that my home loan was completely waived off, around 40 lakhs. It was completely waived off. So all financial liabilities were reduced to the core, and slowly and steadily, my mental

piece was there, okay, and I don't have to worry much about my financials, because the aid was given to me.

Sunny Kakaiya 29:55

And within six months, , I started walking. But before that, I started my left hand to train to type, to write. So I started writing, 1 to 100 I started a to z, then I started with the words. Then I started eating from the left hand, everything from the left hand. I started typing. It was 17 words for a minute. I made it very true.

Sunny Kakaiya 30:26

So once now, if I type now, you will not feel it that I am work typing from one hand only. It is, it is normal. So I made equip myself that I have to work. From that standpoint, I have to do something. And I invested in that way. Other thing doctor told me that you want to challenge your brain. Right now, your brain is dormant. You have to challenge so what I did, I started pursuing LinkedIn courses.

Stroke Survivor Story: Taking Courses For Stroke Recovery

Sunny Kakaiya 31:00

I was doing LinkedIn courses, and I was getting some knowledge every day, because I was seated for six months, seated idle. So he said, Don't get into idle mode. Start in utilizing because you are a busy person. You are giving time to your work, your family and everything, and right now your idle, the bad thought should not enter your head, that nothing will happen. Yeah, so I did 66 courses from LinkedIn in that period, and I regained my enthusiasm.

Bill Gasiamis 31:43

Was it difficult at the beginning to do those courses and to concentrate? How difficult was it? Tell me about that.

Sunny Kakaiya 31:52

So I started with one to three minutes of watching videos, and the video when I see it, I was not able to understand what is saying. Again I have to pause it, going back and again I do start the video and understand so slowly and steadily, I was starting understanding the of the video so that that was there, and then a half an hour, then one hour. So every one hour, I used to regain it again. I used to see the

video to gain the knowledge.

Bill Gasiamis 32:33

So you had to repeat it multiple times.

Sunny Kakaiya 32:37

Yes, yes. And that has strained my brain very much.

Bill Gasiamis 32:41

And that strained your brain, was that fatiguing? Does that mean that you have to rest afterwards?

Sunny Kakaiya 32:48

Yes, but it has given me an advantage. After six months, I enrolled for the post-graduation course, and that was a challenge for me. I told them that I will be enrolling. So I told the university that I am a person with disability and I want to pursue this course, they examined me and told me, okay, you can do it.

Sunny Kakaiya 33:17

And then I joined Accelera and I completed HR transformation and people analytics. So I took the different subject altogether. I'm a finance guy, but I took a different subject so that I should, I understand it properly or not from that perspective. And I learned a new stream altogether.

Bill Gasiamis 33:43

What subject did you take?

Sunny Kakaiya 33:45

HR transformation, human resource transformation.

Bill Gasiamis 33:51

And did you take that because you had an interest in that, or did you take it simply just because you thought you wanted to try something else?

Sunny Kakaiya 34:00

No, I was part of learning management system as a consultant, so I thought I should pursue this course so it will give me an edge and more learnings and implement things in the business. So I did that.

Bill Gasiamis 34:20

It's still relevant in your particular field, in the work that you do. It was very relevant and are you still doing that particular course, or have you completed that?

Sunny Kakaiya 34:37

I completed that within 10 months. It was 10 months course, and again, have enrolled for new course from I am Mumbai, advanced project management and analytics. So the next month it is going to get communicated and. And course will be completed. So the second challenge, I took it after I took a break of one one year, and then this happened in 2022 2023 I took a break, and again, I took a course in 2024 and started doing that.

Bill Gasiamis 35:22

So are you back at work? Have you been able to go back to work? Or has that not happened yet?

Sunny Kakaiya 35:31

I went to work within six months.

Bill Gasiamis 35:35

Okay, so you went back to work full time, the normal hours you're doing before?

Sunny Kakaiya 35:43

Full time, yeah, full time.

Bill Gasiamis 35:46

And was it difficult getting back to work? How did you navigate that? Because Are you walking properly after six months, you still have some mobility issues. So how did you navigate?

Sunny Kakaiya 35:57

No, that was different. I was giving work from home setup so I don't have to go to office very frequently in a month once, I used to visit the office. So that that leverage was given to me being a disabled person, and the projects also were aligned to me in that person that I don't have to go to office every day. So that was very good. My mentors and my directors helped me in that way.

Bill Gasiamis 36:38

And then the days that you did have to go to the office. How did you navigate

that? Was it easy to get to the office?

Sunny Kakaiya 36:46

Yeah, I get CAB services from the office. They used to take me, but I have to go down with the help of my wife or mom, and when I came back home, they used to fetch me up to the building. So that was there when, slowly and steadily, when I regain the confidence I asked that I will go by myself only because someday I have to take that step independently. I have to walk independently.

Sunny Kakaiya 37:21

I have to go outside meet friends, to take in the groceries, or something like that. I have to do myself. So I started those so first time, when I went, I went for a haircut independent. So for that reason, I got a confidence, okay, I can walk now by myself, but I was lurching on the right side, but it's there.

Bill Gasiamis 37:52

It looks different, but it's walking, I understand. So that must have been a big moment for you, that first moment of new independence again.

Sunny Kakaiya 38:05

Yes, yes, I literally cried. It is a moment of freedom. It is the guy who doesn't sit at home for a moment also he's been seated for from last year, last three years. It is very much painful, because I used to play cricket every weekend, Saturday and Sunday. I was very active. I used to go outside with the friends. I used to go out with my wife, Mom, I used to party also, so not a single day I was at home, and the life suddenly changed. Completely changed,

Bill Gasiamis 38:53

yeah, big adjustment, big adjustment from your physical adjustment, your mental adjustment, your your speech had to adjust. Then you also had to your work situation, and then also your after hours situation, how you spent your time on the weekends. Everything's changing. It's very dramatic, and it's very sudden, and you're not prepared for it. What were some of the things that you struggled with the most. What were the things that were the hardest for you to deal with?

Bill Gasiamis 39:30

I'll ask that question again. You seem very motivated, very upbeat. You seem like the glass is always half full, not half empty. However, stroke is a very difficult time, so there must have been some things that made you upset, emotional,

perhaps, or, you know, worry.

Sunny Kakaiya 39:56

The only thing I was worried about, people used to see me from a different angle altogether, in a moment, six months back, I was something else. I was very much different person, and now they empathize with me, sympathize with me. Okay, this has happened. You will do it good. You will so they thought I will be, I will not be doing or I will not be pursuing my dreams, which I had it, because now life has stopped.

Sunny Kakaiya 40:41

You in some sense, you don't have to worry much, you relax and you you don't think about anything. And they used to just give me a weird empathy that now it is stopped. You can't do anything else. That is, there's a that was a direct message given by many people to me, that this is this is it.

Sunny Kakaiya 41:07

Now you will be a disabled, and you will be dependent on your wife and mom for everything, right from getting a bath or eating a food so that that actually hit me very much, that why people are thinking that I'm I have a same brain with the enhanced version of the brain. I have developed everything again. I started with the left hand. I regained all the moments which I need to do it. I used to eat it. I used to take a bath. Myself, not, not a single time. I means, after six months, I did everything by myself.

Bill Gasiamis 41:54

Yeah. So instead of encouraging you, they were saying you just have to give up. Now. You don't have to worry about doing anything. You have to expect somebody else to look after you and help you out. And then that's not encouraging at all. That's really difficult.

The Impact Of Words On Stroke Recovery

Sunny Kakaiya 42:13

That means people don't have a idea about this thing I think that everyone has some kind of disability. Even when I see everyone, there is some disability which are visible. There are some disability of there are not visible. So from that perspective, I can't judge you from that day. You cannot do this. That is

something. If you give me a challenge, I will definitely prove you wrong.

Bill Gasiamis 42:49

Yeah, and do you think they're not doing it because they're terrible people? They're doing it because they don't know any better, and they actually don't know how to be encouraging. And maybe they're again, maybe, like you said, they're trying to protect you or something, it's interesting, like, how people think about that.

Bill Gasiamis 43:12

I know maybe I was not exactly like that. I was kind of the opposite. When I was before stroke I would tell people who thought that they something was difficult, that they could do it. I used to encourage people ways to make sure that they knew that all you have to do is keep going and keep trying and all that type of thing.

Bill Gasiamis 43:35

But then I found that a lot of people don't know how to deal with stroke survivors, they don't know how to have a conversation about all of the changes that have occurred, all of the problems that that person has now, all of the physical challenges that they have. So they say the worst thing that they can possibly say, trying to make things better, but they say the worst thing, and they don't realize the impact that it's having on the other person.

Bill Gasiamis 44:04

And it's a little bit it's a little bit sad that that happens, but it's really important for the stroke survivor to understand that it's actually not about them, the person who is saying those words. It's more about that person. It's about that person's thoughts and approach to life, and that approach to life doesn't have to apply to the stroke survivor.

Bill Gasiamis 44:29

You can listen to that person just say whatever they want to say and let it go past to the wicket keeper and forget about it, and then just do your own thing, follow your own routine. Do your own encourage yourself. If you haven't got the right type of encouragement, fight for your recovery. Don't accept what other people who have not been in your shoes are going to say.

Sunny Kakaiya 44:54

Yeah. Absolutely, absolutely. I actually never thought of that. I was a different person altogether. So before that, before stroke, my personality was that I will be doing things later that was my notion.

Sunny Kakaiya 44:55

What kind of things would you be doing later?

Sunny Kakaiya 44:59

I will tell you that I was trying to pursue a course for a while. So I was thinking that I will do it, do it, do it. I will. But I never took an admission, and I never went for it. But as soon as I got a stroke, and when I identified my strength, I felt my strength, the yes, this is sunny and sunny can do many things. From that standpoint, I started figuring out that this, you can get it and conquer it.

Sunny Kakaiya 46:00

There is nothing impossible in this world which you cannot do it. So from that perspective, I was a changed person. So somewhere down the line, I feel the stroke happened to me, but I see it in a very positive way, then I'm a changed person. I'm literally a change person.

Bill Gasiamis 46:26

Do you feel like before you thought that life was long, and then after the stroke, perhaps, do you think, okay, life's short, I better do something now. I better not wait until later, because later might not happen is that something that you relate to?

Sunny Kakaiya 46:47

No, I don't see that way also that life is short. I have a desire to live. I have a desire to fulfill my dreams. This is just one incident in my life which taught me many things, let me know who are my nears and dears one. And it has filtered out people also and things also in my life. So I see it in that way, very much, and I'm very positive with that.

Bill Gasiamis 47:24

So it's so it's this really serious situation. You really unwell. You know you might not recover properly. You have all these concerns. Yet, when you have had a chance to reflect back three years now, three and a half years, you see that there's been a lot of personal growth and a lot of personal development, and your yourself, but you're an enhanced version of yourself, even though you have the

deficits that you have.

Sunny Kakaiya 47:55

Yes, yes, definitely, when I say, if I have, I've grown, I've grown in this three to four years.

Bill Gasiamis 48:09

Like it sounds like it's been an intense growing as well. So you've had a lot of growing that you've squeezed into those last three years.

Stroke Survivor Story: Dealing With Pseudobulbar Affect

Sunny Kakaiya 48:16

Correct. It's very much intense because I started meditations, I started inquiring about that, why stroke happens? What was the reason? What stroke has happened to me? I had a side effect of pseudobulbar affect. It is a effect in the brain.

Speaker 1 48:36

Pseudo bulbar affect.

Sunny Kakaiya 48:47

So you don't have a emotions control. So that is a part. So I'm talking to you right now, and if I if some thought pops up in my mind, which is emotional, I will start crying. And if I some jokes happen to me in my head. So whenever I go to my meeting or a client meeting or director meeting, I tell them that I'm a stroke patient, I might have a pseudobulbar affect. So if some thought pops up, I might cry, or I might laugh. So please don't mind it.

Bill Gasiamis 49:25

In the wrong moment, we're in the middle of a meeting and I'm laughing or crying. It's not about you, it's my stroke condition, doing it.

Sunny Kakaiya 49:32

Yes, I have mentioned that very specifically.

Bill Gasiamis 49:36

Yeah, it's a very common thing, pseudobulbar affect. I had a similar situation, and every once in a while, it just catches up with me and I cry. So a little while ago, I

was presenting about my book. So I'm not sure if you've heard about the book, but yeah, I did. I did. I wrote a book. It took four years, and it's about all those things that you've spoken about, sonny, it's about how it's possible to go through the process of having tremendous personal growth during the recovery phase from stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 50:08

And the book is called The Unexpected Way That A Stroke Became The Best Thing That Happened. Now it became that it wasn't the best thing that happened at the beginning, but it became that later on, because in the last for me, in the last 12 years, I have squeezed in so many things that the previous Bill doesn't do. You know, the previous Bill doesn't have a podcast, doesn't write a book, it doesn't talk public speaking, he doesn't do meditation, he doesn't learn about nutrition, you know, he's smoking, he's drinking, he's doing all these things that are harmful to the body.

Bill Gasiamis 50:48

I'm talking with my family different, you know, I'm nicer to my kids, I'm more emotional. And I remembered all these things, and I remembered that I've had, I had pseudo Bulba affect. At the beginning, I was crying all the time for nothing, but, but it hasn't happened for a long time. That emotional side, it settles down after 10 years, you know, eight years, nine years, it settles down a little bit, and it doesn't happen so often.

Bill Gasiamis 51:17

So I went to the book launch to present about my book. There was about 40 people in the room, and the first moment I stood up and went to give the presentation, I cried. And then I had to stop. I had to calm down. Then I had to continue with the conversation. And then sure enough, a few minutes later, I cried again. I cried about four times during that presentation.

Bill Gasiamis 51:42

So it's very interesting to observe myself, even after 12 years, going through that and being triggered by something completely unexpected. And I don't know why. So in the room, I think what made it a little bit harder to get through in the room was a lot of my family and friends, the ones that really helped me, that were close to me, some of them I've written a little bit about in the book.

Bill Gasiamis 52:10

So it's a very interesting thing to still experience pseudobulbar affect. But a lot of people who know me now, they know that that happens, and it's not a big deal anymore, whereas before, when you're 37 because I was 37 when I had the first bleed in my head, and you've never cried in public before, and nobody see you cry. They don't know how to react. They don't know what to say. But now they're used to it, and they know that in a few minutes, I'll be fine, and I'll just keep going.

Sunny Kakaiya 52:42

Yeah, the same thing I when my dad passed away. I was strong as a stone. I didn't cry, I didn't cry, and I was after that. After this stroke, I realized that where the difference in me, that the sunny before and sunny now is very different altogether, but this, this is a much better version from that I see. I can see that, because when you cry, you let out your emotions, and it is good to be good to get out the from that emotions.

Sunny Kakaiya 53:34

I believe in that way, because when you don't let out that emotions, it stays somewhere in your heart or brain, and it really impacts our health. It's okay to cry. We there is a notion that men don't cry. It's not true.

Bill Gasiamis 53:56

Real men cry Sunny.

Sunny Kakaiya 53:59

Yeah, definitely, definitely.

Bill Gasiamis 54:02

So how about your family who lives with you now? What sort of living arrangements do you have?

Sunny Kakaiya 54:11

I stay with my mom and my wife, but this year, on February 29 my mom passed away. Yeah, that's an emotional setback to me, because she has, again, raised me like a kid in this three years very much. So it's a very emotional setback right now. I'm going through some counseling also, because I'm, I want to overcome from that, because I have some dreams to complete, which my mom has seen it.

Sunny Kakaiya 54:52

I have to do that, and I'm much capable from that point of view. So I'm I'm getting better day by day, but missing mom like anything, because she used to be here only 24 by seven, so see her. So that's really missing for me and my wife. I have no kids yet, but we'll think to plan in future.

Bill Gasiamis 55:23

What about the counseling side of it? How has that been helpful? Why is it important to do counseling for yourself? Why do you feel it's really important?

Sunny Kakaiya 55:34

It is a fine tuning your brain and accepting a fact that the person is physically not with you, but from mentally, you should be very positive that from the astral plane, they will be with You only, and they will be giving you the blessings required, and you never think that you are alone from that perspective. So just one example that counsel told me.

Sunny Kakaiya 56:16

Do something which your mom used to do every day like a routine. Start performing those at what your mom used to do in the morning, evening or afternoon. You will not feel that she's gone away. She is with you only. So that has helped me of very much I should, I should perform few activities which mom used to do. It, like watering the plants. And then she used to prepare a tea.

Sunny Kakaiya 56:58

I prepare a tea with that specific style than doing a rituals from the God that she used to do every day. So all those things I started performing, she used to go out and get something for me, my wife, so I have started doing that, also what she should bring for us. So I feel that she is with me, and that is a very positive one. It does. The physical form is not there, but she is with me mentally all the time.

Bill Gasiamis 57:41

Do you feel like the counseling has reminded you of some things that you already knew from, say, your your spiritual beliefs or your religious beliefs? Has it just reminded you about the fact that your mom is physically not there, but she's living in your heart, you know, and she's spiritually still with you, and she's always going to be a part of you.

Sunny Kakaiya 58:07

Yes, yes. That has helped me a lot.

Bill Gasiamis 58:11

Yeah, your dad. How long ago did your dad pass?

Sunny Kakaiya 58:19

Seven years back.

Bill Gasiamis 58:22

So seven years ago, that was before the stroke, before you had an understanding of emotions and the type of level of what's the word, like wisdom that you have now very different kind of experience. And did you find yourself being affected by your dad's passing as much as you were affected by your mom's passing? Or was it sort of had similarities, but very different? You experienced it differently?

Sunny Kakaiya 58:58

Yeah, I would say it was different when my dad passed away, I was I was more. I was like a person who will be leading the family, a man of the family. So from that point, I was being very strong from that way, and I have to lead the family. But when my mom passed away, I cried like two year old. I still cried like Kid, because it's the it's emotions.

Bill Gasiamis 59:41

It's a very different Yeah, so what you're saying is, with your dad, it's kind of like the life, your life then took another turn, where not only did his passing happen, but also you, your responsibility increased, so you became the man of the house, so to speak. And. The head of the house, not the man the head of the house. And it's a different kind of transition of relationships.

Plans For The Future

Bill Gasiamis 9:00:08

So it's like your dad passed on something to you that you needed to accept and then move forward with. But as with your mum, it was a very more, it probably always was, a more emotional relationship with your mum, because she's your mom. She gave birth to you, and, yeah, she nursed you, and she did all those things.

Bill Gasiamis 9:00:31

So it was a and as well that you had a stroke, and she cared for you in a deep way like she did when you were a baby. So very different kind of experience. Correct? Yep. Mm, well, it seems like you're doing a great job at keeping their traditions alive and keeping you know their memory alive within you and your family. You're doing a great job. Do you have siblings?

Sunny Kakaiya 9:01:01

I'm the only child.

Bill Gasiamis 9:01:03

Ok only child. So it's you and your wife. And what are your thoughts about the next six months? What are you planning to do to achieve what's on the to do list?

Sunny Kakaiya 9:01:19

So next six months, I saw your video of etanercept, so that has triggered my interest, so I contacted INR Stroke Recovery Center in it was Philadelphia, right? No, Florida, yeah, Tampa, Florida, yeah. I my wife's brother is in Florida. So I contacted the center, and I asked everything in that format, they told me that around \$16,000 the cost will be there, and sudden test before that will be performed.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:02:16

So right now, I am collecting those money, from that standpoint, to go over there, and there is a waiting period of five to six months down the line if I take a appointment now, my turn will be after five months or six Months. So I'm, I'm very positive at that once I have that money, I will, I'll start raising it, and I will go over there and get completely healed. And that's a positive.

Bill Gasiamis 9:02:56

Okay, so you've spoken to the clinic, they've told you you need to do some blood tests. You need to get some results done. Do you do all those before you arrive to Tampa, Florida? You don't do that when you get there, correct?

Sunny Kakaiya 9:03:13

Right?

Bill Gasiamis 9:03:15

So you do all that stuff in India, you send them the results, they will determine whether you are eligible, yeah. And then, if you are eligible, then you can make

the appointment, raise the money, and then, and then go, got it. Got it, yeah, yeah. Well, that's good. I'm glad because, as so many people have heard about etern because of the interview that I did, and it's really encouraging, because it offers hope.

Bill Gasiamis 9:03:44

I know it offers hope for some people. It doesn't work. So it may not work for everybody, but if you can manage the money side of it, and you don't mind going through all of that to get a result, maybe I think it's worth it. I think it's worth going after every possible improvement that you can get. And it's great that you you found out on the podcast. I'm very happy about that.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:04:14

I would like to tell you one thing, I believe in the higher self. So when I saw your video at that time, I understood that God is giving me a sign that Sunny you have to do this and you will be completely fine, because I wish God I actually meditate. I told them that the day I got a stroke and I got like this, you only have a power to do that you can do in one day where you can make me proper, like a normal person. And after one week, I saw your video and when I saw the video, I cried I saw I told my wife to sit with me, and I saw it again, and we both cried. That was the emotion all together.

Bill Gasiamis 9:05:18

Wow, so I'm so happy about that.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:05:22

Thank you so much for that, doing that thing, because God gave me the message that you need to do it, and yes, you will get better.

Bill Gasiamis 9:05:33

I'm so glad about that. You know, we are, I'm in Australia. You're the way. You're all the way over there in India, as a cricket supporter, I never want India to beat Australia ever again in the cricket but as a human being and a fellow stroke survivor, My wish is that People find my videos and they have fantastic results, fantastic outcomes.

Bill Gasiamis 9:06:04

Do you know? And the fact that you found that in India and other people have found that in all these other parts of the world, it's so encouraging to me as well.

It's what makes me keep doing these interviews, and it's what makes me keep doing this. So it's such a fantastic thing. And now what's even better is that I'm in Australia. You're in India, you've got family in Florida, exactly where you need them to be.

Bill Gasiamis 9:06:29

You can fly into Florida, stay with them for a few days, got it, visit your family, go and get the procedure done, and then, you know, you can really appreciate the whole experience. It's just like from one end of the world to the other triangle, part of the triangle, and then to this other part of the triangle. It's just crazy. How how small the world has become, and how, how fascinating it is that you and I, we can connect, and then you can end up somewhere else simply because of one video. It's just ridiculous. I can't get my head around it.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:07:04

Definitely. And if something gets possible, I'll meet you in Australia.

Bill Gasiamis 9:07:10

Sunny. Come to Australia for sure. Come to the Australia for the for you know, one of the cricket matches, maybe the the.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:07:19

II want to visit MCG.

Bill Gasiamis 9:07:21

Yeah, the MCG, yeah, come to the MCG. I live near the MCG, not far from the MCG, so we'll go there. We'll, go and see the test match or something, you know, it'll be fantastic.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:07:33

Yeah, surely, definitely, we have a same interest.

Bill Gasiamis 9:07:37

First stop, Florida once you work out Florida, then you can come to Australia. Also, I just wanted to ask you, like, What's the hardest thing about stroke for you?

Sunny Kakaiya 9:07:54

I don't see anything hard just from physical perspective? Muscles get fatigued very frequently. You have to do a regular massages, keep oiling, because it

doesn't get fatigue, yeah, to continuously do exercise. That's, the one thing, if you miss what, two or three days, also you will start contracting your muscles, and you will feel that you will start the pain in that. So if I take a break, if I don't do exercise for two or three days, it immediately gets impacted. I feel that.

Bill Gasiamis 9:08:52

So the hardest thing for you is the way your body feels physically?

Sunny Kakaiya 9:08:57

Yeah, okay, so at least I do a squats. If I do don't do anything now, I will do 40 or 50 squats in a day. That will suffice for a day. So if I take a break, I will only do squats. I will not do anything else.

Bill Gasiamis 9:09:22

What's something that stroke has taught you?

Sunny Kakaiya 9:09:28

Stroke has taken my ego, it made me humble. It showed me the reality of life, you're living in the cloud. You see the reality and start enacting on the things you want to do. Don't do it later, later, later. So. Those things are very much impactful.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:10:04

Gave me courage to do many things like, if I have to walk again, I would take a step without asking anyone else I need to do it, I be little bit hesitant to go out alone, but I would take a step that should go out and do it. I need to, again, play a cricket that's a dream. So I always tried to grab a bat, but I'm not able to do it. But very soon, I know I will be fine. So very positive with that.

Lessons From The Stroke Survivor Story

Bill Gasiamis 9:10:47

So it's given you a lot of new lessons. It sounds like you've gained a lot. Okay, there's people listening now going through what you're going through? Maybe they've just started their stroke recovery journey. Tell me about like, what kind of advice or encouragement would you like to give somebody who's struggling at the moment with their recovery?

Sunny Kakaiya 9:11:15

Yes, I want to give advice to do a breathing exercise, a pranayama. And if you can do the pranayama for one hour or two hours, or maximum three hours, that is fantastic, because you are seated idle, you're doing nothing, but if you do practice a breathing technique, you will actually activate the lost arm and the leg, and it will help in your spasticity and regain the neural networks again in the brain, so that actually helped me a lot of breathing technique.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:12:06

Right now, in recent times, I started doing Wim Hof breathing technique, which my friend introduced to me. So that is, like very much beneficial. You don't get ill from that standpoint. So if you want to do this thing every day, you want to improve it. Start with five minutes, which you do, then you increase 10 minutes and get it till two hours or three hours. So you will see the difference in you within six months.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:12:45

And second thing, I would say, meditate. When you go inside the journey, you will find yourself, we've we've go outside and look some for everything, but real journey is inside. If you start seeing that, you will be, you will not be getting anywhere outside, or you distracted. You will not be distracted. So you have to see inside. That's, that's two thing I want to tell the world that breathing technique and the meditation is utmost. I currently one hour meditation, easy going every day I do it, nothing, no problem into into that.

Bill Gasiamis 9:13:40

I love what you said. That's a such a profound statement, that the real journey is the internal journey, yep, yep, yep. That's so true man, I practiced early on meditation and breathing very, very regularly, and it made a massive difference in my recovery. And what's the best part about it is it doesn't cost any extra. You don't have to go anywhere to do it.

Bill Gasiamis 9:14:05

You can do it from your bed, you can do it from your kitchen, you can do it from your couch, you can do it from any location. And the benefits are so dramatic. The benefits are so good that it's the biggest return what your time invested than anything else that you can do. And it's still important to do all those other things, but meditation and breathing exercises give you such a return on your time invested that it's just everybody 100% should be doing that.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:14:43

I believe in past life, also from a religious angle. So if we see of being a Hindu from that standpoint, we believe that we take 84 lakhs life before we take a human form. So currently, I'm learning something new into that, the past life regression therapy, in which I go into my past and see that why this has happened to me, stroke from that point of view. So that is something which is very focused. I'm still learning now. It is just one session done.

Bill Gasiamis 9:15:36

So when you say, why it has happened to you, what you mean is, what the purpose of stroke was?

Sunny Kakaiya 9:15:49

Correct. So in my past life, something, I would have wished it that I should be having this it has happened in this life. Maybe I'm just guessing it, but I'm figuring out so that theory is there that if we go and in the past and settle our karma, this thing will go away in this life. So I'm I'm just believing that that will happen. I'm very positive with that. Let's see and life is to explore new things, so I'm exploring it right now.

Bill Gasiamis 9:16:32

I wish you all the best on your journey. Thank you so much for reaching out and being on the podcast. I really appreciate it. Thank you for sharing your lovely stories about how the podcast has been important for you. That's really great to hear as well. And I look forward to hearing your update after you go to Florida. I would love to hear.

Sunny Kakaiya 9:16:57

Yeah, surely. And thank you so much, Bill. Lots of blessing to you, I would say. And you actually gave me the path from Gods will. So it's, it's very nice to connect with you, and it has been very good talking to you. It's like a brother. Thank you so much.

Bill Gasiamis 9:17:23

Thank you, Sunny. I appreciate it. Well, that's another episode wrapped up. I hope you found Sunny's story inspiring, as I did. If you enjoyed this episode, please consider supporting the podcast by subscribing to our Patreon page at patreon.com/recoveryafterstroke.

Bill Gasiamis 9:17:43

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Intro 9:18:13

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Intro 9:19:07

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