**Stanislav Jusyonis**

I am 59 years of age. My profession is offset printer (preparation of the slab with applied text to be ready to print).I have been working in this occupation for more than 30 years.

I had the last-haemorrhagic stroke in December 1997. I have had a few before, but I have survived them without hospitalization. I had the first stroke in 1991, when, suddenly I have lost sight in one of my eyes. After being treated in hospital my eyesight has got back to normal.

The last stroke happened between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. at home. I remember when my wife saw me; she was just opening the doors. The stroke happened when I was still sleepy. However, I have already woken up and wanted to go, but I couldn’t control one part of my body, it could not feel it. I fell down on a chair, I couldn’t hold on to a little table. There were moments when I was losing my ability of thinking, but I have been conscious all the time. I understood what has happened to me, and wanted to be taken to the hospital as soon as possible. Of course, nobody waits for an illness, but I already knew what stroke is and that I need to get to specialists.

From beginning of being in hospital, I knew that I need to start to walk; I understood that it’s difficult, but I was trying my best. I have this will power since my childhood. I was told off when I was getting up, because I tried to do everything by myself (to walk to lavatory), although, I was not allowed to do it without assistance. I believed that I shouldn’t lay down, but should be moving. The only thought in my head was-I need to move forward.

Fears started appearing after hospital, at home. I had very noisy work and after a stroke noise began disturbing me. Noise of cars, any movement in the neighbouring apartment, any noise outside annoyed me. When I went to somewhere, I had to go over people, and it seemed to me that people are watching me. I wasn't afraid of death... even during the first hours.

Stroke has very big losses. I feel loss of time, it’s a pity that I didn’t do more. I would work in a big term and it is not case of money. Work is something like a skill, vital – it is important to pass the way with people. I can't tell that I liked this work, but I chose this job, so it is necessary to work. I lost a possibility of communication and unbroken. I am also broken physically. I have the 2nd group of disability and pink sheet (it equates the 2nd group to the 1st). Although, I wasn't completely restored physically, I don't upset. I have my family and I know that I can return all, I just should try. For these 12 years I could become a head of printing office.

Time is a valuation, its loss - is the missed opportunities. Now, I value even an hour. I began to appreciate time even more.

Nevertheless, I don't think that these years after a stroke lost – I live, I breathe, I move, communicate. When I was in hospital, professor brought students and showed me, I think that it is necessary, people studied.

Before the stroke I played musical instruments very well but then I lost these skills. For example, I played an accordion and acted on dances. I met my wife by music… Right now I play only for myself. It’s hard… When I go over the people who play accordion, it’s difficult to restrain tears.

I was sensitive before a stroke, and after disease it became appearing more. To communicate with each other, to help, to sympathize, to listen, to be with each other, I think that all of it is very important. I am treating to old women with touching, I like communicating with wise old men – They teach me the wisdom of life, relationship to people, situations. I believe that human relationships are very important.

Almost all of my values changed after a stroke. The first was human relationship - kindness, honesty, disinterestedness. In the past it was value, but now it is the most important thing.

Wealth has lost its value for me-do not save up, do not spare, and enjoy the sun, air, money. I used to work three shifts in a row, and always was unsatisfied, something was lacking. Why on earth did I have an urge to work so much..? Usually, after a night shift I was walking home-it was summer, sun was shining, but I needed to go home and have a sleep. So much time was wasted…Now I do not need to work and live my life enjoying every moment of it... at least I try.

I am as an emotional and inquisitive person interesting in events which take place in our country. Unfortunately I find it difficult to take an active part in events because of my physical limits, for instance in volunteering cleaning up.

There is no bad weather I like any of them. I have a good relationship with all. I know that we are different and think differently but political situation in our country saddens me because there is no democracy. The situation in Latvia which divides people into “us” and them” saddens me greatly.

It’s not hard to please me. There are people who are alive and pleased to be with me and I am happy to have them. Most Important thing is humanity. In the good sense man can solve everything because man is everything.

The littlest things make me pleased. Here is an example: I woke up at 5 o’clock and heard the call of the nightingale where I understood life goes on in spite of everything. The sun makes me happy.

Everything become more beautiful and warmer when it’s shines.

Now I can eat, brush my teeth and write but before I couldn’t even hold something in my hands. After a stroke all is lost but now my sense of humor comes back. I was told that after a stroke I was lost. I don’t remember much about it, but it was the most difficult moments. Fortunately, the God leave me a pretty good memory.

Basically, I succeed in household use. I can clean up, cook and go shopping.

I become more tolerant to strangers weakness. I become more noticeable and more attentive. I feel an irresponsibility which I couldn’t feel in the past. If I think that it is very important for me, I will defend it.

I have a lot of close friends around me. I have a good relationship with my relatives. There wasn’t an opportunity to get knowledge and make a career but instead of this I have had a lot of good relationship.

I still have problems with my health. I can do everything but with a lag. For instance I can’t dance like before. To be honest, I live with full life, I communicate, visit people who transfer a stroke, who can’t go out home and go to different courses to have better speech skills, good memory and stimulate muscle skeleton system.

What I don’t like about myself-I am not highly principled person, though may be I am getting wiser.

I think my biggest achievement is the ability to replace my wife in the housework – cleaning, cooking, shopping, conservation food. I am usually saying to her: “do not waste your time, I will do it myself. I do all housework, my wife trusts me.

Moreover, I have a masseur with sharp spikes, I am getting on it with bare feet and climb on toes, pull hands up. It is hard, and not every healthy person can do it - I understand that it is very important for my musculoskeletal system and that this exercises reveal the large horizons.

I am proud of my hardening - physical and psychological - in spite of the devil", "contrary". The more life squeezed me the more I straightened. All the difficulties that I had experienced, including stroke, all this helped me to harden, become stronger.

Now I have a "third eye", I see everything to the smallest details of life in all its fullness and diversity, and I became wiser.

In general, I am satisfied with myself. I realize that I was quick-tempered and still I am. I consider that everyone needs an individual approach, I am never apologizing I try not to do such mistakes again.

I am glad that I have grown up and becoming more mature. Before a stroke, I realized that I should apply very carefully - think about every my step, not to offend anyone, don’t waste time on useless things, stroke brought me to this level.

Soon I have a 60 years anniversary. It will be wonderful in summer. ... At that time, much has matured: mushrooms, berries and young and beautiful peoples. The anniversary is always in my mind. I would like to celebrate my anniversary worthily, to meet people, to bring them joy.

Later I would like to visit my closer elderly people, going for a meeting with them in Moscow, Minsk, preferably in Warsaw. They aren’t able to go out that is way I am trying present to them good time.

I hope about the gross of my pension. This makes it possible to travel around the world - in France, Brussels... I want to look the attitude towards people like me in these countries with my own eyes.

Music is my companion in any moments of life - and when it's hard, I appeal to her. Also communication helps me. Worse when you have no one to talk. In order not to lose heart at once, I say to myself: «Everything is good in it is season”, it helps.

I consider that perseverance and persistence are important for man, who suffered a stroke; you must get up earlier, washing with cold water, doing exercises. The most important things are faith, hope and love. Hope - is the first word, you need to hope for recovery. I am convinced that if you could get to move at least one finger, you can get the rest.

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*Interview conducted and recorded by volunteer Rita Balabanova*