



INSPIRED CONSCIOUS LIVING

**L**OVE  
**LETTERS**

**B**

TO  
OUR  
**BODIES**™

VOLUME 3

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN  
CANCER SURVIVORS

FUNDED BY LLOYD SYMINGTON FOUNDATION



# Pay Attention to Your Body

CANCER WARNING SIGNS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusual bleeding/discharge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood in urine or stool</li> <li>• Discharge from any parts of your body, for example nipples, penis, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sore which does not heal</li> </ul>	Sores that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• don't seem to be getting better over time</li> <li>• are getting bigger</li> <li>• become more painful</li> <li>• are starting to bleed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in bowel or bladder habits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in the color, consistency, size, or shape of stools. (diarrhea, constipated)</li> <li>• Blood present in urine or stool</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lump in breast or other part of the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any lump found in the breast when doing a self examination. Any lump in the scrotum when doing a self exam. Other lumps found on the body.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nagging cough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in voice/hoarsness</li> <li>• Cough that does not go away</li> <li>• Sputum with blood</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obvious change in moles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the ABCD RULE:</li> <li>• Asymmetry: Does the mole look the same in all parts or are there differences?</li> <li>• Border: Are the borders sharp or ragged?</li> <li>• Color: What are the colors seen in the mole?</li> <li>• Diameter: Is the mole bigger than a pencil eraser (6 mm)?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in swallowing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling of pressure in throat or chest which makes swallowing uncomfortable</li> <li>• Feeling full without food or with a small amount of food</li> </ul>

**Note:** If you experience any of these warning signs, you should consult your doctor. It is important to note that many of the listed warning signs, as well as a myriad of others, can point to less serious medical problems than cancer. It does not necessarily mean that cancer is present, but it is a sign you should not ignore. If the cause of your symptoms is cancer, early diagnosis and treatment will offer a better chance of cure.



# *Dedication*

*A sacred offering  
dedicated in loving memory of*



**Marjorie E. Collins**

Mother  
1929-2012



**Christine Smith-Woods**

Sister  
1947-2019



**Kathryn A. Pielage**

Friend  
1953-2022



# Gratitude

We are enriched by the courageous women who shared their vulnerability and their Love Letters, also by the support of team members and partner organizations. Thank you.

## PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS



Astrid Richardson



Dr. Linda Thompson



Dr. Lucretia Bolin



Barbara Grier

## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



Melbra Watts  
Executive Director



Lisa Simms Booth  
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Toby Symington  
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CHARLOTTE MAXWELL CLINIC  
INTEGRATIVE CANCER CARE



SMITH CENTER  
FOR HEALING AND THE ARTS  
community. creativity. cancer support.



LLOYD SYMINGTON  
FOUNDATION

# Introduction

*“Love Letters to Our Bodies” is a contemplative, transformational workshop for women journeying with cancer. This series of workshops was specifically for African American women and women of the African diaspora.*



*This cohort was selected because according to the American Cancer Society the incidence of cancer in the United States is highest in African Americans. Also, as a group, African Americans have poorer health outcomes.*

*In the workshops the women explored themes related to how they experience their bodies pre- and post-diagnosis, stories they tell themselves, how that has changed since their diagnosis, and how they engage in self-care. In addition, through a series of interactive polls, women shared whether they had previous traumatic experiences, how they were dealt with, and what they love and appreciate about their bodies.*

*The California Black Health Network presented the “I AM CONSCIOUS” Black Beauty Initiative to inform women of how we are impacted by toxic carcinogens in beauty products. They also heard from Erin “Bionic” Brown about her journey with cancer.*

*Throughout the workshops, the women participated in guided inquiry, meditation, contemplation, journaling, breath work and mudras. They were supported energetically with processes to quiet the mind and open the heart, and holistic healing energy to restore balance.*

Gwendolyn Mitchell  
Founder, Moyo Institute, Inc.  
Creator, Love Letters to Our Bodies





# Daisy Chandler

Hello, to my healthy and thriving body!

You have grown from a wondering girl and wandering young woman into a more confident senior citizen. You experienced years of painful monthly menstrual cycles. Around age fourteen, I recall staring at you in a large round mirror in my bedroom while embracing your image. You smiled at my cuteness.

Although my mother died the summer before I entered 7th grade, I always tried to 'fit-in' by focusing on 'positiveness' rather than 'negativeness'. After staring at you, I walked away from the dresser mirror with confidence. Confidence masked in self-doubt, fear, and uncertainty. However, I could still hear my mama saying, "You are somebody."

For years, I have walked in my truth... My mother was no longer with me, but I was still somebody.

Dear Body, you were very skinny during my younger years. Today, I embrace my full figure. My greatest asset on the outside is my smile. My greatest asset on the inside is my character. I have always loved you, but I haven't always been in love with you!

Now, I embrace you with all my challenges. We were diagnosed with Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC). We have experienced challenges regarding chemotherapy (infusions), breast surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy (pills) again.

Prior to our diagnosis, I had never heard of TNBC. I now realize that everyone's body is different and that everyone's body responds differently!

God has been better than good to us! We went through the fire, but we didn't get burned! I am thankful that we have gone from wandering and wondering to living a life of humility, greater spiritual appreciation, and peace.

I am proud of you, my dear body. I have no regrets. Our surgical scars represent our strength. We are being restored and transformed daily. I will continue to give you what you need to thrive: water, healthy food, exercise (walking), meditation, medication, social interaction, and purpose. I understand that you and my mind work intentionally and collaboratively to help me to be the best that I can be.

Body, I am in love with you! I am in awe as to how you are evolving! You are strong and when you find yourself getting weak; I will be there to listen and strengthen you. When you find yourself feeling unloved; I will embrace you because you are worthy of all my love. When you find yourself engulfed in negativity, I will help you to focus on positivity and what really matters; for greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world.

As I thrive, I am constantly evolving. I am grateful to be on this journey with you. Please continue to be patient with me. Continue to love and trust me. Forgive me when I am impatient with our pain. Know that the side effect(s) of chemotherapy (neuropathy) is not the end of our journey. I embrace the new you and will continue to work to help you become your best. Body, WE ARE ALIVE and growing stronger; so, let us uplift others along the way. I am thankful that we have been entrusted to take care of each other! I will talk with you soon.

Love your best friend,  
Daisy Chandler, Ph.D.  
National Board Certified Teacher





# Karen Walker

Hi Pretty Lady,

I know it's been a tough few years but look how far you have come. We been through it!! Army vet, tough chick, two kids, surviving a bad marriage, finding love again, looking forward to retirement, and BAM!

When this first happened back in 2016, I thought cancer was an old white man's disease! I was like - no, no not me! Will I be here for my daughter's college graduation, weddings, my first grandchild? Will I marry the love of my life? So many questions ran through my mind.

You been through some s--t - surgeries, scans, x-rays, radiation, disability, oozing everywhere, pills for everything, and out of work for 10 months!!!

You gave up your home, moved. I can tell you are beat up, tired, drained, existing on fumes. You were the strongest one of all of us. It's been tough to keep that appearance up, but know this - you are still here. You have seen all those things you thought you wouldn't.

Look at you! Look at God! You are on your way to healing! Dust yourself off! Stick your chest out! Live a day at a time, some days an hour at a time!! And keep walking on faith!!!



# Tanya Martino



We've been through and experienced a great deal. Teen pregnancy, fibroids, and breast cancer. I now know and believe the scripture: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. I've reconciled that our ways are not yours nor our thoughts."

As traumatic as these experiences have been, they have taught me valuable lessons. One is to embrace my body scars and all. So on this day, I want to take the opportunity and say thank you and offer gratitude. You've served me well many times and I haven't acknowledged that until now. This Moyo Institute Inc. workshop helped me arrive to that.

The journey of cancer of any type is a giant monster! We know that we can conquer giants and slay monsters. Mindset is also a very important part of this journey. The day I was diagnosed with breast cancer I was advised to claim healing and I've done so. I believe in numbers. The number five symbolizes God's grace, goodness, and favor toward humans. The word "five" is recorded 345 times in scripture. Since five represents grace, when it's multiplied by itself, it produces 25 which is 'grace upon grace' (John 1:16).



Recently I've learned about the number nine. Used 49 times in scripture, the number nine symbolizes divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality. I pray for a double portion of grace and a double portion of completion. I was healed the day I was diagnosed. I'm setting my Intentions. You shall have what you say, right?

We're all survivors of something... fearfully and wonderfully made. Survivors move about the earth differently! I now see life as an opportunity, so I capture it. Life is a dream, so I seize it. Life is a challenge. I'm overcoming it daily. Life is a promise, a gift I do my best to fulfill it. So, I live as much as I can, as profoundly as I can, as long as I can, because life isn't meant to be lived in one space or place.

God, thank you for this amazing opportunity to share, to do my part. I can't wait to hear about ways that you're going to eradicate this disease.



Anita Moorjani  
Author  
"Dying to be Me"



*"When I awoke into my infinite self, I was amazed to understand that my life could be dramatically different just by realizing that*

*I AM LOVE.*

*And, I always have been.*

*I don't have to do anything to deserve it.*

*Understanding this means that I'm working with life force energy. Whereas performing at being loving is working against it.*

*Realizing that I AM LOVE was the most important lesson I learned allowing me to release all fear and that's the key that saved my life."*





# Gloria Brooks

My Body,

There are so many things I would like to do with you. At times you seem not interested in doing them. I'm trying to learn how to take better care of you. Sometimes it's easy and sometimes it's hard.

I am very willing to put forth an honest effort. But I also need your help. I want to feed you the right things and I need you to do the right things. I have come to realize now how much I love and need you. I appreciate how precious you have really been to me. Please forgive all the abuse I have done to you.

You have been more than good to me. I have lost friends but still you have stayed with me. So let's start our love over and fight for each other.

I look forward to us being on one accord. I look forward to making happy memories with you.



Love,  
Gloria

# Dorcella Warren



You are beautiful just the way you are! I want to apologize for all the times I put you down and was not grateful for the God-given gift that you are. You are more than a conqueror! You are strong, resilient, and unique (set apart).

If I had known then what I know now, I would have appreciated you as a gift from God that you are. From this day forward, I promise to allow God to nurture, replenish, and restore all that is needed to help you flourish. You lack nothing because God lacks nothing, and it is God's Holy Spirit that dwells in you! You are made in His image and likeness.

You are equipped and empowered with all you need to flourish. I'll continue to show up to the table ready and willing, because God is more than able. Your beauty resonates from the inside out! I'll continue to nourish you physically, mentally, and spiritually. I will bathe you with Grace!

Your trials here have made you much stronger and wiser. Therefore, you can pour into others. Embrace your scars as a reminder of what the enemy tried to do, but failed!

Love you always,  
Dorcella



# Cassandra Poindexter

Love Letter to Myself,

Hey beautiful! Look at you. You are a precious soul. Your body is so beautiful. You are scarred, but you have learned to embrace every scar to remind you of what you have overcome.

Your biggest surgery removing a choledochal cyst left you with a 10-inch scar from your breastbone area and down past your belly button. To others, it might look super ugly, but embrace that incision, the keloids, and all.

Your shoulder surgery left you with another large scar and additional keloids. So what? You've got this girl!

Two surgeries last year. My wrist, and then breast cancer surgery. That breast cancer diagnosis blindsided me. Child, where did that come from? With God, all things are possible, so you can conquer this.

For 30 years, you've been fighting osteoarthritis, rheumatoid disease, fibromyalgia, and so many other ailments. I have come to the realization you are the "hostess with the mostest." All your ailments are guests and they want to party. This party in your body has been going on too long. So, in the meantime and between time, you gotta handle this and fight like a boss.

Stay strong with your beautiful-black bodied self.



Gwendolyn Mitchell  
Founder,  
Moyo Institute  
Love Letters Project Creator



*"We are master creators, creating every moment with our thoughts, words, deeds and emotions. It is up to us to use our capacity to create consciously. 😊"*

*Doing so, we experience beauty, joy, fulfillment, gratitude, and resilience."*





## Lillian Walker Shelton

Dearest Lilly,

You certainly have been through a lot. You have lost so much, yet you still want, desire, and strive for joy. Lilly and body you amaze me. I really have not met anyone like you. Before this chapter of your life - cancer (and I call it a chapter because there will be future chapters), I really thought you were a coward.

I thought that you had a low tolerance for pain. I really didn't think that you could handle things.

You showed me, my body. You rose to this challenge, and you are doing your best. Sometimes that looks like tears and prayers. Sometimes that looks like support groups. But it never ceases. You are determined not to stop. Thank you, body, for trying your best.

Much love to you.



# Mildeen Worrell



Hey Beautiful,

Yes, I said that. But there are times that I have not treated you as though you were beautiful. So many times, I have allowed negative thoughts and emotions to take up residence in your sacred parts. I have allowed stress and toxic behavior to be around you and in you.

This can only produce unhealthy outcomes that have shown up in many ways, such as cancer, depression, and emotional scars.

Today, I make an agreement with you to be intentional in the way I treat you. Every day I will choose to love and honor you with care and compassion.

I am committed to our journey together towards complete healing.

Love always,

Mildeen

2024 Workshop 1





# Jada Seegers

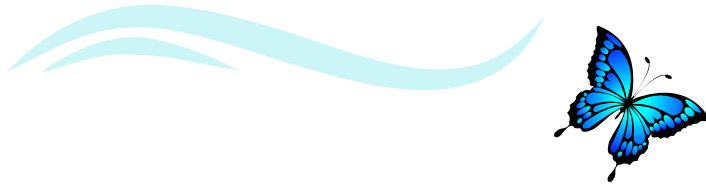
My Beloved Body,

As I promised you, my wonderfully made body, I'm doing better at taking care of you. I am becoming more aware of how you are communicating with me about your needs. I realize that how I think, feel, and form my intentions has a direct effect on you. I'm grateful that we are on the same page now. Life with you and our Divine source is much more fulfilling. And I am consciously loving you back into balance.

Love,  
Jada



# Kamika Luas-Allen



Dear Kamika,

I am now in a new body. I call myself a butterfly now. Five years ago, my body tried to kill me with Stage II, Triple Negative Breast Cancer. I am now learning to live with this new body and new me. I was angry at first, but now I am less angry. The new Kamika has allowed me to see life in a unique way.

Thanks to you, my new body, I have learned to set boundaries with people... Learned to *live life* to the fullest, laugh till we cry, and LOVE unconditionally. I am growing up and proud of this new body and mindset that I now have. I also see the true meaning of my marriage vows. GOD has allowed me to stay here for a purpose and I am striving to live in my purpose.

This new me has seen the importance of spending time with family and friends. Now we just get up and go without thinking twice. I still get down sometimes because I miss my parents and mother-in-love. My sons are my joy and it makes me happy to see them growing up. I also see more in my spouse and look at him in another light now.

Now we always say, "*See You Later*" and "*Love You More.*" Thank you, new body!

Sincerely,



Your new friend Kamika



# Mildeen Worrell

Dear Body,

Today, I wish more than anything that I could hold you in this current state of peace and serenity. You have responded well over these past two days to this healing workshop.

However, we know that this stage of our healing journey will be interrupted with the cares of everyday living, the stress of facing illness, and disappointments over which we have little control. I promise you that I will try to return to this place of peace and tranquility for you as often as I can. I thank you for not failing me when we faced a difficult childbirth, breast surgeries, and colon cancer.

You showed your strength and resilience. You showed up for me daily. I will remember and value your resilience, your softness, coupled with your ability to harness any negative energy around you and diffuse it. I think you're beautiful and amazing. I love you and greatly appreciate you. I will commit to be more intentional and mindful of the care you need to bloom. I promise to move forward with you in total acceptance and gentleness in our journey of life.

Love always,  
Mildeen



2024 Workshop 2

*Sri Amma Bhagavan  
Enlightened Avatars  
Golden Age Movement*



*Health is a cumulative  
experience of the mind.*



*Health is not just treating the  
physical body, but healing the mind and  
nourishing the consciousness.*



*A return to oneness between various  
systems of the human body is the return to  
health.*



## Quintina Hampton

Dear Tina's Body,

You have the support of so many people! Sometimes, knowing that there are people who love you and are there for you makes a world of difference. Then there are other times when those voices of doubt whisper ever so softly, activating feelings of fear and anxiety, which creep into your mind and paralyze you temporarily.

They whisper, "You're too old to start over; what if you get sick; you will be all alone." It stops you long enough for a delay in the plan. Keep going, my dear! All change comes with struggle. Is your desired outcome worth your struggle? Let me remind you of your outcome. Don't you want the years in front of you to hold peacefulness, no day-in and day-out conflicts? You want to feel loved, appreciated, and confident in the decisions that need to be made.

Remember how you used to love being creative? You loved flower arranging, and you got a tremendous kick out of growing watermelons, squash, and everything else you experimented with growing. You got the biggest kick out of making greeting cards! Throw that negative talk out the window. Think about how happy you will be once you complete the plan. Get yourself back on track to do the things that you love. You are strong and have got this!

Welcome, Tina, to the new you! Oh, my goodness! You look fabulous!



# Briggette McKnight



Dear Body,

First, I want to apologize to you for not taking care of you like I used to. I used to love the way you looked: The toned muscles and the arch in my back... I loved the firmness of my hug when I embraced causing my girlfriend to feel safe and secure.

I remember when I could open a bottle of cold water or a chilled bottle of wine with no problem. Oh, and don't forget about my stamina. No one could keep up with me during love making. My sweet sexy body, you looked so good. The way you wore those clothes. When I looked at us in the mirror, all I could say was, "We look good!!" Not to mention our hair, it was always on point!! Those are some of the great memories of us, some as recent as a year ago.

I miss those days but guess what? I love you so much that I'm going to get us back to even a better place. Some things I can't change, but I will change what I can. I don't want to lose you or lose us. I've realized that you are my biggest cheerleader. If I have you, I will never be alone. I'm asking you to give me a chance to prove myself to us!!

My stamina is not the best right now, but I can still walk. I can play corn hole. I can hit some pickleball and I can move my arms. Body, body, body stay with me!! You make me feel good when we look good.

Don't get me wrong now. On our good days, we still look and smell good. We go out and have a great time!! Let's cherish the moments and continue to build our lives together. I am proud of us. We've come a long way. Let's keep moving!

Love, Briggette



# Testimonials

*“Thanks again to all for the wonderful workshop. I haven't been to a paid workshop as powerful as that one!! I wanted to let you know that one of my hands was blistered, darkened, and swollen from chemo. After the workshop yesterday, my hand is no longer swollen. It's not in as much pain either. Thank you. If I can do anything to help out, please let me know. I definitely want to participate in the healing sessions.” ~ B.M.*



*“I learned so much on the first day of the course. I couldn't wait to share the information with my family members. This is an incredible workshop. It made me feel so good.” ~ Q.R.*



*“Thank you for presenting such a powerful, enlightening, and indescribably uplifting experience. The entire event has left me feeling grateful and knowing that within us all there is a strength beyond description.” ~ T.W.*



*“I registered to be supportive but did not expect to receive so much from the workshop. You should be teaching this to everyone, not just people with cancer.” ~ S.R.*



# Tiffany Franklin



Dear Beloved Body,

For over 40 years you have sustained me, even when I might not have been as kind as I should have been to you. When I gave birth to my precious baby girl, you bounced back. When fibroids wreaked havoc on my body and surgery was needed - not once but twice - you bounced back. Now in this season when cancer has reared its ugly head, I know deep down that you will do what you have always done - bounce back.

But this time I know that I must make some changes because you need my help. I promise to honor you more moving forward. I promise to give you sunlight, the water, the vitamins, and minerals you need to thrive as you fight through chemo, radiation, and the drugs that man says you need to survive.

When this battle is over, I promise to continue to love and honor you by not forgetting what is essential for you to thrive. For I know we have many miles left on this journey before we depart from each other.

Lovingly,  
Tiffany



# Dynamic Sisters Spotlight

*Featuring Women  
Who Have Used  
Their Experiences  
with Cancer  
to Positively  
Impact the Lives of  
Others ...*



# DYNAMIC SISTERS SPOTLIGHT



## THELMA D. JONES

Thelma D. Jones was recently honored for her lifetime commitment to volunteer work, receiving the President Joseph R. Biden Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award, commemorating over 4,000 community service hours. The President's Volunteer Service Award, established in 2003 and led by AmeriCorps, recognizes the important role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity, and honors individuals whose service positively impacts communities throughout the country.

Jones is known throughout the community for her work providing food to those in need, her founding of the Southwest-based Thelma D Jones Breast Cancer Fund (TDJBCF), and her volunteer work with the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA), St. Augustine's and Westminster Churches, and Southwest DC Action.

She is leading a life of service and support to others in various ways. She is a person who really loves her community, and loves making a difference in the lives of community members.



PRESIDENTIAL  
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD

***Thank you Thelma for more than 4,000 community service hours, your tireless effort to support others and kudos for this well-earned honor.***

# THELMA D. JONES BREAST CANCER FUND

Ms. Jones is the founder of The Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund (TDJBCF), a unique nonprofit grassroots organization whose mission is to advocate and improve the overall health and wellness for women and men through outreach, education, and prevention, primarily to underserved communities in the Washington, DC metro area. More than 1,000 breast cancer survivors (men & women) have attended the monthly meetings of the TDJBCF Support Group.

TDJBCF identifies the needs of targeted audiences and designs and implements training programs and other modalities to help raise awareness of breast cancer, reduce myths and fears, and increase knowledge or influence attitudes with a goal of practicing a healthy lifestyle.

TDJBCF brings together survivors, caretakers, and others in a monthly support group with other survivors to draw strength and encouragement as no one should walk their journey alone. Through the support group, skilled speakers discuss various topics while providing a safe and caring environment for survivors to share their stories and give voice to the silent ones.



# DYNAMIC SISTERS SPOTLIGHT

## TAMIKA FELDER

Tamika Felder is on a mission to eradicate cancer, advocate for the patient voice in healthcare, and mobilize others to live life with purpose, whatever their obstacles. Tamika is an award-winning television producer, author, blogger, international speaker, mentor, cancer survivor and patient advocate. She's a high-energy, humorous motivational speaker who shares her personal story and translates her challenges and learnings into "goal crushing" action steps to move past fear and live life with purpose.

Her life-affirming worldview has been featured on speaker daises across the globe, in a 2017 Newsweek cover story, on Good Morning America and other national press. She is the founder and Chief Visionary at Cervivor - a nonprofit dedicated to cervical cancer advocacy and support, as well as the author of "Seriously, What Are You Waiting For? 13 Actions To Ignite Your Life & Achieve The Ultimate Comeback."

# PRESS RELEASE



**Today, President Biden announced his intent to appoint our Founder and Chief Visionary, Tamika Felder to serve as a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.**

In recognition of her visionary leadership, Tamika was named by President Biden to serve on the National Cancer Advisory Board in May. She currently serves on the board of the Global Coalition Against Cervical Cancer and on the steering committee of the National HPV Vaccination Roundtable.

# 23 - YEAR SURVIVOR OF CERVICAL CANCER ADVOCATE & MOM



She is a former board member of the Ulman Cancer Foundation for Young Adults and shared her story and experiences on Presidential Cancer Panels convened by the White House. Her story of patient-to-advocate / survivor-to-Cervivor inspires and mentors not only patients and medical communities, but anyone who has struggled with obstacles in their life. Learn more about Tamika's work at: [www.TamikaFelder.com](http://www.TamikaFelder.com), [www.SeriouslyTamika.com](http://www.SeriouslyTamika.com) and [www.Cervivor.org](http://www.Cervivor.org).

***Thank you Tamika for creating such a dynamic organization to support cervical cancer survivors and being a strong advocate.***

# DYNAMIC SISTERS SPOTLIGHT



## KAREN NAKAWALA

Zambian broadcaster Karen Nakawala was diagnosed with cervical cancer four years ago. She survived, though many friends she made did not. Today she's on a mission to convince girls across the world to get the HPV vaccine.

Nakawala's cancer was discovered in June 2019, following a routine gynecological exam. She remembers the moment the diagnosis sank in: "It dawned on me that, you know, this is actually, actually happening. I felt I was in a cube, like in an ice-cube - I was having an out-of-body experience." For the next three days, she didn't sleep, dogged by unbidden visions of mourners at her funeral, of her two motherless children.

The treatment - radiation, chemotherapy and brachytherapy - was "very harsh," she recalls. Her fellow patients were a comfort. "We sort of formed a sisterhood," she says. But there were mornings on which one of the group would be unexpectedly absent. "You ask about the other ones - 'oh no, she died last night' - and the mood just changes. Everybody thinks: 'okay, next is going to be me.'"



Instead, by September, Nakawala was "done" and cancer-free. She resolved to make use of her public profile, speak up, raise awareness, provide a safe space for cancer patients to talk openly, and urge women to get screened. She began her campaign in 2020. Within a month, she says, her Facebook 'movement' had 100,000 engaged followers.

# IN AFRICA SPEAKING ABOUT SEXUALITY IS TABOO

Nakawala founded the Teal Sisters Foundation and became its Executive Director. The Foundation actively advocates for cervical cancer prevention and screening through community mobilization and engagement in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Cancer Diseases Hospital in Lukasa, Zambia.

Teal Sisters Foundation has set up a Women's cervical cancer one stop center at the Cancer Disease Hospital. Two 40ft containers were purchased and have since been partially refurbished and already placed at the Hospital. Over 3,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in Zambia and an estimated 1,900 die each year of a cancer that is preventable and treatable especially if caught early. The center will provide screening, peer-to-peer counseling using survivors, HPV testing and vaccination, patient treatment support, patient navigation and information services. It also will offer weekly sessions on survivorship for survivors and caregivers, and weekly sessions on managing cancer treatment.

***Thank you Karen Nakawala for using your platform to help others.***

# LOVE LETTERS PODCASTS

LAUNCHING SOON ON SPOTIFY & MOYOINSTITUTE.ORG

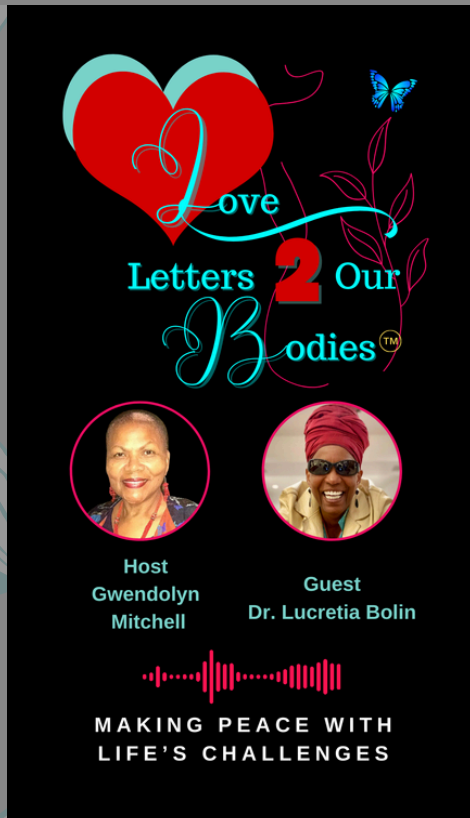


Love  
Letters **2** Our  
Bodies™

Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell,  
Moyo Institute, Inc.




MIND, BODY, SPIRIT  
& WELLBEING



Love  
Letters **2** Our  
Bodies™

Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell

Guest  
Dr. Lucretia Bolin



MAKING PEACE WITH  
LIFE'S CHALLENGES



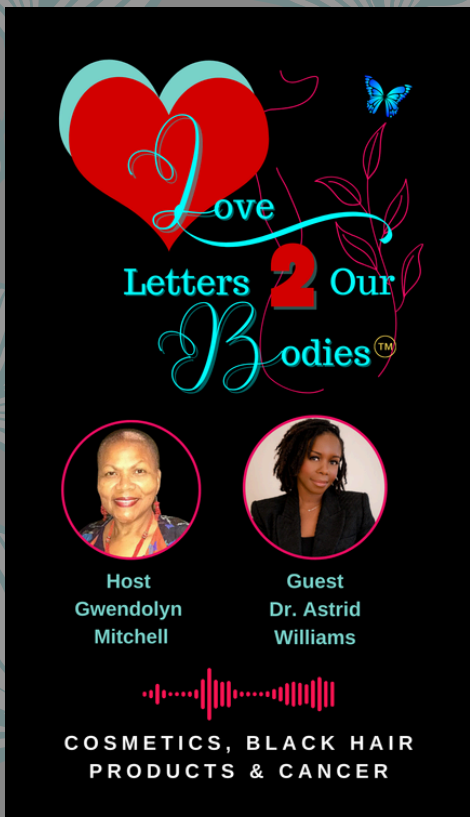
Love  
Letters **2** Our  
Bodies™

Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell

Guest  
Dr. Linda  
Thompson




FOOD, NUTRITION AND  
CANCER



Love  
Letters **2** Our  
Bodies™

Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell

Guest  
Dr. Astrid  
Williams



COSMETICS, BLACK HAIR  
PRODUCTS & CANCER



Love  
Letters **2** Our  
Bodies™

Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell

Guest  
Talaya Dendy



CANCER DOULA &  
PODCAST HOST



Love  
Letters **2** Our  
Bodies™

Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell

Guest  
Melbra Watts



INTEGRATIVE CANCER CARE



# LOVE LETTERS PODCASTS

LAUNCHING SOON ON SPOTIFY & MOYOINSTITUTE.ORG



Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell



Guest  
Valarie  
Traynham



NAVIGATING MULTIPLE  
MYELOMA



Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell



Guest  
Erin "Bionic"  
Brown



LOSING HER LEG AND  
FINDING LIFE PURPOSE



Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell



Dee  
Manuel  
Cloud



BEAUTY IN THE BREAKDOWN:  
LIVING AUTHENTICALLY



Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell



Guest  
Delorme  
McKee Stovall



THE IMPORTANCE OF  
ADVOCATING FOR ONESELF



Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell



Guest  
Starla Gay



BLACC - BLACK LADIES  
ADVOCATING FOR CANCER CARE



Host  
Gwendolyn  
Mitchell



Guest  
Astrid  
Richardson



SACRED INTENTION &  
HOLDING SACRED SPACE

# Project Collaboration

**Moyo Institute, Inc.**, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Moyo's mission is to offer heart-centered educational experiences that foster inner peace, happiness, wellbeing, creativity, connection, and oneness.

Founded by Reiki Master and Meditation Teacher Gwendolyn Mitchell, the goal of Moyo is to support the restoration of harmony and balance within individuals, families, and communities. The Institute facilitates the sharing of processes and practices that stimulate wellbeing from within. Moyo combines both Eastern spiritual wisdom and contemporary scientific research to empower individuals and groups. A portion of revenue generated supports teaching members from marginalized and underserved communities.



# Project Collaboration

Moyo collaborated with two organizations for the "Love Letters to Our Bodies" project - the **Charlotte Maxwell Clinic, Integrative Cancer Care** in Oakland, California and the **Smith Center for Healing and the Arts** in Washington, DC.

Charlotte Maxwell Clinic's mission is to provide San Francisco Bay Area low-income women with cancer the opportunity for improved health outcomes and quality of life by providing free access to compassionate, integrative care.

Smith Center for Healing and the Arts is a nonprofit health, education, and arts organization in Washington DC. It's mission is to develop and promote healing practices that explore physical, emotional, and mental resources that lead to life-affirming changes for people affected by cancer.

The project was funded by the **Lloyd Symington Foundation**, a small family nonprofit, that serves the cancer community by supporting visionary individuals and spiritually grounded programs which offer healing at every level.



INSPIRED CONSCIOUS LIVING

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# What People are Saying



Dear Divine Vessel, You  
are a masterpiece just  
the way you are." ~  
Talaya

