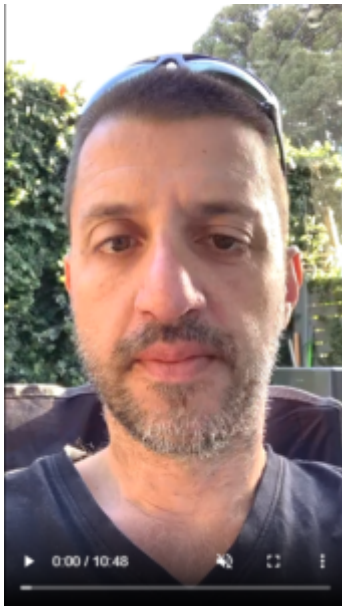


What was your stroke journey like?



Transcription:

It's Bill from recoveryafterstroke.com. And today I wanted to answer a question that was asked about my stroke journey. The person asking wanted to understand what it was that I've been through.

And in the last nine years, that's been a lot. And I think the reason why he was asking was to get an understanding of what a stroke journey is like, so that he can potentially understand what he might be going through, or what he might have to go through.

Or what's some of the hurdles, some up the times and some of the downtimes will be like. So I'm going to try and make this as succinct and as brief as possible. Because I do mention a lot of these things in the podcast episodes.

And if you are interested to know a little bit more about me, you can also go to the about page of my website at recoveryafterstroke.com. So my stroke journey started in February of 2012, where I experienced a bleed in the brain. And that was as a result of an arteriovenous malformation.

And seven days before I went to hospital, I was experiencing numbness on the left side. So I finally went to the hospital and addressed that numbness. And they found that there was a bleed in the brain.

And it was caused by a faulty blood vessel, that they sent me home for six weeks

while I was being observed. And during that six week time, I wasn't to drive I wasn't to work, do anything strenuous.

So it was basically go home and do nothing for six weeks. And around the six week mark, when I was about to go to my appointment, to follow up and see how we're going to approach this bleed in the brain, I had another bleed.

And this time, the symptoms were a little bit different. I started to feel a burning sensation on my left side, like I've been sunburnt. And by the time I got to hospital, I didn't know who my wife was, I couldn't speak, I couldn't say my name, I couldn't remember who I was.

I had no idea what was happening, and I blacked out. I woke up, and a little while after I woke up, I realized there was a lot more issues for me cognitively than there was previously.

And this time, I had memory problems I couldn't type an email. I had problems with understanding time, I couldn't remember who came to visit me. I really struggled cognitively, and that lasted for about nine months.

In that nine-month period, I was being looked up by the doctors regularly. And were doing scans regularly. And this time, they noticed that the bleed had tripled in size if it was the size of a golf ball.

And that clot was stuck in my head and it was just sitting there interfering with my brain. And in that time, I really struggled with all the issues, all the things that most stroke survivors talk about.

And I couldn't come to terms with what was happening to me. And I wasn't very productive. I struggled from massive and debilitating fatigue. And I was just nothing like I was after the first bleed that was completely different.

And it caught me by surprise. And it scared the heck out of us, my family, my wife, my parents, everybody. So it took around nine months after that, for me to start feeling kind of like things were coming back and there's some normality coming back. And I started to get excited about the possibilities that I was impacting on my brain health positively by really focusing on nutrition and reducing some of the things that I've spoken about in the last year.

Just caffeine, sugar, alcohol, gluten, and dairy. And I started to really dial in and

tune in my nutrition. And I used to pay attention a lot to when I ate something what it made me feel like.

Now in that time, I just started to notice that things got better and better. And I eventually slowly got back to work. I was self employed, I had a painting company. So slowly got back to work, but not on the tools. I had a lot of other people taking on all the tasks that I needed to be done during the day.

And I just kept the relationships with my clients going. And I was able to slowly continue to get monitored by the doctors and we were in a situation where we thought that perhaps everything was going to be okay. But then almost three years into my journey. I experienced another bleed in November of 2014. And that bleed caused me to require brain surgery.

During that time we booked in the brain surgery day. And when I woke from brain surgery, they successfully removed the faulty blood vessel. I couldn't feel my entire left side. And I needed to learn how to walk again, use my left arm again. And I went through rehabilitation to get back on my feet.

And what I've been left with deficits, including the numbness on the left side, that's there all the time, tightness in the muscles. So, spasticity, but a minor version of spasticity.

And sometimes when I get tired the fatigue is a real issue. So I know that when I start to notice the fatigue happening, I start to take it easy, and start to get ready to rest and do nothing and cancel my appointments.

And in that time, every emotion that you can possibly imagine from February 2012, to November 2014, and beyond and even today, we went through doubt, fear, uncertainty, financial problems, we experience psychological issues in a way I did. I involve my family in my therapy sessions .

I went through every single possible low and high life that you can imagine. And I really struggled with a lot of things. But I went and sought out solutions. One of those things that I did really well was sought out solutions.

And I think that focusing on the solutions, putting all my time in solutions, rather than what the problems are and why I've got all these problems and how all these problems came about and am I ever going to be able to get rid of these problems?

Focusing on solutions was the thing that really kept me sane because it made me feel a little empowered by the fact that I was learning how to solve my own problems. In conjunction with the doctors.

I sought out naturopath, Reiki healers, I sought out functional medicine, people are sought out doctors, chiropractors are sought out massage therapists, you name it, every single kind of person that I thought might help, I had a go and I saw them and booked appointments with them often.

And it made a big difference because I started to find things that were working for me and things that weren't working for me I decrease the things that weren't working for me. And I started to increase the time spent doing the things that did work for me.

So if there are things that you're going through, that you think you're the only one going through them, You're not. Stroke survivors that are recovering from stroke are all going through the same thing that you're going through. And if you feel you need to reach out to somebody feel free to reach out to me.

But also on Instagram, hashtag stroke survivor is a really popular hashtag. And it's a great hashtag, put something out into the world and get amazing responses back from an amazing community.

I also sought out people to coach me and support me, from psychologists to life coaches, and business coaches and all sorts of people to guide me so I can get better at doing the things that took up a lot of my time. I refined the way I went about running my business.

And even though I struggled with fatigue, even I struggled with lack of energy. Even though I struggled with numbness and memory problems I still continued to attempt to run my business as per normal.

I still continued to attempt to be a dad, I still continued to attempt to be a son, I still continued to do all those things that I needed to do. Even if the way that I was going about doing those wasn't as my old self, it wasn't exactly the same. I just did it as best as I could.

And I didn't apologize for my shortcomings. I just did what I could, and for the people that didn't understand that was their problem. It wasn't my problem. They

would need to educate themselves a little more in the by asking me about what was going on for me and what was working and what's not working and how I'm feeling.

Or they need to do their own research on Google with very few people tend to do. So as a result, in that time I also started the podcast, and there's 130 episodes I'll be recording the next one in the next hour and hopefully that answers the question and hopefully that answers the question for you if this is a question you've been thinking, but haven't asked yet.

And if you like to leave any comments below, feel free to leave any comments below. And also feel free to check out my website where I offer some support via coaching or courses, and also check out my website just to check out 130 other podcast episodes that are there where I interview stroke survivors.

And they share their story of their stroke journey and their recovery, their challenges and their problems. And I think you'll find that you're not alone. So all the best, Bill from recoveryafterstroke.com. See you on the next installment.