

# 124. Vertebral Artery Dissection And Stroke Aftermath - Stephanie Flynn

Vertebral Artery Dissection And Stroke - Stephanie Flynn remembers the exact moment when a sudden movement caused a vertebral artery dissection that created a clot that caused a stroke.

Social:

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Transcription:

Stephanie 0:01

I was not thinking it, but it's almost as if it really took out all the things that, you know, I really needed that were just kind of noise. And now I can focus on here's my purpose, here is the reality of it, here's what's important, here's where you need to generate your energy and just be a lot more simple and positive.

Stephanie 0:25

It was still difficult though, because, and even still now, I'm really saying I was even speaking with my friends about this recently, because I would say, I have a grasp of the emotions, but it's still very hard to feel it. And every day that goes by, I feel like it should be a lot further along. But I'm realizing this process takes time, and there is no time limit.

Intro 0:56

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

## Introduction



Bill 1:09

Bill from [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com). This is Episode 127. And my guest today is Stephanie Flynn. Stephanie remembers exactly when a sudden movement caused a vertebral artery dissection that led to a massive headache and then ischemic stroke.

Bill 1:27

10 months later, Stephanie is coming to terms with how life is different. Now just before we get started, if you have ever wondered what I can do to help you with your stroke recovery, you should know that you can get recovery after stroke coaching right from the comfort of your own home.

Bill 1:43

I too am a three times stroke survivor and a brain surgery survivor. And I have built for you what I was missing when I was sent home from hospital in the hope that you don't have to do stroke recovery as tough as I did.

Bill 1:57

Support packages give you access to a variety of tools 24 hours a day, seven days a week so that you can work on other areas that are important in stroke recovery,

that you don't get the chance to add physical therapy or rehabilitation.

Bill 2:12

With tailored support available for less than \$8.50 per week all recovery after stroke support packages, bring stroke recovery to you in the comfort of your own home. To try out recovery after stroke support and see if it is right for you, you will get the first seven days free, as well as a 30-day money-back guarantee no questions asked.

Bill 2:34

As a bonus, you will also get to face to face zoom support calls with myself to take your recovery to the next level. Go to [recoveryafterstroke.com/support](https://recoveryafterstroke.com/support) to sign up. It won't cost you anything for the first seven days and you will get a full refund. If you're not happy after 30 days. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. And now it's on with the show. Stephanie Flynn, welcome to the podcast.

Stephanie 3:01

Thank you. Thank you so much for having me.

Bill 3:03

Thank you so much for being here. I really appreciate it. I like to get in touch with people to come on the podcast to share their story about stroke, and about how it's impacted their life. Tell me a little bit about what happened to you?

Stephanie 3:21

A little bit of backstory, I've never really had any major medical issues before. But earlier this year, about the first week of the year. Let me give you a little bit more backstory. The end of last year, I had started having a really big headache and majorly just attributed to holiday stress.

Stephanie 3:48

There was a lot of things going on my family, we were traveling for a funeral and a wedding and you know, I just kind of brush it off. And then once my family we came home still had a headache. But again, I just thought it was something that was just a residual effect from the holidays and whatnot.

Stephanie 4:09

And then it was January 8th. In the morning, I still have that headache, but again, it was nothing different. And then at about eight o'clock, all of a sudden, my

whole right side of my body just started going numb and it was extremely intense very quick.

Stephanie 4:30

I have two daughters and one daughter was about 10 months old. She was with me at the time and my husband had just went to drop my oldest daughter off at school. Luckily he was on his way back home. I went to go and pick up my phone to call him and realize couldn't even grip my phone.

Stephanie 4:50

So I went and use my other hand to call him and just said hey, something feels weird. He got home in two minutes. And from the onset of the symptoms, it was probably maybe six minutes before we got in the car he said, we're going to the emergency room.

Stephanie 5:13

And luckily, it was only about a less than 10 minute drive down the road. But in that time, my right side was still numb, but I had completely lost my speech and pulled up to the hospital went to go in, I couldn't even walk in, he had to go inside and get someone to come out with a wheelchair.

Stephanie 5:37

And this is about 15 minutes in and of course, you know, they do the whole triage and all that stuff, and I couldn't even speak, couldn't move. I was trying to act like everything was okay. Because I am the type of person where, you know, mind over matter, just be strong.

Stephanie 5:58

But this just was unlike anything I have ever experienced before. And I of course had my 10 month old with us too. So I could tell she was distressed. So that was kind of making me a little bit more nervous. But they got me back in, they did a CAT scan, initially it looked okay, and then they did a second one.

Stephanie 6:23

And then they found a blood clot. On my left side. And it all happened very quickly. This was maybe again, like a half hour after the symptoms had started. And they then told my husband about this medication called TPA. And they said, you know, there's a risk, there's a, you know, I think 3% risk that this might not, give us the result that we wanted, but you know, sign these papers, and we'll start

to administer it.

Stephanie 6:59

So my husband signed the papers. And I think 10 minutes later, they're realizing nothing was really happening. So they wheeled me back on into surgery and started to perform a they started to do a thrombectomy to go inside, do the wiring just to clear the clot on their own.

Stephanie 7:26

And by the time that the neurologist went to go and finish, the TPA had cleared the blood clot. So he didn't have to finish with what he was doing. The clot was cleared, and then you know, they wheeled me back into a room. And again, this was maybe an hour and a half, two hours after the very first onset of the symptom.

Stephanie 7:55

And I think I was still in the shock factor, not really knowing what was going on. In asking the most incredible nurses, I live in Arizona, and so the hospital I had gone to was a tier one stroke hospital, ironically. So they knew everything that they were doing, they did a phenomenal job.

Stephanie 8:21

Every question I was asking, they already knew you know how to answer it next. Even though my processing at that point had already started to slow down, I started to realize not only that I was scared of the physical effects that I could start to be aware of the mental effects.

Stephanie 8:40

But then finish the surgery and came back into the room and really just tried to analyze from there, you know, what happened? How did this, you know begin. And I honestly had started feeling much better.

Stephanie 8:58

I had an enormous headache. But you know, it wasn't anything that I felt, you know, was extremely different until I tried to move and I tried to move to my right side and they said, don't try it yet. You are going to need to stay here, you very clearly are not someone that is gonna stay in one position and being calm.

Stephanie 9:23

But we're going to need to stay here for a little bit. And I realized the severity of it when right before they went to wheel me off. They looked at my husband and said you guys should say goodbye. We're not really sure how this is going to turn out.

Stephanie 9:40

And I think we both were just very much shocked like this is all happening so quickly. I'm grateful that they were so efficient and quick but this was a lot to process very quickly. So after they performed the surgery, then we just tried to figure out what we're supposed to do next and how this all happened.

## **Vertebral Artery Dissection And Stroke**

Stephanie 10:03

And we narrowed it down to it was about 10 days before I had turned my neck at my grandmother's funeral. And I will never forget, I had felt the most stress I've ever felt before. Everybody were stressed differently. I very much carry it, you know, my shoulders, and you know, I could just feel it.

Stephanie 10:29

And I, when I turned my neck, it was just a nothing intense. It felt like, you know, I could not even explain it. It was a pain that was so intense. I tried to ignore it, because it was really in the middle of our my grandmother's funeral. But you know, I would pinpoint my headaches would always be I'd say, hey, they're right here.

Stephanie 10:58

You know, I could feel it right here. But for some reason, it's right here. And everybody just said, you know, it's just a migraine, whatnot. So they pinpoint it back to when I turn my head. Apparently, that's when I had the dissection of the artery. And the clot had started forming, you know, at that point, and then fast forward 10 days later, and that is when a stroke happened.

Bill 11:27

Far out, vertebral artery dissection caused the stroke that caused a clot that went up into the brain that caused the stroke, perfectly healthy woman otherwise. And then all of a sudden, you're dealing with all of the impact of stroke, in a space of minutes, you've gone from Normal to half of your body being gone.

Bill 11:48

And then try to understand what it all means and trying to make decisions. It's a very common experience, the one that you've just described, it's, you know, similar to what I went through, but a lot of stroke survivors have had vertebral artery dissection have gone through similar things.

Bill 12:06

And it started from something minor as well. And one of the episodes, I interviewed a police woman who, you know, minor collision, moved her head in a particular direction. And that caused the vertebral area dissection. And then a few months later, I think it was it caused a stroke.

Bill 12:25

And she was in her 30s. And it just seems to come from nowhere. And from nothing, and very few people even know, to do anything about the headache that they have, for a long period of time. She kind of felt it in her neck like you she sort of knew where it was. And she would sort of say like, it's kind of in that spot.

Bill 12:48

But in the end, it's just amazing to be talking to you. And all those other people that I've spoken to, you know, 123 episodes so far all those other people that I've spoken do have been in that situation. And here we are, we're talking about it we're here, we're able to share. Tell me about what it left you with. So I know you were in hospital and then you were dealing with the immediate issues a TPA, by the way, which is an amazing drug.

Stephanie 13:18

Oh, my goodness,

Bill 13:23

I had it here. Where is it? It's called. The oh my gosh, where was it? I just had it open here.

Stephanie 13:35

I should know too.

Bill 13:39

Tissue Plasminogen Activator. So administered within the first three hours of stroke does for you guys. Like the most amazing thing and saves function saves lives saves all sorts of things, but it does have the risk of causing hemorrhages. In

some patients, it can cause a brain hemorrhage.

Bill 14:06

So the opposite of what we're trying to achieve. And then therefore, complications but I've spoken to so many people have been administered TPA, and they get away they seem to get away with it with like they get away with I can't even describe it It's so phenomenal what me and other stroke survivors go through years and years and years of stroke.

Bill 14:31

And then people who have been administer TPA and get a good result within three hours. They kind of dodged a bullet like a major bullet and they don't realize the seriousness and the dramatic nature of what's just occurred. So when you had time to come around after all the surgeries What were you left with that you had to recover from?

Stephanie 14:53

So I they had done about a couple days worth have, you know, like you said, bloodwork surgery, you know, MRIs, all that stuff. I was begging to go home, because I felt fine. Not realizing, again, I was laying down, I wasn't aware of my even though I had got my feeling back, on my side, I had lost about, I would say about 75% of my mobility on that side.

Stephanie 15:35

And then I once leaving the hospital, my main focus was trying to get myself back physically, you know, I was able to walk extremely slowly, I was not, you know, able to lift any weights or anything like that couldn't hold my daughter. But I was okay with that. I said, Okay, that's fine, you know, it's a traumatic event, I can handle that, you know, I'm going to start to do some physical therapy.

## **Post-stroke mental fatigue for Stephanie Flynn**

Stephanie 16:03

And, you know, trying to get that back. I was very focused on the physical side because it was obvious to me that I completely neglected the cognitive and emotional side, I left the ICU, truly believing that things would just go back to normal, I would just need a little bit of physical therapy.

Stephanie 16:27



Because I could think Normally, you know, my, they had given me medication to make sure that this wasn't going to happen again. And so let's just focus on the physical side. And I realize, probably within a week, that my cognitive side, my memory, my ability to comprehend my ability to be calm, and be patient, and to not get overwhelmed and overstimulated and I was most surprised with the unbelievable fatigue.

Stephanie 17:09

It wasn't honestly physical fatigue, it was truly mental. Just I could feel my brain trying to get back to normal, and it was exhausting. And they would say, you know, don't be on your phone, don't do anything. And I would just lay there and I could sleep all day.

Stephanie 17:30

And it was very defeating because I felt like, Okay, I'm exhausted. But let's focus on this physical side, you know, so any energy that I would get, I would try to get my physical side back, not realizing, even just taking a walk around the block, I came home and had to take a nap.

Stephanie 17:49

And I have never been like that before. So I feel like I was left with the obvious physical side that I kept saying, you know, they had told me, hey, you may never get back to 100%. But I'm the type of person where if you tell me, I can't do something that I'm going to try really hard to make sure that I can.

Stephanie 18:10

So it was extremely motivating. But in doing that, the mental exhaustion, and then so I was very aware of the physical side than the cognitive side and the fatigue. And then I started to realize emotionally, I had lost a lot of empathy. I had lost my ability to, you know, be calm and reason and make sense of things.

Stephanie 18:41

Things became, as night and day as possible. It's either A or B, there's no in between, there's nothing else because any other forethought just took too much energy. And that was very hard to first of all, explain. And then second of all, deal with because no one can see that.

Stephanie 19:08

My dad had said when he came to see me a month afterwards, he said, you know,

it's an invisible trauma that you're trying to sift through yourself. And you're trying to reason with the deficiencies that you now have. And I was able to get back physically, I would say about 95%.

Stephanie 19:30

And I'm extremely grateful for that I have seen I mean, I have never known anything about stroke until this happened. And of course, after it happened, I started to do some research and humbled. You know, I just was humbled by seeing how first of all many people my age have gone through it.

Stephanie 19:49

And second of all, just how different every situation is and how truly grateful you need to be for what you have. So I felt like I was in this bubble of okay. I'm extremely grateful, But the struggle is unlike anything I can explain, it's hard for me to put words to it, and then it's hard for me to, you know, become better.

Stephanie 20:14

And the irony for me is I actually, I'm a licensed counselor. And so I know all of these things. And it's like, there's this filing cabinet in my brain that was just locked, that I could not open. And it was a very trapped feeling, you know, realizing, hey, I can write down the reality as best as I can. But then sometimes it would come back in, you know, it would not make sense sometimes.

Stephanie 20:47

So I would say, yes, I feel like I was very blessed physically, to have gotten back with it, but I focused way too much on that, and was not honest enough, was not open enough, and was not realistic with myself enough to understand the cognitive and emotional effects because like I said earlier, I'm a mind over matter, person, but this is very much neurological.

Stephanie 21:18

The doctor explained to me, he said, You know, there are brain cells that were lost, that you won't get back. But your brain will rewire itself, you know, a different way. And so, that was, and still is very hard to kind of come together. And then, as I was realizing all that, the world pandemic started.

Stephanie 21:48

And I had already as probably one of the most quarantined people of this year, because I haven't left my house much at all, since the beginning of everything

that happening. But then trying to reason, that layer, I really had to compartmentalize all of that that was going on, because what was even just in my own mind, was very difficult.

Stephanie 22:12

And the main thing that I found to truly help me with that was finding a community of other people that have gone through this, because it truly is a situation that you might have a different story. But you can relate in the relearning of yourself, the shock, the so many of the things that came with it, you know, that you'd never would have expected to happen.

Stephanie 22:43

And so many people I have never met before have been my biggest saviors, because they were honest. And they would say, it's gonna take a while, or you might need help, or you might get back. And I had wonderful caregivers, I had an incredible family, and you know, they're all doing their best.

Stephanie 23:02

But it truly is an experience that if you're able to speak with somebody else, it is the most life giving opportunity, because it really enables a more positive recovery, in my opinion. But I've only gone through this once, so I'm not sure.

Bill 23:27

You've gone through enough. That's enough. That being said, I think you're lucky that you're a counselor, you have the brain to understand and notice things in yourself, you have self-awareness that some people don't have the ones, the people that are going for counseling may not have the depth of self-awareness, and therefore they need support, they need counseling.

Bill 23:50

I've been a coach for a very long time. Eight years ago, I had a stroke. And then I needed coaching and counseling myself. So I went and saw a psychologist and a coach. And I did everything I could to understand what blocks I was creating, that were allowing, that I was creating, and getting in my way of recovery.

Bill 24:15

So the physical stuff I did as well. But then I realized that my biggest recovery was going to have to be an emotional one. Because I had to come to terms with my health, my well being my almost dying. And my children and my wife and my

mom and dad and my family and all the stuff that I wasn't going to be around to see if I did die.

Bill 24:37

And then I had to deal with the cognitive and the mental anguish that that created while my brain was trying to heal and recover. And then I also had to deal with this physical side of it. So it's a three pronged recovery and people who are just doing the physical recovery, that might be important for them because they're in a wheelchair or they're using a cane or whatever, and I get it.

Bill 25:07

But they've got to do that in combination with the emotional recovery, because that is a massive block for a lot of people. And that gets in the way of the physical recovery, as much as you think that just going to the gym is what's going to get my physical body back.

Bill 25:24

No, the emotional recovery is also going to get your body back, your cognitive and your mental recovery is also going to get your body back, because it's energy that's being distributed through those systems. And it's trying to put some energy there and put some energy there and put some energy there.

Bill 25:43

And if you're got emotional trauma from 30 years ago, that you've never dealt with, it's not gone away, it's back. And it's back in a bigger way. Because you're dealing with the emotional trauma, as well as the stroke trauma. So I really got a handle on my recovery very quickly on the emotional recovery.

Bill 26:08

Got that out of the way quickly, I want to say quickly, a year and a half, two years of therapy, you know, I had dealt with a lot of that stuff started apologizing a lot, I love you alot, doing stuff, which was a different version of me that I haven't really expressed before.

Bill 26:26

So that was great. And as that started to resolve itself, then I started to find my cognitive function started to come back. And I started to focus on what I can do to support myself, which was all about nutrition, which was all about meditation and imagining myself achieving my goals and imagining myself walking better and all

that stuff.

Bill 26:51

And that also then supported physical recovery. So there was this really three-pronged approach that for me started with the heart, that's where it had to start. And once that process had begun, and I started to clear some of that negative energy around there, then I was able to focus on other things, and it was freeing and relieving.

Bill 27:13

And also great to put to rest stuff that have been there my whole life, you know. So what you say about how you've understood recovery needs to go. I want to dig a bit deeper there because I want to get a feeling for what were you going through emotionally, what were you thinking about? When, you've been diagnosed with this thing, and then also, you've come back and you're not the person that they knew you to be up until that point in time, what were you going through?

## **Cognitive and emotional recovery**



Stephanie 27:53

I would say, first of all, I really appreciate you being honest and open about the importance of the inward-looking at the heart, and then how that, in turn, gave so much more positivity for the cognitive, because I've been trying to do the reverse. And I've tried to focus on the cognitive and the emotional.

Stephanie 28:15

And for me, I was a very outgoing, personable, loving, not perfect by any means, you know, but generally, I have incredible husband and great kids. And you know, we like to be very social and outgoing. And what hurt me the most is the awareness that I am very different.

Stephanie 28:43

I am not as excited, or honestly loving at times that my emotional, empathetic side, it had vanished. It was almost like, that's what the clot went and took from me. Because I would try to find my heart I would try to speak.

Stephanie 29:07

And it was terrifying. And then it put me in a place of I used to be really outgoing. And now I'm scared of what people are going to see. Not because I necessarily care as much about what they think but because them seeing this in me shows me the reality of what it looks like. And that was more terrifying to focus on.

Stephanie 29:37

I didn't really want to see a lot of people because I first of all would become overstimulated very easily. And my own kids overstimulated me that was very difficult, very difficult is to try to, you know, a kid doesn't understand what's going on. And so, thankfully my husband knew I mean goodness, you get your match during this because they go through a lot.

Stephanie 30:04

I mean, but to explain it to a child, you know, not necessarily explain what happened, but you know, mommy's not as happy or, you know, hey, we just have to be quieter here.

Stephanie 30:15

So the emotional side really put me in a position where I had, I remember being in the hospital, I remember them saying, hey, there's a high chance you're gonna deal with a little bit of depression. And I said, I know how that stuff goes, I've studied it, you know, thank you for letting me know, I really appreciate it.

Stephanie 30:36

But you know, I already know how to handle that. So I don't have to worry about that. And I'll never forget the look of my husband's eyes. It was kind of like, Okay, well, just, they know what they're talking about way better than you do. And I had hit probably, after the second month, a deep emotional place where I had

realized, I was shocked, I had almost passed.

Stephanie 31:05

There is something now that's different about me. It's not like I can dig in there and find it and wake up with it tomorrow morning. I am frustrated, this is taking so long. And it was almost a hamster wheel of negativity that I have really never had an immense amount of before, my self awareness, honestly came more from being aware of other people's needs.

Stephanie 31:30

And that's how I would go ahead and take care of life. And that's what made me feel good before. But when that's stripped, and I can't take care of anybody, and I need to focus on myself, it was almost like I had started to clean out the mess that I didn't even know was there.

Stephanie 31:47

And then try to recreate a new mentality of how to beware of the negative, but to show the positive and to reawaken, you know, an emotional side that once was there, and then now isn't, and I mean, I've been married to my husband for 10 years. And so we've been through a lot and seeing him just kind of, you know, I very much would be attentive to how people would react.

Stephanie 32:18

I was very aware of people's facial expressions and everything they try and say, like, are they seeing something? You know, what do they know? And he was very open with me the whole time, and would kind of say, you know, you're pretty harsh. And, it's as if the how would he say it? It would just, it would be, he understood that I was different.

Stephanie 32:48

But it started getting to the point where, when we were in the hospital, they're like, it's a three to six month recovery. So I was like, oh, three months tops, you know, I'll be fine. And then when I started to realize that, Oh, my gosh, I'm having a hard time, you know, feeling love for someone, which I never had a hard time doing before.

Stephanie 33:11

Where did that come from? You know, I've studied and know a lot of stuff. But I didn't study this stuff. This is something that's completely different. And it was

new territory. And so I would say about a month two to three, I definitely went in to about a depression.

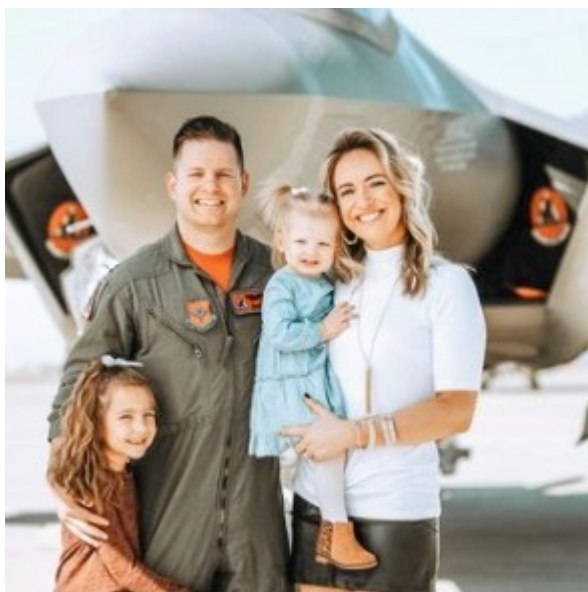
Stephanie 33:35

Where I realized that, you know, I was okay with the fact that it had happened, but I was scared of what the future was going to look like, because I didn't know how much I could control it anymore. And really tried to grasp the tangibles that I could change, you know, just being very simple, okay, just try to give someone a hug, or, you know, try to think more positively.

Stephanie 34:01

Try to put more positivity inside me, I realized that the problem is I was, you know, really not filling myself with a lot of positivity, because what I had known to be my love and positivity and, you know, high emotion with other people and being with other people being social, and that's gone, I had to rethink, you know.

## **Positivity and stroke recovery priorities**



Stephanie 34:24

And so in a weird way, I understand that I have been created to kind of be a different person, but it's almost, I'm saying this a month 10 I was not thinking it then. But it's almost as if it really took out all the things that, you know, I really needed that were just kind of noise.

Stephanie 34:43

And now I can focus on here's my purpose. Here is the reality of it. Here's what's important here is, you know, here's where you need to generate your energy and



just be a lot more simple and positive and it was still difficult, though, because.

Stephanie 35:05

And even still now, I'm realizing I was even speaking with my friends about this recently, because, I would say, I have a grasp of the emotions, but it's still very hard to feel it. And every day that goes by, I feel like it should be a lot further along. But I'm realizing this process takes time. And there is no time limit. And I need to be patient.

Intro 35:36

If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. Like now long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse?

Intro 35:53

Doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to [recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) where you can download a guide that will help you.

Intro 36:16

It's called the seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke. 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](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) and download the guide. It's free.

Bill 36:39

Yeah, you need to stop saying. And when I say you, everyone who's a stroke survivor, who is becoming impatient, needs to stop giving themselves timelines, deadlines, goals to achieve by a certain date, because that's going to be disappointing because you're not going to achieve most of them.

Bill 36:58

And what you need to be doing is looking back on what you've achieved, how far you've come, Oh, okay. I couldn't do that a month ago, I'm doing it now. I couldn't do that two months ago, I'm doing it now. Instead of putting a date and a time on

when I'm going to feel this, that and the other.

Bill 37:15

Now I know with emotional challenges that you're experiencing, the heart has neurons in it, the same as the brain has neurons in the heart has around between 30,000 and 120,000 neurons, whereas the brain has billions. And the things that you're not feeling may have been interfered with for the time being.

Bill 37:39

And then you can retrain that to come back in the heart, just like the doctor said, they're going to retrain parts of your brain that have been missed that are missing, can rewire the same thing can happen in the heart. So be comforted in knowing that it will come.

Bill 38:00

And what happens in this moment when people have stroke is before that they were in a team sport called family life, friends and all that kind of stuff. But stroke is like tennis, it's about the individual. And it's got nothing to do with anyone else. And the coaches sit way up above the court. And all they can do is go left to right, just watch the game.

Bill 38:29

And your husband and your friends are now in the stand watching your game and how you're playing it. They can judge you as much as they want, they can cheer for you as much as they want, they can criticize you as much as they want. But they are not allowed to talk to you during the game.

Bill 38:49

And now you're on your own man, you got to do it on your own. And when you have the opportunity to make a decision about whether I interact with all those people, or save that energy for me. It's a very simple decision to make you don't interact and you save that energy.

Bill 39:10

And explaining that to people is the most challenging thing because they think you're being rude, mean etc. And it's okay that they remind you of that as well. Because you need somebody to say that was a bit mean, because that allows you to then adjust slightly your behavior so that you're not coming across as mean.

Bill 39:29

And if you do come across as mean or nasty. You can have a conversation and say, Hey, I know that might have sounded a bit mean and nasty, but actually I'm just playing tennis at the moment. I've got to do this on my own. Because the energy that I have, I can't allocate it to this particular place where I did before because that means that I spent three hours in bed.

Stephanie 39:58

I think that was a very big pinpoint two was realizing that my energy is not limitless anymore. And that I need to make wise decisions about where I do put my energy. And I think that was also difficult, kind of, like you had said, even just saying, you know, somebody wants to go out to lunch, I can barely keep up with the first couple sentences and realizing, you know what, that wasn't the best situation for me, unfortunately.

Stephanie 40:29

And it sounds very selfish. And there was nothing the person did wrong. It was just the awareness that, I think I had seen a picture at some point when they explained the person, you know, stroke person's battery life, and how quickly it just goes. And it was so relatable, because it was as if, you know, that was something I needed to learn.

Stephanie 40:55

But at the same time, like you said, it makes you very focused on what you do, and don't put your energy into, and we are actually my husband, he's been in the military for six years. And so our lifestyle is very, you know, go, go, go, go. I mean, a couple months after it happened, we were supposed to move.

Stephanie 41:17

And there was just so many things outside of us that thankfully, he did an incredible job of, like, he would say, just block out all the noise, that you don't need to worry about anything else, you focus on you. And if that means you read and you sleep, and then you have energy, just to sit and play with your girls for an hour.

Stephanie 41:37

So that day, they see that that's important, and then close the book on that day, and go to the next day. And then maybe we can be one more step ahead. In that

part, I appreciated but at the same time, I wish that I would have been more aware, or at least had the guidance afterwards.

Stephanie 42:03

This is something I've honestly be compassionate about is, you know, everybody recovers much differently. But I had so many questions, and there was so much that was going on that I wished and I looked and I found.

Stephanie 42:15

And there's there is not a lot of resources, or from at least what I could see of people that we'll talk more about the cognitive and the emotional side, and then just being okay with what it is and then just moving forward every single day, and to look back and say, Okay, I'm better than that day, or you know, what, I've plateaued, or I can see I went down.

Stephanie 42:17

And you know, that hike, even though I was feeling okay, in the moment, I had to pay for three full days afterwards. And to explain it to someone, again, is a humbling experience for the same time, it's really become obvious, you know, the people around you that will be on your corners to cheer you on, when they say no, I might not understand it. But we know that you're not the kind of person to want to sit around and wait to do this.

Stephanie 43:13

But to recreate the best new form of you, you need to be as focused and as honest as possible. And that's, for me taken a lot of writing a lot of writing down my questions, because I will think of something and forget it. I mean, I still get overwhelmed going into a store just to buy things.

## **Depression and anxiety**

Stephanie 43:36

And, you know, I never had explained I had felt, you know, about of depression. And luckily I came out of that. But then something else I had never experienced before was anxieties and being worried. And I used to have a very carefree mind, the things we had gone through. I mean, we had just moved back from Korea a couple of months before and we had gone through a lot.

Stephanie 43:58

So, you know, I had never really dealt with, really being worried on a continual you know, not just, oh, I'm worried about this on this day, and oh, the day comes and goes and, you'll have to worry about it. But no being anxious, first of all, that it's going to happen again.

Stephanie 44:20

I will never forget, at my six month appointment, the doctor had said, Hey, we're gonna take you off blood thinners because everything looks great. And to be honest, I looked at my husband, I was like, I want to be on them. Because I can't have this happen again.

Stephanie 44:35

I've seen it where people have had it again, and the doctor can't look at me and say it's not going to happen again. So I would like my guarantee. It's not gonna happen again. And I'd like to stay on this medication.

Stephanie 44:47

And, you know, the doctors they're way more wise than I am. So of course, I did what he had said to do, but the anxieties after that. Not just that it will happen again. Just all the other things that would come into my mind, you know, just going to the store, and you know, someone getting frustrated if I couldn't figure out what I was doing.

Stephanie 45:09

And it was almost like, being in public was very overwhelming. And I have still, yeah, we're at over month 10, I'm still extremely limited in my public gatherings, especially with what's going on world. But realizing that, okay, now that there are anxieties there, now I need to be aware of, you know, how to, how to understand them, but also how to, try to be better.

Stephanie 45:45

Always, my motto in life is, you know, every day is a new opportunity, and it's a new opportunity to get better, and no matter what happened before, you know, it's a fresh, new clean start. And I think, you know, that's the beauty in a weird way of the situation is, like I said before, it almost cleaned out a lot of things that weren't, you know, supposed to be there started to focus in.

Stephanie 46:08

But then of course, roadblocks, things come in the way. So, this has been

definitely a different situation, I have yet to actually be able to go and I've been wanting to go and see a psychologist, I really have, I've asked my husband a hundred times, I just wish someone could go in my brain and tell me, what am I missing? Where can I get it from? Same thing with my heart, you know.

## **Focus on finding solutions**

Bill 46:35

I can tell you, you're in your early days. And anxiety about what might happen in the future is normal. Now, as a counselor, you can better understand and empathize with people who came to you that had anxiety.

Bill 46:54

One in three people who have a stroke will have depression, in some form. So you're one of those, many of those people can overcome it and get support and help, as a counselor, now you understand what it's like to have depression.

Bill 47:17

As a counselor, now you understand what it's like to feel out of control. You can be a better counselor, as a result of that when you go back to work. At month 10, I was forgetting, who visited me how to write an email, I couldn't drive, I couldn't work. By three or four months after that, I started to notice an incremental improvement in my memory, my ability to type that email to write.

Bill 47:51

So I focused on that stuff. In that time, I said a lot of apologies, a lot of sorry. In that time, I made a lot of wrong decisions, I abused people verbally, I was rude. I was mean, I was short, I was nasty, and I apologized. So what you're missing is not anything specific, that anyone is going to be able to pinpoint for you.

Bill 48:17

It's that ability to just go with the flow. And if you go with the flow, and you come to a speed hump, you just deal with that speed hump at that point in time. And whatever you need to get over that speed hump is what you do, just to get to the other side of that.

Bill 48:35

And what that's done is then given you a tool that you now have, say if that speed hump comes up again in the future, you don't need to worry, work out how to get

over it, you just need to access that tool and go for it again. So what you're doing is you're just building a little toolbox of things that are going to make you more resilient and able to solve the same problems quicker as they occur in the future.

Bill 49:01

And if you take some control in spaces where you can take control, this is what I did. I took control in my nutrition. I took control in how I acted after I misbehaved. And that gave me a part of the equation that meant that I didn't rely on doctors and other people for everything I relied for them on the medical stuff.

Bill 49:31

But I took responsibility for my own stuff. So when I came home, I didn't worry about the doctors stuff at all. I let them worry about that. I just worried about taking responsibility for my behavior and my action what I put in my mouth and what I focused my mind on so instead of focusing on problems, I focused on solutions.

Bill 49:54

The more solutions you focus on, the more solutions you'll find and you'll get. I had the amount of problems and more than other people. So I just focused on here's a problem, what are the 10 Solutions I can allocate to that and which one's the one I want to actually take action on, which is the solution that I'm going to implement.

Stephanie 50:15

That's really powerful.

Bill 50:17

Yeah. Which meant that when I had problems, they weren't overwhelming, as if there was more problems than solutions, because I've got 20 problems. And I don't know how to solve them at all.

Bill 50:33

I just broke it down, one at a time. And I solve that one. And I did have a lot of conversations with people to say, Thanks for the invitation to go out. I can't do it today. And let me tell you why. Because stroke somehow messes with you in this particular way.

Bill 50:51

And I now can't describe it, but it's not about you, I want to really be with you, but I can't, and you're welcome to come over, and just sit with me for an hour, but after an hour, I might be gone, I might be wasted. So if I am, don't take offense, might be just a good time for you to go home.

Bill 51:09

But just know that I'm not trying to offend you, or annoy you or not be with you, I really, really want to, but I need to reserve my energy. And now that you have a podcast episode, you can refer people back to it and say, Have a listen to it so that you can understand me a little more. And you don't have to take offense and feel bad about me being different. You know?

Stephanie 51:38

I think that has been one thing I've also noticed is that a lot of people when this has happened to them, they have been very open. And very, as far as you know, social media is concerned, and very honest and vulnerable about it. And all of those people have encouraged and really helped me, and I have not found that grounding, yet I have you know, as time goes on, I will say okay, I'm going to share a share.

Stephanie 52:08

And every single time I almost you know, clam up. And so I'll do a couple, you know, post here and there, and I'll just kind of explain it. But it's just extremely unlike my character, to not just be open and outgoing and honest. And I've honestly been looking forward to this because aside from my husband, I have not been able to explain it because I have had a hard time being aware of it. And then as soon as I am aware, I don't feel like draining my energy. And explaining that sounds terrible.

Bill 52:53

I'm supposed to be, so I'm learning from, you know, the internet gurus of the world is how to do this for a living, how to make money coaching stroke survivors, how to sell courses and all that type of thing. That's what I'm doing. If anyone listening hasn't worked out what I'm trying to achieve, I want to make this my career my living.

Bill 53:14

For three weeks or four, I have not made a post where I talked to the camera



about something that I think is reasonable and necessary to share to stroke survivors. And one of those things was the acceptance. I want to make a post about acceptance. And I've been thinking about it for about three or four weeks.

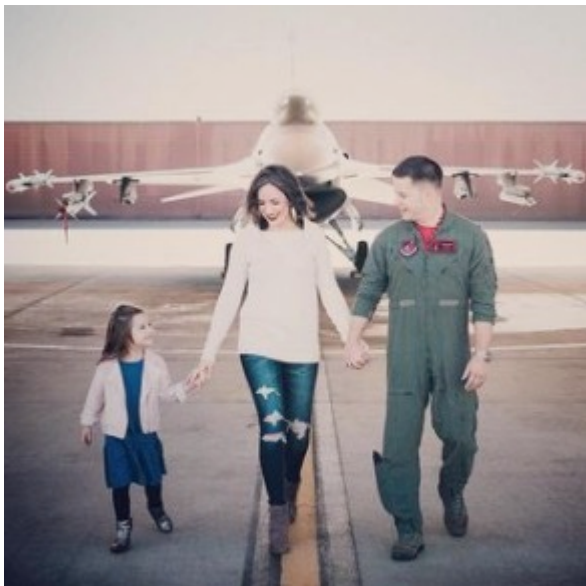
Bill 53:35

And I can't bring myself to sit in front of the phone for 20 minutes or 10 minutes talking about acceptance. Now. I'm breaking all the internet marketing rules and all that junk. But I just can't do it. And I'm not going to I'm not going to do it. Because I'm told by somebody else that I have to do it. I'm going to do it when I'm ready.

Bill 54:00

And I can have a lovely conversation with you and all the other guests that I've had in the last four weeks. But I can't do that. And I don't know why. I don't know why. I've tried many days to get to that point of recording it. And maybe I haven't accepted something about acceptance that I need to talk about, like, I don't know. But isn't it funny that acceptance has made me stuck?

## Acceptance for Stephanie Flynn



Stephanie 54:25

It's powerful too, because it's like, my first thought, at least for myself is you need to accept yourself, you need to be okay. Even though I will try to say it as much as possible. You know, it's all good. No being realistic. Am I accepting who this person is now, because there is a lot of positive but there are a lot of things that are different.

Stephanie 54:48

But every time I get into that rut, I always come back to the blunt reality that I was given another chance so I need to make that worthwhile. And nobody is guaranteed tomorrow. And I will never forget when it had happened. That Yeah, of course, after that for a while, I had never thought about myself not living until, you know, 60, 65. You know, I never thought about, what it would be like for my husband, my kids, like, was my time to use my time wisely before was I so focused on myself.

Stephanie 55:29

Really analyzing my purpose. And not saying that people who haven't had a stroke don't have a purpose. I'm not saying that. But to overcome. And, as my husband tells me all the time, and there's so many gifts I've been given, and this has been very blatantly, you know, a traumatic event, but you have had the better side of this.

Stephanie 55:54

So we have, I feel an urgency to use that, but kind of like you were saying, you know, I've had a hard time just saying, okay, even looking at myself in the camera and saying, you know what, this is how it is. And I'm not just going to say that it's okay, now I'm gonna have to feel it, and accept it, and keep that reality, keep that momentum going.

Stephanie 56:16

Because I know the other people that I have seen that have done that, I know how positively they've impacted me. And I've never met them before. I know how much I appreciate people's honesty of the good and the bad. And I think I used to make it look like, everything was good.

Stephanie 56:34

You know, if there was something bad, it's okay, but the reality is, it's okay to be good. And it's okay to not be good. But I need to make this worthwhile. And I think that that's why I've been trying to, figure out when's the most appropriate time to be as honest about this, because I want to be ready for whatever opportunity I'm given.

Stephanie 56:56

And like you said, as far as counseling goes, man, I can relate on a whole other

level now. Before, I just knew all the textbook answers of how to solve and I had the heart to help, but I have the mind to understand, which is like, Whoa, I didn't realize that I thought that, you know, people in my profession, which I've not been able to professionally practice, because of the military, I haven't been able to do that for a couple of years now.

Stephanie 57:27

But just in our lifestyles, you know, we like to have an open door policy, you know, we love people. But now, the, when I hear somebody say the word, depression, anxiety, things are different. I'm different, you know, acceptance, you know, being honest about the bad.

Stephanie 57:49

It's almost like I can get on their level so much quicker than I could before. Because now all the BS is gone. I do have moments kind of like, you were explaining, I will have times that I will see myself lash out or be you know, a form of emotion that I had not really dealt with a lot my life is anger.

Stephanie 58:17

And I my impatience, or my anger will happen so quickly, that I'm just like, Who is that person? And I have to I will realize that later. But then it's, I have to go back to you know, being honest with myself apologizing, realizing it, but also, now I understand people say they have dealt with anger.

Stephanie 58:39

And I know, there, it's on so many different spectrums. But I think just being honest with yourself, and to be real, I've had to write it down. And I've had to see my own handwriting write it, that has helped me see the reality of who I was in January, who I am now, and being okay with.

Stephanie 59:01

I'm so glad you said that about the timeline. Because, you know, you can read that you can recover this time or this time, and my husband even said, We're about to hit your one year, like, you know, what, there's not a number dial above our heads of how many more days left, we have until we're recovered, quote unquote, you know, or maybe this is the recovery is it's just somebody that is, you know, I'm in the same body but a lot more.

Stephanie 59:31

Before I was saying new, but other people have been helping to say renewed and I appreciate that perspective. Because, you know, it happened over the time of having to, you know, hash out why it happened, is it going to happen again, now, I'm on the other side where it's like, okay, it is what it is, let's do the best we can.

Stephanie 59:52

And, you know, being honest with myself that it's you know, If I got angry just an hour ago because I was starting to get stressed out about even just doing this, which I've been looking forward to so much. But I really wanted to be as clear minded as possible. And my kid just doing something small and it was just like earth shattering. It was not a big deal. It was super small. But I have to be more aware of my reactions where before I would be, yeah, it's fine.

Bill 1:00:25

So it's interesting for me to try and engage people to come on the podcast and read their comments in the messenger app, or wherever it was that I contacted them all via email about, okay, when will I be on? What will I say? What will I be about? Who will I, and all these questions, you know, your personality comes back in all these ways, which has always been there.

Bill 1:00:53

And they're trying to control what's going to happen in the podcast. And all I'm saying is because we're just going together to have a chat, if you're planning for every chat that you're going to have every day, which is some work that you need to do on that. And it was interesting to read, yours, will be okay, for that day, you constantly checking in with me to make sure that I was going to be available.

Bill 1:01:17

And I'm like, yeah, I'm available, if you're available, if it works for you, if I can make sure that you're going to be well enough. And because I understand that stroke survivors have to cancel, or they're not feeling great that day, or something else came up, whatever. But I see that side of people, and it's their personality, and it's no longer serving them, because now they're dealing with stroke.

Bill 1:01:41

And if you're going to be that frantic about everything, as well as try and deal with stroke, it's just going to be overwhelming. Again, it's harder to deal with.

And I love what you said about purpose, use the experience of what's happened to you to find your purpose.

Bill 1:01:57

Now, don't get me wrong. Purpose is not something you think about in your head, and then you find it and then you do it starts in your heart as well, it's why the emotional healing has to happen. Because then your purpose can come to life. For me, my purpose just started because I thought I'm gonna try and find other stroke survivors. Because eight years ago, there was no podcast, there was nothing happening.

Bill 1:02:21

And I wanted to meet people that were like me, so I didn't feel weird, and strange and alone. And I thought, I'm just going to reach out in this way. And then if they're happy to, I'm going to share that story. Because I need to be able to really listen to those episodes over and over again if I need to.

Bill 1:02:41

And what I didn't know was that I was discovering my purpose. And then a few years later, I realized that this podcast that started off selfishly, for me was actually more for other people. And the more that they responded positively to it, the more I got out of it, and the more I had to continue doing I couldn't stop.

Bill 1:03:03

And then somebody said to me, wouldn't it be good if you can make a living from this? And I was like, Wow, I didn't know that was possible. I'm not making a living from it right now. And I don't know if I will be in 12 months. But the idea that I can do this, connect with people from all over the world, realize that I'm not alone, realize that I'm similar to all these other people helped me uncover my purpose in life, which was to connect with other people really, and to make their life better.

Bill 1:03:35

And to do that, will make my life better at the same time. So in Episode 121, I interviewed a guy called Nick Kemp. And Nick is a guy who looks at this Japanese way of finding purpose, they call it Ikigai. And the Ikigai way is not something that you can actually pinpoint. It's more of a felt sense. It's a sense that's internal, that when you're experiencing purpose, or you're experiencing that moment,

that's the Ikigai moment.

Bill 1:04:13

And it's like, it could be at a pub with your mates having a drink, it could be riding your bike, it could be at work, it could be anywhere, it doesn't matter. It's kind of all encompassing, and it's not. My purpose is just to do podcast and release them and speak to people about it. Part of my purpose is to be able to leave my day job and come home and record a podcast where I never used to be able to do that before.

Bill 1:04:40

I had to be at my day job all day, every day that sort of at least what I told myself. And now you know part of my felt sense of I'm contributing to the planet to myself to my well being to my emotional state and to other people's emotional state has come from not really knowing what I started five years ago, it was just starting it.

Bill 1:05:05

And then seeing where it evolves from and how it goes, and what it ends up becoming. And then being comfortable with people going, you know, it could turn into this, or it might turn into that and me not holding on to those ideas. Maybe just going alright, well, if it turns into that, it turns into that, let's see what happens.

Bill 1:05:24

And then all of a sudden, I'm five years down, I've spoken to 123 people. And it's an amazing thing that the Bill before stroke, never contemplated this stuff. This was not a guy, not the guy that you're talking to now, it's a completely different guy, he was so thick and so stupid, in a loving way.

Bill 1:05:51

And here, he's more aware more evolved, his emerging out of his shell into this different version of himself that people don't recognize, but they love. And they go, okay, we can now be more vulnerable around this guy who was our friend, and we spoke about the football and we spoke about politics, and we did all this junk.

Bill 1:06:15

And now we can talk about emotional stuff. And we didn't have the ability to talk with him about that emotional stuff before. And isn't that great to be able to offer your friends that beauty that wisdom, and also my wife, you talk about your

husband, I mean, my wife, she went through the wringer man, did she go through the wringer, I interviewed her for Episode 100. And in that episode, we spoke about what it was like for her to go through stroke.

Bill 1:06:46

And to have to deal with me, and also what it was like to have to deal with my brain surgery, two weeks after my mom passed. You know, to talk about putting somebody through the wringer. And now me being able to hold the space for her. Because I understand how emotions are important in my life, I can now allow her to be emotional in her own way, with me.

Bill 1:07:15

And before the age of 37, before my stroke, I didn't know how to do that. And we were missing a critical part of our relationship because I couldn't be an emotional kind of guy and make space for her. So your journey is just beginning. And your learning and your connection to your husband and what you're going to be able to offer people and not in a monetary way or in a you know, like just your offering as a human being is going to evolve and it's going to grow and you're going to be somebody that they may not recognize, but they're going to fall in love with again, and they're going to go, Wow, this person is somebody that I can look up to.

Bill 1:08:01

And you know, they'll do the old cliché, you know, you're so inspiring, and all that kind of stuff they have one word to describe so much more, they don't know how to articulate it more than you're inspiring. That's not what they mean, you know, they mean that they can, they love you more they can be more around you than they could before. Why? Because you had a bloody stroke.

Stephanie 1:08:31

Which, I mean, I always thought I was writing my own story and making my own choices. And then the something like that, that completely takes the control away. And for another time, I will say, I have also learned, you know, my recovery has been one thing, but then seeing what my husband has gone through and seeing, the incredible effects that it has had.

Stephanie 1:08:59

I have appreciated the people, which is actually just a small handful. I mean, everyone's worried about how I'm doing. But the people that have asked him how

he's doing has actually helped me more because he has needed someone to talk to, and someone to be honest with because, you know, not only did have I changed, but it's a daily kind of like, explaining your wife, like it's a daily thing.

Stephanie 1:09:25

And, it's a journey that you know, of course, if they probably could hit a button and say, you know, I always say I was like, you know, I miss January 7 stuff who was completely fine and January 8 stuff is completely different. And, you know, he has always been so accepting but I would be lying if I said you know and hasn't put us in positions where it's like wait, I'm a different person now does this mean are we supposed to still happen?

Stephanie 1:09:56

You know, is this a new change? You know, I mean I understand we have kids, and to have him hear me say these things is, he just had to stomach and had to deal with and, again, focus has been on me, but the people that have helped, which, like I said, and not in a bad way, but the small amount that he's able to speak to, have really given him so much more life and hope, I think, actually, that's a big word.

Stephanie 1:10:33

That it's going to be okay, and or what she says, You know, I guess this is what true love is when you know, and you make the commitment, for better or for worse, I mean, this is the worst we had not anticipated. But he has always said, you know, but you're still here.

Stephanie 1:10:53

And, that's something that we have learned to really cherish and hone in and to be more intentional about is we have always been so others focus that inside our own bubble, it's so fulfilling. And it's so, just the simple, just the four of us being together has put us at a much different pace.

Stephanie 1:11:23

But at the same time, I never realized that, how much we all needed it. And it has been a journey. And I think to be honest, you're probably out of the 10 months, this has happened, I haven't begged to spend with like anyone, which is gonna sound so terrible, especially to people who have, you know, if I do one thing with somebody that I'm done for the next day or two, and I think when people see me



do something like okay, well, let's plan something else the next day, the next day.

Stephanie 1:11:55

No, please don't be offended. I used to be a marathoner, you know, like, I could not, as far as physical, I'm not running. But as far as social interaction, like, let's do this, and let's do this, let's do this. And I'm not there right now, who knows if I'll ever be back to that place.

Stephanie 1:12:14

But the place that I'm at right now is just very focused, and intentional and realistic in finding out what the inner feeling of being able to feel the purpose, and I know, like, my heart jumps every time. I see, you know, the reason why I actually found you is because I can't remember her last name.

Stephanie 1:12:38

But Kelly, from Hawaii, she, oh, my goodness, not only very real and open and genuine. But you know, her story was just, incredible. And she keeps telling it, and that's what I think has helped me is people keep telling their story, or people is keeping open. And if they want to not tell her story for a couple weeks, and then come back and say, hey, it's because, you know, that was a lot for me to deal with.

Stephanie 1:13:05

But this is what I chose. It's like, you're getting back the control that you thought you lost when this happened, but you're really just realizing No, the more I'm aware, the more I can take care of the things that are important. And, you know, we go from there. So I very much appreciate this. This is an extremely great form of therapy.

Stephanie 1:13:29

I think, should be charging a lot of money. And I think a lot of stroke survivors would throw a lot at to be honest. Because I think, you know, in speaking from a therapists mindset, you know, I know the word is escaping me. I know, like the cliché, I know, the, what it looks like when people, you know, it looks like to go get help, but it just needs to become more of a realistic thing.

Stephanie 1:13:57

So it can reawaken, you know, marriages that, hey, we don't know what's going on, but we're going to seek and we're going to find out what are the areas that we

can learn from this and become better. And, maybe we both weren't really focused on each other as much before, but now we're extremely focused on each other and, you know, for better or worse and gratefully, I mean, we're still here though, and we wake up tomorrow morning, we still have another day.

Stephanie 1:14:29

So just trying to run with this as best as I can. But also this is coming off of me coming back from the beach, which I think was the best time I had all year just to be just to let go. And just to relax. I think it's really understated how much a stroke survivors we're always trying to figure things out and then to rest and but just to relax and to have that steady pace of just contentment.

Stephanie 1:14:29

Was unbelievable and at least for me, and everybody has their own thing that, you know, they feel most comfortable with. But for me and even be with my family, it was just like, we were in heaven. It was. I wanted, I was not kidding when I posted and I said, I want to figure out a way to make her Yeah, I mean, because it, it was incredible. So this timing could not have been more perfect.

Bill 1:15:31

I'm glad with regards to, you know, I like to say to people, if somebody who's doing something that you want to do, it's possible for you to do it as well, if they're living by working four days a week, and you want to work four days a week, it's possible, what you need to do is find out how they did it, and do what they do.

Bill 1:15:50

Similarly, the way that's going to suit you to make it possible, does that mean you have to make some changes or fix few things, that might mean that but there's no reason why if a human A has done something, human B, can't do it. And you can get help from somebody to help you find a way to get to that point.

Bill 1:16:16

So that you can live the kind of lifestyle that suits you. Kelly was on episode 99, you know, she had an ischemic stroke probably caused by being on the pill medication. And I can't believe the amount of people that I've spoken to in the last 20 episodes that have said something similar.

Bill 1:16:39

The great thing about women who have a stroke is they tend to be more open, more likely to share more likely to get out and connect with other people, I struggle a lot to find men to come onto the show. And I don't know why. And while I do know why, because they're dumb like me, like I was, and they need to become wise.

Bill 1:17:06

And until they become wise, they think they're going to solve all their problems on their own, and that they have all the solutions and that they can't be vulnerable. And they can't do all these things. So that's why men don't do it, they feel like you know, they need to be men, and they need to, you know, show this front of how they've got everything under control, and everything is sorted.

## Knowing when to reach out



Bill 1:17:30

And I tried to push through a number of times these men barriers, and I didn't have the skills to do it. Because I didn't seek out the right help. I didn't go to the right person to guide me. And then I thought I could solve my problems of 37 years in two sessions. I was gonna go twice, or speak to the counselor, then we'll get sorted, and I'll move on with my life. And I'll be better and it never worked.

Bill 1:17:57

So I started a lot of things, but never followed through with them. But then after stroke, I had that out of the four years between the first bleed and the third bleed, and then surgery, I had so much spare time because I was at home, the majority

of the time doing nothing trying to recover.

Bill 1:18:17

And I thought, well, here's a good time and opportunity for me to focus on fixing some of those things that I'd attempted to fix before but hadn't really allocated the right amount of space and time to do it, you know. So it's a conversation that needs to happen. That's why I'm having it so that you and people like you can come on and have it and begin that conversation and then get curious about okay, what did I get out of that? And do I want more of that?

Bill 1:18:54

Do I want to give more of those things that I never thought I would get out of this conversation that surprised me in a loving way in a great way. All right. And if I do want to get more that What do I have to do? Well, I have to have more conversations, but I just have to have them.

Bill 1:19:11

And if I have them, more great things will come from that more learnings, more understanding more awareness, more empathy, more sympathy, more kindness, and then more recovery. And that's what. And that's what I think begins recovery from anything.

Bill 1:19:30

It's always conversation, whether it's a trauma from the past or a new trauma. It's a conversation about it and finding people who are prepared to just hold your hand and say, we're going to talk about this. It's going to be hard, but done it it's going to be easier.

Stephanie 1:19:48

Mm hmm. That is so true.

Bill 1:19:51

Then you're going to start to feel freer to explore more things. And once you get into the habit Bit of having hard conversations and loving the other side of that, and going, Wow, that's really relieving, or that's freeing or that's whatever it is, once you get good at that, then it's easy to go and have more more and more harder conversations. And then there's more and more space in healing and recovery that happens. So that's kind of my philosophy.

Bill 1:20:23

And I had a feeling that your philosophy was similar when I reached out. But of course, I'd love to hear about your philosophy in the context of stroke. And I just want to reassure you that it's early days, things are going to get better, you're going to have hard days.

Bill 1:20:40

And when you face them, they're going to relieve you of something that has been blocking you and being getting in your way. And it's going to be a better life. For this experience, you're going to I don't know, like, you've never read a book about a guy who had a perfect life, everything went well. It was fantastic. Awesome, great story. And you know, they died at 110 and everything was perfect.

Stephanie 1:21:11

That's so true. That is so true. And I think there is so much beauty in, you know, being comfortable to speak to people you've never met before. And I think it's so powerful, that there is the space for that, first of all, I mean, that's most important is that there's the availability.

Stephanie 1:21:33

And then the people that are wise, and that you saying to me them in the early days, I mean, I feel like I've passed my expiration date when I was, you know, three to six months, you know, you should be done. So to hear those words are more empowering than what I've heard in months.

Stephanie 1:21:53

And it's such a beautiful thing to be able to, like I said, to have this to have this opportunity. But at the same time, you know, it's almost like a weird euphoric feeling afterwards, because it's like, wow, okay, here's someone I've never met before, you were just honest about a traumatic situation, you gained incredible wisdom.

Stephanie 1:22:16

And then, you know, I promise you, I'm a much happier person leaving this conversation than when I started, not because I didn't want to have the conversation. But just because, you know, there's all those uncovered files in your filing cabinet. And one of the biggest things that a lot of people told me to push away, when this happened, I kept saying, this was stress induced.

Stephanie 1:22:40

I very, very, very, very strongly believe everyone said, No, that's implying that you brought it on yourself, you know, it's not you. And I'm saying no, I'm not saying I brought on myself, I'm saying, I'm aware enough to know, the stress that I was under, and now I'm so passionate to, you know, to have people just be more open and to find a place that, you know, we don't have to be putting ourselves in those positions, not saying if you get stressed, you're going to have a stroke, I'm not implying that.

Stephanie 1:23:08

But just saying, I'm having to relearn a new life to minimize that, just so that mine and other people's lives can be better, because not going to help situation if I'm not going to be able to help other people, if I am over stressing myself, and I think I'm really encouraged from the conversation to really explore, you know, this new person that I hope to have a lot to give, because that is the common denominator from the stuff before and the stuff after is I've always wanted to give.

Stephanie 1:23:43

But now I want to give a little bit more intentionally with a different type of purpose and a different type of relation and understanding that, you know, I never used to look for help or to ask for it. But you and other people have gone through this have been, you know, kind of like the guiding light to say it's gonna be okay.

Stephanie 1:24:07

We thankfully have this platform, and hopefully, it continues to grow. Unfortunately, people keep continuing to have them. But that's where this platform was so important. Because when the doctor said me, oh, this never happens to anybody. And then, you know, you're perfectly healthy, this is just freak accident, move on with your life.

Stephanie 1:24:27

Well you know, I have met a lot of people that, unfortunately, have been through a similar situation. And not that I want to normalize this by any means, but just to be more aware, and to be good, you know, encouragement, or whatever that's going to look like so I really can't thank you enough.

Stephanie 1:24:50

I've taken so much. I've tried to be taking mental notes and I'm going to be I have

my notes that I've put in here that I was going to talk about, but I'm excited to go into write these things down. Because at the end of the day, honestly, they're life giving, you know, and it's very important, especially with the status of our world right now.

Stephanie 1:25:09

It's just crazy and everything as it is, and we need a lot more hope, I guess I'm gonna go back to that word a lot more hope for something better, because it's definitely there. We just need to find it. And I appreciate the people. You know, my husband's been with me through this whole entire thing.

Stephanie 1:25:28

And he's been incredible, but I'll probably come up with conversation he's gonna say, I've been here this whole time and you've not been this happy. You know, that's just because there's beauty in relating with other people. That's why it's called relationships. You're supposed to be able to relate.

Bill 1:25:42

That is beautiful on that note thank you so much for being on the podcast. And when we finish this, just go there and just tell him what you really think of him and give him a massive hug and a kiss.

Stephanie 1:25:55

Thank you, he'll appreciate that. So thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

Intro 1:26:05

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Intro 1:26:32

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Intro 1:26:49

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Intro 1:27:10

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