

Larry Gifford: Today on the Michael J. Fox Foundation Parkinson's podcast.

Bill Rasmussen: Well, I think the researchers are kind of like the official scorekeeper up in the booth. They're looking at the wide range of folks and trying to identify patterns so that they can get a way to cure it, eventually we hope. But we're the players out in the field, Larry. We're walking through it every day.

And so they can study my brain, but I have to use my brain and they can study your brain, but you have to use your brain. You don't stop thinking, you don't stop living or any of those things. You adjust and keep on keeping on, as they say.

Michael J. Fox: This is Michael J. Fox. Thanks for listening to this podcast. Learn more about the Michael J. Fox Foundation's work and how you can help speed a cure at [michaeljfox.org](http://michaeljfox.org).

MJFF: Navigating Parkinson's disease can be challenging, but we're here to help. Welcome to the Michael J. Fox Foundation podcast. Tune in as we discuss what you should know today about Parkinson's research, living well with the disease and the Foundation's mission to speed a cure.

Free resources like this podcast are always available at [michaeljfox.org](http://michaeljfox.org).

Larry Gifford: Hi, I'm Larry Gifford. I'm the host of the podcast "When Life Gives You Parkinson's." I was diagnosed at 45 years old, and like you, I'm trying to figure out how to do what I need to do to be healthy, well and safe during this COVID-19 pandemic.

That's why the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research and I are teaming up to launch this limited series podcast. Each episode is designed to help people with Parkinson's disease and their care partners navigate their way through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Joining me each episode is the Foundation's own board certified movement disorder specialist, Dr. Rachel Dolhun. Hi Rachel.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Hey Larry. I am still here working from my New York City apartment, so please excuse any background noise that might drown me out temporarily.

So today we're talking about the importance of staying active, keeping a positive attitude and getting involved in research soon after a diagnosis of Parkinson's. I for one are super excited to hear your conversation with Bill Rasmussen, the founder of ESPN.

Bill is 87, has Parkinson's and a truly positive outlook. He has partnered with our Foundation as an ambassador to spread the message of positivity and activity.

He will also be a spokesperson for a message we're calling embrace early engagement.

Larry Gifford: 87, that's amazing. This is the first I'm hearing about embrace early engagement. What's that?

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Yeah, this is all about reaching people in their very earliest days and months of living with Parkinson's. This is a really tough time for a lot of people understandably. People are trying to process what Parkinson's means for them and their future, and this is a time that a lot of people hide their diagnosis.

Larry Gifford: You know, Rachel, I hid mine. I had symptoms for like eight years. I just ignored them. And then once I got the diagnosis, I hid the diagnosis for eight months. I mean, this is a real thing.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: It's so true, and it's a time when people hide because they don't want to be treated differently. They don't want to be pitied, but it makes it more stressful, and it makes the symptoms even harder to hide.

Larry Gifford: Oh yeah, for sure. When you're hiding them, then you're stressed. You're like, who knows, who doesn't know, can they see this twitch? And then the stress actually increases the symptoms.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: That's right. And one of the other things is that it makes it harder or impossible to participate in research during a time when they may not be taking medication, and can make really valuable contributions to disease understanding, and also testing new treatments with the potential to either slow or stop disease progression.

We've heard so many times from people who didn't know that this was an option until it was too late to be part of some really important studies that are ongoing even today.

Larry Gifford: Well, this sounds like a really important initiative and Bill seems like quite a force to be behind it.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: He really is, and we met Bill. We really just loved everything about him and his message. So we asked him to join our patient council with you, Larry, to serve as an ambassador, to share his message of staying positive, of getting involved, of being active and of getting rid of those feelings of stigma or of shame that so many people experience early on with this diagnosis.

Larry Gifford: Yeah. Well, that's exciting. And as the founder of ESPN, and I know you're a huge sports fan, Rachel.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Larry, unless we are talking about the Green Bay Packers in the days of Brett Favre, or dirt track weight model racing, I really know nothing about sports.

Larry Gifford: Well, it's very exciting for me because full disclosure, while Bill founded the 24 hour cable sports channel ESPN in Bristol, Connecticut, back in 1979. I worked for ESPN for six years, both in Bristol and in Los Angeles in the mid-2000s to the early 2010s.

I was program director of ESPN's radio network, and eventually moved to Los Angeles to program 710 ESPN, which was owned and operated by ESPN, ABC, and the Walt Disney Company. But until today, I never had the honor of meeting the man who made it all happen.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Well, I didn't know all that about you, Larry, so I learned something new today too.

Larry Gifford: Well, embrace early engagement is a great way to kick off. Here's what I'm hearing, what are you hearing? Sticking with the sports theme, I hear there's a woman with Parkinson's in Los Angeles. Joan De Young, a world-class quilter who has been sewing and selling face masks with Los Angeles Dodgers fabric to raise money for Parkinson's. And she's doing it in honor of Dodgers legend, Kirk Gibson, who is also living with Parkinson's disease.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: It's really so cool to see how people are contributing in these creative ways, using their skills in new and different ways to help people, to help the community, to help for the greater good.

And, as I mentioned, I'm not the biggest sports expert you're ever going to speak to, but I really think it's great that this is being done in Kirk Gibson's honor. Our Foundation knows him pretty well, and he really is most definitely worthy of this honor.

Larry Gifford: Yeah, it's cool. Boy, what a legend is he in Los Angeles. As Major League Baseball continues to be locked down because of COVID-19, mlb.com is finding some really great stories to share, including the Parkinson's journey of former Colorado Rockies outfielder, Ben Petrick.

Now he was drafted in 1995. He was diagnosed in 2000, but he didn't give up the game. So this guy played Major League Baseball with Parkinson's and not only did he just play it, a year after his diagnosis, he batted a home run off a Hall of Fame pitcher, Randy Johnson, which was great, but complicated because as he trotted the bases, Patrick says whether he hit a ground ball or a home run, his thoughts immediately went to pumping his left arm faster so his run wouldn't get off rhythm, which I totally get. Like I can't run or I'll fall. It blows my mind that he was able to play Major League Baseball at that level, and still like succeed at the highest levels.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Mine too. I mean, this is such a neat story, and I am constantly amazed by what people can do with Parkinson's because oftentimes it's so much more than what I can do without Parkinson's.

There are people out there running marathons, as you said, playing Major League Baseball, sewing. I can't sew. So, as I said, I mean oftentimes there are people who don't give up and shouldn't have to give up the things that they love. With Parkinson's you can adapt, you can be flexible, and you can get around these things.

Now, as you pointed out, I mean, it's there, you have to live with it. You have to get around it. You have to be flexible. You have to meet this challenge. And that's why at the Foundation, we're doing what we can to make this a thing of the past, to come up with better treatments now, and to do what we can to find a cure because it's there and it sucks. And there are things that you have to do to get around it now.

But yeah, stories like this just, as you said, blow my mind because people just come up with amazing ways to live well with Parkinson's and to do the things that they love to do.

Larry Gifford: Do I hear something in the background there? Is there a truck going by?

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: It's so much quieter than it usually is. This is quarantine in New York City. So this is not a usual day in New York City, but that's my New York City apartment.

Larry Gifford: All right. Now, back to the real theme of the podcast. I'm hearing the American Academy of Neurology has issued some really new guidance for neurologists treating people with Parkinson's during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Yes, and this is something we see associations like the AAN, which is a group of neurologists do when there is a significant new factor, like the pandemic that affects how doctors and patients think about care as usual.

And so, one of the recommendations is to get telemedicine for usual visits, so regular ongoing non-urgent care. And we've seen a shift to telemedicine in the past couple months for regular care.

So the hope is that this could be one way to get regular non-urgent care for the future. This could decrease risk of exposure to the virus, lessen risk of the virus for the future, and so that's one recommendation moving forward.

Larry Gifford: Well, what's interesting about that, and I had a telehealth session with my doctor, and now he's following up with email. I actually have more communication with him now than I did before.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: That's right. And I think a lot of people are seeing that. We also have a lot of resources. We know that there's a huge learning curve for doctors and patients for telemedicine. So we have a webinar, Larry, that you moderated about the topic of telemedicine. We also have some resources about getting the most out of your telemedicine visit on our website.

Larry Gifford: Yeah. So for the very latest on what's happening at the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, be sure to check out [michaeljfox.org](http://michaeljfox.org). You can also click that email signup part in the upper left hand corner and they'll just send the information straight to your inbox, which is fantastic.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Make it easy for you.

Michael J. Fox: COVID-19 is testing us all in ways we never imagined. Around the globe individuals, families, and nations are rising to this challenge with courage and grace. I'm especially grateful for the research community's quick response to this crisis. For our part, the Foundation is making this commitment. We will flex with the researcher's needs in any way to keep critical neuroscience moving forward with the least possible disruption. Together we will pull through this and be stronger than ever.

Larry Gifford: Okay. So one of the issues we're all dealing with during coronavirus is staying active. Our guest today is a huge advocate for getting your body in motion. Bill Rasmussen lives in Seattle and was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2014, and oh yeah, by the way, he's the founder of ESPN. Woo hoo. Hello Bill.

Bill Rasmussen: Good morning, Larry. How's everything today?

Larry Gifford: Well, it's beautiful. Sun is shining and I'm still walking. So that's good news every day.

Bill Rasmussen: I'm glad to hear you say that. I say that frequently. And then the other one that you have to use is if you felt any better the world couldn't stand you.

Larry Gifford: Yeah. If I was any better I'd be you.

Bill Rasmussen: Well, I don't know about that. I have a positive approach so, as you've obviously discovered, and I like to try different things and experiment. And some experiments turn out pretty well, as did ESPN, as you know.

Larry Gifford: Yeah. I want to thank you for creating that company because it gave me a really an opportunity to cover Super Bowls and World Series and NBA Finals, award shows and meet a ton of great people who are lifelong friends. And just thank you for taking that big leap of faith.

Bill Rasmussen: You're very welcome. I enjoyed doing it. It seemed to be something that should have been done a long time before that, but the technology wasn't there. And for a non-technology guy, the only big word I ever learned was geosynchronous, that's all. Beyond that I don't know anything else. There's a satellite up there somewhere and it works. That's what counts.

Larry Gifford: That's what matters. And especially during these COVID-19 days, we are all missing sports.

Bill Rasmussen: Oh, no question. This is almost like being back in the '50s. They only had a game or two a week, a football game or two on a Saturday, and that was it. This wall to wall sports idea where you can turn on any time of the day or night to any one of dozens of channels and find baseball, football, whatever, none of that existed. So having it all taken away is really very difficult. Lots of folks are having withdrawal symptoms.

Larry Gifford: I turned on ESPN last month, they were doing a competition of stacking cups.

Bill Rasmussen: Oh my goodness.

Larry Gifford: And it reminded me of the old days when they were doing lumberjacking.

Bill Rasmussen: Oh yeah. We had some great stuff. How about Irish hurling from, I don't know, Limerick, Ireland or someplace. That was kind of intriguing.

Larry Gifford: Okay. That was great. What a journey you've been on. Six years ago your journey changed a bit though. What was that like to get the news from the neurologist that you have Parkinson's?

Bill Rasmussen: Well, it was interesting. Obviously I had noticed that things weren't going the way they always had gone. I was becoming less flexible, I guess you would say. Things were bothering me, but I didn't think it was anything significant. I had visited my regular physician a year or so before, and I had just a slight twitch and he thought it might be what they call the essential tremor. But it got a little worse so I finally went and saw a neurologist and we did a bunch of tests and he said, "I hate to tell you this, I'm sorry to tell you this, but you have Parkinson's." Well, my mother had Parkinson's so I was familiar with a little bit of the background, not very much. So I set out on a journey to learn as much as I could about it.

And he quickly explained, obviously, it's not a death sentence. You're not going to die in three months or three years. But some various parts of your body aren't going to react properly because the brain isn't able to keep doing what it's been doing all your life. But there are ways to get around it. And one of the ways, obviously, is exercise and some medication and a good attitude. And I have the medication and I exercise twice a day and walk all that I can and try to keep those things going. I think, for me, it's been a question of what can I do to keep operating about at the same level that I was before? Can I still go and speak to people? Of course I can. My left hand is the one that has the biggest twitch, so to speak. I thought I'd keep it behind the podium or this or that, and after one event, they sent me a tape and I looked and that wasn't very effective. And so at that point, I said, "You know what? This is a fact of life. It's not anything to be embarrassed about. People catch cold, people break their leg, people knock their head up against a wall or whatever. And that's okay so why isn't Parkinson's okay?"

And suddenly, as I began to look into it and began to ask more and more questions, for some reason Parkinson's is one of those diseases that people kind of want to hide. And I don't know why. You can't hide it.

Larry Gifford: It's hard.

Bill Rasmussen: Your body is changing. So I can't backhand a grounder at third base anymore. That's okay. I used to do that sometimes. Many times it would go right past you anyway. But I just think a positive attitude in everything we do is great, but it is especially important for anyone who is diagnosed with Parkinson's.

Larry Gifford: Now, when you were diagnosed, did you embrace this right away? Or did you take some time? Like for me it took me about eight months to sort of process the doctors saying you've got Parkinson's. And then I started telling my story, but-

Bill Rasmussen: Well, my daughter is a nurse, a senior oncology radiation nurse, and she was there with me. And when he said that I'm afraid we have some bad news, she thought instantly it was something to do with cancer and so on, in the brain or whatever. And he said that I had Parkinson's so she was relieved. And so having seen my mother, I knew something of the progression. Not all the details, obviously, because you don't know that unless you live it. But my first thing was to start asking questions of the doctor. It was not only what can I do about it, but what are the impacts going to be? And he said a lot of that is going to be up to you, and a lot of it you can't control. So from that day on, I set out trying to find out as much as I could about it. But I didn't have any public announcement. Didn't even occur to me. And then after, let's see, I guess it was last summer-

Larry Gifford: Yeah. Last summer. You went big.

Bill Rasmussen: Yeah. We did this story with ESPN and that's when I decided maybe I can help somebody. And if I can help one person, that's great. If I can help two, that's even better.

Larry Gifford: What was the catalyst to go from just being the person living with and dealing with Parkinson's to becoming that vocal advocate?

Bill Rasmussen: That's a really good question. I guess I started seeing people in a different light. I obviously met a couple of people who had Parkinson's, but interestingly enough, one of the people ... do you know Mike Soltys? You ever come find him in your time at ESPN?

Larry Gifford: Oh yeah, of course I did. Mike Soltys is the head of PR for ESPN.

Bill Rasmussen: Yeah. He had some difficulties with some health problems of his own.

Larry Gifford: He has an inspirational story about dealing with his kidney cancer. Yes.

Bill Rasmussen: He thought about going public with it for a long time. And he said finally he decided to and he got a lot of response, as I did. And he said one guy wrote and basically talked about his brother had the same problem that Mike had and that Mike's message motivated his brother to go and have some surgery and get it taken care of. And he said, "Mike, you saved my brother's life." That's pretty powerful.

Larry: Yeah.

Bill Rasmussen: So the ESPN has the resources to help write the story and kind of distribute it and that's what we did last year and got involved, obviously, moved forward and began talking to the Michael J. Fox folks. And here we are. I think people should talk about it, should think about it, should think individually what can they do better each day to help themselves? And as they help themselves they're helping their family and everyone around them.

Larry Gifford: How has keeping active helped you deal with your Parkinson's?

Bill Rasmussen: Oh, I think it helps enormously. Maybe it's a routine that everybody does, I don't know, but I wake up every morning with a positive thought. What am I going to do today? I think ahead, obviously, like I know I was going to talk to you this morning. I didn't wake up and say, "Oh, I'm going to talk to Larry." I've known this was coming. But each day I make certain that I get all the exercise in, I walk around the neighborhood because we can't go to the tracks or anything anymore at this point.

But as far as impacting me, I can't dance particularly well, but then I never did so I can't blame Parkinson's for that. I still write things. I'm in the process of hopefully writing a book that'll get published. Just be positive, do things. I think if you are an active person both physically and mentally, it's going to help with Parkinson's and it's going to extend the good time of your life. I'm going to be 88 come October, so ...

Larry Gifford: Wow.

Bill Rasmussen: ... I figure I've got 10 or 12 years more to go and I'm going to work hard at it.

Larry Gifford: Good for you. That's a great attitude. I love it. I think you're counting up to 100 if I do my math correct.

Bill Rasmussen: Oh yeah. Yeah. Well, it's easier that way. It's easier to divide by 100.

Larry Gifford: That's right.

Bill Rasmussen: If you live to 100, that's 36,500 days plus 25 leap years. So that's easy, just check them off the calendar.

Larry Gifford: That's right. That's great. How is your community, the community of people that surround you? How are they reacting to what you're doing?

Bill Rasmussen: Oh, many of them are amazed, but most of them are just encouraging. There's a small support group, very active with people and scheduling events that we can go to. I think meeting other people and talking to people who you look around the room, everybody has Parkinson's. Okay. We don't even talk about Parkinson's per se. One fellow, he's 71-years-old, still plays on the softball team that won a national championship last year.

Larry Gifford: Wow. That's great.

Bill Rasmussen: Old guy's softball. That's a terrific attitude.

Larry Gifford: Yeah, that's great.

Bill Rasmussen: I said, "You don't need anybody to come out and be fodder for whatever, because I don't know if I could stand up to swing a bat." I shouldn't say that. I'm sure I could swing a bat and I can throw a ball and I can throw and catch. That's okay. And other people are doing the same thing. One lady with Parkinson's is a driver for one of the companies that picks people up and drops them off, so we don't have any commercial mix-ups here. Everybody tries to stay active. Well, not everybody, but so many people. And of course you gravitate to those folks who are active and they, same with me.

Larry Gifford: Hey Bill, I believe people with Parkinson's are probably more prepared to handle the pandemic than most because our disease is so unpredictable. We're already living hour-to-hour, day-by-day, not knowing what symptoms may flare up. We're used to that life being uncertain.

Bill Rasmussen: What you just said is absolutely correct. In effect, we have our own pasture with a fence around it that we have to play in, so to speak, and other people are so stunned that they can't resist going out the front door and meeting people and going here and going there. I think, yes, we are probably better prepared. As you know, the virus started here in Kirkland, Washington, which from where I'm sitting right now talking to you is out the front door, down the hill and turn left and the first stoplight I'm already there.

Larry Gifford: Wow.

Bill Rasmussen: Less than two miles from here.

Larry Gifford: It was knocking on your door.

Bill Rasmussen: Yeah, and everybody was quite concerned. "Oh my, what's going to happen? What's going to happen?" Well, keep doing what you're doing. I walk the streets of the neighborhood, as do a lot of people now, and the intriguing thing is now

of course we all have to cross the street. We can't stop and talk to each other. We have to have that 10 or 12 feet or whatever it is between us, which is fine. But I think the Parkinson's forces you to consider a little bit more in advance what you might want to get done if you're going to go out and about. I don't go in the grocery stores or any of those kinds of things as far as the pandemic is concerned. But then because I don't drive, I didn't do that very much before.

Larry Gifford: Right.

Bill Rasmussen: I still want to go to baseball games and football games or basketball games, but until this pandemic thing is over, can't even think about any of that kind of stuff.

Larry Gifford: I'm guessing you might have a unique perspective on what's happening, born in the middle of America's Great Depression. Are there lessons maybe about human spirit, entrepreneurialism or the importance of community which can apply from that era to what we're going through today?

Bill Rasmussen: Oh, absolutely. I was born in 1932, and what I remember, and you probably remember the same things as we went through the Depression. We were young kids and by the time Pearl Harbor happened in 1941 we were old enough to start appreciating rationing and the rationing coupons and no gas and no sugar and no food and meat and all those different kinds of things. I think that put some solid, solid foundation under all of us. I think that's why so many people from the 30s were very successful in life later on. We were taught some pretty severe lessons because of the Depression, parents losing jobs, people losing houses. It was just amazing, but we survived. I think from my own personal point of view, I can remember my father was always very positive, telling us we can do what we want.

We can accomplish a lot in America. This is where we live. This is what we can do. Always take advantage of opportunities. He used to say, we might not have very much food but he would figure out a way to make sure we had food so everyone can have a meal. His only tenet was if you put it on your plate, you better eat it. I don't want to see any food wasted. That was a good one.

Larry Gifford: I remember that line too.

Bill Rasmussen: Sure. That came from that era. I was going to say, you heard the same thing. Maybe slightly different words but the message was the same.

Larry Gifford: That's right.

Bill Rasmussen: I think it all stems from that. And then of course, during World War II, everybody was so patriotic. We wanted to beat the bad guys. My father was one of 11 children so I had a lot of cousins. Many of them served in the Army and Navy and Marines. They were just a little bit older than I was since my father was the youngest in his family. But yeah, I'm a strong believer that that silent

generation, that 1925 to '45, born in that Depression Era, if it wasn't trial by fire, and I don't know what else it could be, but we survived and countless, countless people who've gone on to enormous success who were born and raised in that era.

Larry Gifford: Yeah. We all experience things in life which prepare us to deal with future events and unique ways. Are there any lessons that you learned through the founding of ESPN that you've been able to apply to dealing with Parkinson's?

Bill Rasmussen: That's a good question. Well, I guess one, the announcement that you have Parkinson's. That was from the neurologist and the announcement that I didn't have a job was kind of jarring. That was probably more jarring than the Parkinson's announcement now that I look back on it.

Larry Gifford: Tell us about that.

Bill Rasmussen: Memorial Day Weekend, 1978, working for the New England Whalers and Howard Baldwin and Colleen Howe decided that I was no longer indispensable. I was dispensable. She called me on her way. Colleen Howe called. She was headed to the airport and she said, "I really wanted to ..." She got all excited and flustered about it. "I didn't want to do it this way." But I had been the executive director of the Howe Enterprises. They were a business family top to bottom. She said, "We don't want you back at the end of this, Howard. I have to catch a plane. Goodbye." So that was pretty jarring and that's not exactly the way that the HR folks would handle a dismissal today I think.

Larry Gifford: I don't think so. It's interesting. You got fired, but you didn't let it get you down. You just sort of brushed it off and said, "I'll start my own business."

Bill Rasmussen: Yep. You just have to keep going.

Larry Gifford: Yeah, you just got to keep moving.

Bill Rasmussen: Yeah. I had three kids in junior, high school, and college. So I had one at each level. And when we went through that, they were all concerned, but I had to display confidence to them that we are going to make it, that this is fine. We'll get through this. And we did. They all turned out just fine. Now I'm waiting. I've got seven grandchildren and they're starting to get married so if I keep getting heading toward 100 I'm might have had some great grandchildren before long.

Larry Gifford: That's right.

Bill Rasmussen: I have to stay healthy for them. I can't let Parkinson's get me down with them. That's a no, no. You've got to be positive.

Larry Gifford: I love that. We're living in this sports-less world through a global pandemic with Parkinson's. What brings you hope?

Bill Rasmussen: Waking up every day. No matter who we are or how old or how young we are, we're all granted the same amount of time to go to sleep and if we go to sleep and we wake up, it all comes out even at the end. I wake up every day and I start off very positively every single day. I don't leave my office messy. I don't leave the bed unmade. I just get up and start the day. And I usually plan ahead. I've got one or two things that I'm going to get done. I was looking forward to this conversation this morning.

Bill Rasmussen: And it's a pretty exciting world we live in if you give yourself a chance and look for things to do, look for positive things to do. And I think one of the great things that we can all do, is help each other get through these things like Parkinson's and the pandemic and everything else. And it may only be a word or an action or something. And somebody says, "You made my day better." Well, that's great. Do I get tired and so on some days, and do I have a bad Parkinson's? Of course, but I always know there's a better one coming and that keeps me going and hopefully, it'll keep others going as well.

Larry Gifford: I think you make a lot of people's days. I know my day is off to a great start because we're having this conversation.

Bill Rasmussen: Well, thank you. I feel the same way. I can find lots of things to make me smile and make me feel better. And hopefully, be able to do things to encourage students in college or business school or whatever or corporate groups when we speak. The ESPN story opens a lot of doors for that to be able to talk to people. And I think me talking to other people helps me as well. I feed off their energy and enthusiasm. And when people ask questions about one thing or another, and we can have a good conversation like we're having now, then we feel better as we walk away and we can do something maybe to help another person.

Larry Gifford: It's really interesting when you share your story, how it really comes back at you. You end up learning more about yourself and feeling more positive and more energized. And so, it feeds your health and your happiness. It's really neat to see how that works.

Bill Rasmussen: Well, I think, and the researchers who are brilliant people, and I don't mean to be negative in any way to them, but it's like I said earlier, they're kind of like the official scorekeeper up in the booth. They're looking across a wide range of folks - age-wise, how serious their Parkinson's may be, and trying to identify patterns so that they can get to a solution, to get to a way to cure it eventually, we hope. But we're the players on the field, Larry. We're walking through it every day.

And so, they can study my brain, but I have to use my brain. And they can study your brain, but you have to use your brain to get through each day. And those are the things that I think if we can convince people when you hear the word Parkinson's, you don't stop thinking, you don't stop living or any of those things. You adjust and keep on keeping on, as they say.

Larry Gifford: A final question for you, Bill. When we live through big moments in life, and I think this pandemic one is probably a unique to all of us having a worldwide event that affects every human being. What do you think we're learning from this? Or what are you learning from this?

Bill Rasmussen: I think a lot of people are learning that they can survive and that they can count on themselves to be a little more, I don't know if the word is inventive, to be a little more creative and that there is some serious sides to life that may, especially the younger people who are charging through school and be it high school or college or graduate school or in their first job and so on. Things have been, I don't want to say things have been easy for all of them across the country, but they've been living, we've been experiencing over the last several years, I would say, several years as in from the '60s or '70s or '50s or however far back you want to go, that it isn't all handed to you on a silver platter. You have to really think about things.

And maybe this is causing a few of them to come up short in our society and say, "Wait a second, I've got to kind of reevaluate where I'm going and what I'm doing and how can I help?" And I think helping others really helps each individual as well. And if I can do that and help one person, it makes me feel good and it makes them a little bit better, that's great. So I hope that more people are learning that.

And I think that as I walk around and talk to a lot of young couples here, that I'm living in a house with my daughter and her husband and two of my granddaughters. So, it's a young neighborhood, and everybody is still very positive. We're going to get through this seems to be the major attitude that they have. And they're especially concerned about their young children, their preschoolers and their first and second graders. They say, "We've got to get this solved, so they have a good life." The pandemic is certainly not a good thing, but maybe it is forcing people to think a little bit differently about their futures and making it better than they perhaps would have had.

Larry Gifford: Great insights. Thanks, Bill. And thank you for joining us today. I look forward to having you on the Michael J. Fox patient council. I think we'll have some good times, and we'll make some noise.

Bill Rasmussen: Yeah. I'm looking forward to it as well, Larry. And who knows? Between us we may come up with a couple of really good talks here.

Larry Gifford: Yeah. Well, I think we'll string a couple of them together.

Bill Rasmussen: And I bet we've triggered a few already.

Larry Gifford: Yeah, that's right. Bill, thanks so much.

Bill Rasmussen: You are very welcome, Larry. I enjoyed it. Thank you.

Larry Gifford: All right, Rachel, how about that? Bill Rasmussen, what do you think?

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: He is so inspirational and I mean, he says he wants to help just one person. He is certainly helping many.

Larry Gifford: No doubt about that. What an attitude. 87 years old, just a firecracker.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: That's for sure. He's not stopping or slowing down.

Larry Gifford: All right. Well, that was quite a podcast, Rachel. I think we got a future in this podcast business, you and I. But Bill's inspired me now to go stretch and take a walk. So I think this one's done for the day.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: I think I need to go stretch and take a walk, too. I can't wait to catch up next time.

Larry Gifford: Rachel Dolhun, MD is vice president of medical communications for the Michael J. Fox Foundation and a board-certified movement disorder specialist, neurologist. And I'm Larry Gifford. You can connect with me on social media at @ParkinsonsPod on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Email us at [info@michaeljfox.org](mailto:info@michaeljfox.org).

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Thank you so much for joining us. Be sure to check out the [michaeljfox.org](http://michaeljfox.org) website for more information on how to live a better life with Parkinson's. You can click on understanding Parkinson's and look down the middle column labeled "The Parkinson's Journey."

Larry Gifford: Stay safe, keep positive, keep moving, and we'll get through this together.

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