

Announcer:

Welcome to the Sudden Cardiac Mike Show where it's all about sudden cardiac arrest, the number one cause of natural death in the United States. And now, here's your host, just a regular guy who dropped dead on a New York City subway train but then came back to life and started a podcast about it, Michael Kiernan.

Michael Kiernan:

Hello and welcome to episode one of the Sudden Cardiac Mike Show. I'm Michael Kiernan, and I'm real happy that you joined us here today.

If you have any interest or connection with the topic of sudden cardiac arrest or sudden cardiac death, then I really believe you're in the right place. Maybe somebody in your life, a family member or someone you're close to experienced sudden cardiac arrest, or maybe you're in the medical field or the counseling field where you deal with how sudden cardiac arrest can impact someone and their family and their friends, how life changes for them and how you're looking for ways to help them move forward. Or maybe like me, you, yourself are a survivor of sudden cardiac death and you have your own story and your own personal experiences and you're just looking to connect with others who've been through similar stuff as you. Again, you're in the right place and I'm happy you're here. Now later in the show, I'm going to share with you a very simple, very easy thing that you or anyone can do to reduce the high mortality rate of sudden cardiac death.

So, who am I anyway? Well, I'm a very lucky guy. That's who I am. I was on a New York City subway train heading South under the Upper West side of Manhattan when I collapsed and went into sudden cardiac arrest. A couple of passengers jumped into action to save me. One of them happened to be in her first year of studying to become a cardiologist, so she was a cardiology fellow

at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, and she was in that train car with me. The other passenger was a guy named Tony Medaglia, a retired cop who had learned CPR years before that at the Police Academy. Well, taking turns, they did over 2,500 chest compressions on me as that train continued traveling South. Tony was wearing a business suit, and it just got drenched with sweat. The doctor ended up with these large bruises on her knees and on the palms of her hands.

This was all going on during a Friday evening rush hour, and the train was moving much slower than it normally would. Once they got to the 59th Street station and the doors opened up, the people on the platform tried to rush into the train car, but then all the other passengers got up and held them back. That way, Tony and the doctor still had the room they needed to work on me. Then the doctor asked the transit cops to go get her a defibrillator. The first shock they gave me, nothing. Back to the chest compressions. The second shock, nothing. Back to the chest compressions. There was no way they were thinking I was coming back.

While the defibrillator was charging for the third shock, one of the transit cops saw my eyes start moving around in my head. I came back. It amazed everybody. By the doctor's watch, I was clinically dead for 28 minutes. No breathing. No pulse. Then the EMTs stuck me in an ambulance and rushed me off to the hospital. And while I was there in the cardiac ICU for a few days, the doctors implanted an ICD defibrillator just under my collarbone. Now, I wasn't really sure if I wanted some device to be implanted in me, but the doctors told me in no uncertain terms, "Michael, you're not leaving unless we implant the defibrillator into you."

Well, life for me was in slow motion for a good couple of weeks, but I came through it all largely unscathed. My short-term

memory seems to have taken a little bit of a hit, but that's minor compared to what the outcome could have been.

Looking back, I think the key to my survival was having people, people who were trained to know what to do begin rendering aid to me as soon as possible. That's why I feel so strongly about doing this podcast, I came back. I got a second chance. 90, 95% of people who experience sudden cardiac arrest don't make it. That's a fact. So, I really see it as a responsibility to talk about this, to get the word out, and to raise awareness and understanding of it.

I'm really excited for what's coming up on this show. In addition to the world according to sudden-cardiac Mike, we'll have interviews with a whole bunch of different folks, emergency responders, doctors, nurses, counselors, social workers, other survivors of sudden cardiac death and maybe even their family members too. And even those wonderful people who saved me on that train. I still keep in touch with them.

You, the listeners, you'll also be able to shoot me your questions, and I'll really do the best I can to find the answers for you. If I don't know the answer, I will absolutely find someone who does, and maybe they'll even come on the show to give the answer themselves. It's really going to be shockingly good, no pun intended!

Oh, wait a minute, about that really simple thing I mentioned earlier, I almost forgot, the short-term memory loss, that easy thing that you could do that I wanted to tell you about. Here it is, this is important, take a CPR class. They're held all over, and they don't require much time and it's so easy to sign up for them. Plus, here's a big thing, plus there's no mouth-to-mouth resuscitation involved anymore. That really, really was a sticking point for a lot of people. Now it's just chest compressions. It's called hands-only CPR. This is now really part of the guidelines from the American Heart Association.

You see, well over 350,000 cases of out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest occur in the United States every year, and the survival rate is only five to 7%. Hey, I'm lucky to be here today. More than lucky. Winning the lottery is nothing compared to what happened to me. And there may just come a day where you find yourself in a position to make someone lucky too, you never know. Just do it. Just go take the class.

Well, thanks for listening today. And if you haven't done so yet, please hit the subscribe button so you can always know about our next Episode here on the Sudden Cardiac Mike Show!