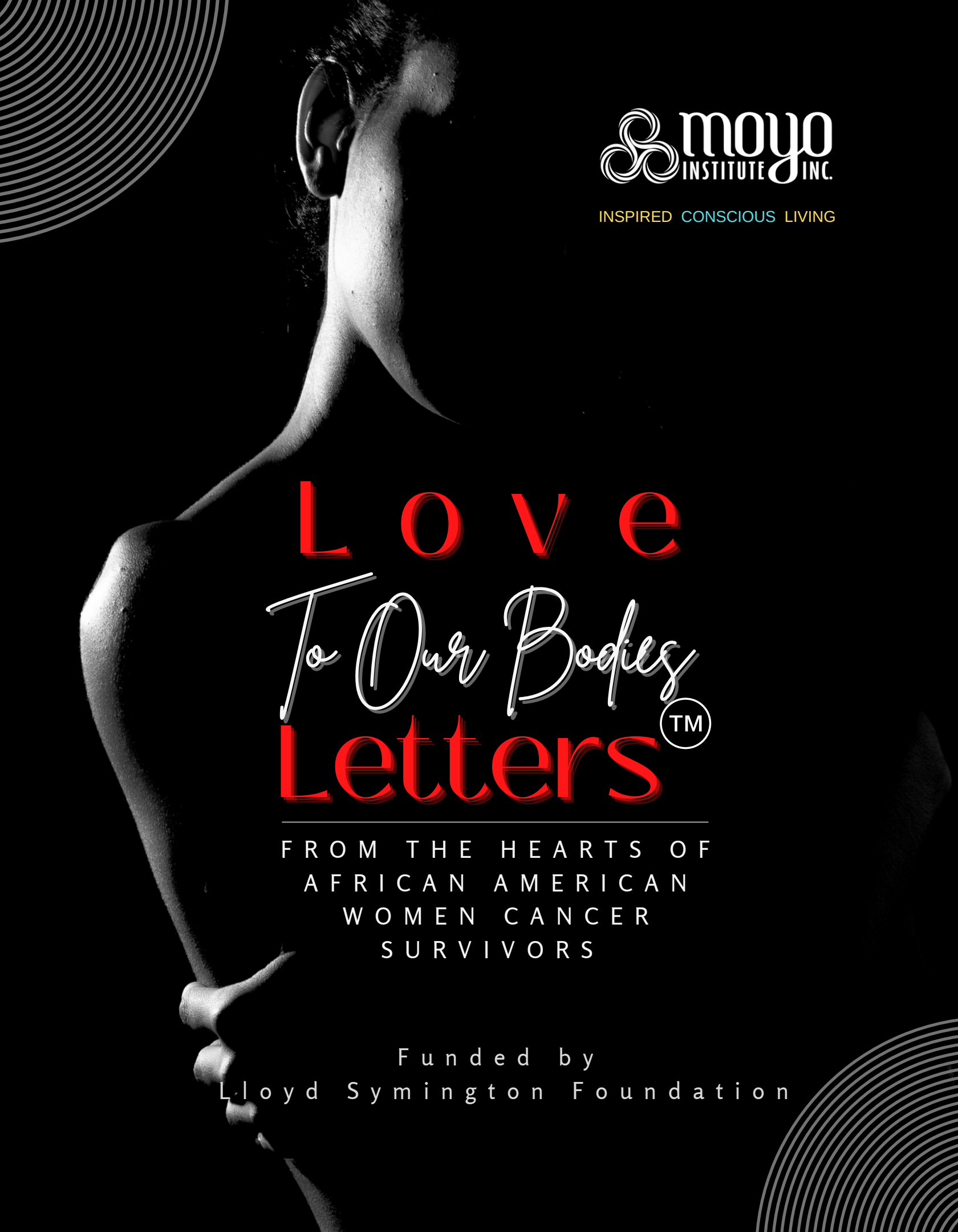

moyo INSTITUTE INC.

INSPIRED CONSCIOUS LIVING

Love To Our Bodies™ Letters

FROM THE HEARTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN CANCER SURVIVORS

Funded by
Lloyd Symington Foundation

moyo INSTITUTE INC.

INSPIRED CONSCIOUS LIVING

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY

CANCER WARNING SIGNS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
• Unusual bleeding/discharge	• Blood in urine or stool • Discharge from any parts of your body, for example nipples, penis, etc.
• A sore which does not heal	Sores that: • don't seem to be getting better over time • are getting bigger • become more painful • are starting to bleed
• Change in bowel or bladder habits	• Changes in the color, consistency, size, or shape of stools. (diarrhea, constipated) • Blood present in urine or stool
• Lump in breast or other part of the body	• 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.
• Nagging cough	• Change in voice/hoarsness • Cough that does not go away • Sputum with blood
• Obvious change in moles	Use the ABCD RULE: • Asymmetry: Does the mole look the same in all parts or are there differences? • Border: Are the borders sharp or ragged? • Color: What are the colors seen in the mole? • Diameter: Is the mole bigger than a pencil eraser (6 mm)?
• Difficulty in swallowing	• Feeling of pressure in throat or chest which makes swallowing uncomfortable • Feeling full without food or with a small amount of food

Note: *If you experience any of the 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.*

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DEDICATION

"Love Letters to Our Bodies" is a sacred offering dedicated in memory of:

Marjorie E. Collins
Mother
1929-2012

Christine Smith-Woods
Sister
1947-2019

Kathryn A. Pielage
Dear Friend
1953-2022

each of whom met their journey with cancer with courage and grace.

GRATITUDE

We are enriched by the courageous women who shared their Love Letters. Thank you.

Toby Symington
Executive Director

Lisa Simms Booth
Executive Director

Melbra Watts
Executive Director

MEDIA

Spirit of Jazz
Lona Alias

Oakland Post
Newspaper

SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT

Rev. Sylvia Sumter
Pastor, Unity DC

Linda Thompson
Ph.D., Educator

ONENESS BLESSING TEAM

Gwendolyn Mitchell
Reiki Master

Astrid Richardson-Ashley
LCSW-C & Reiki Practitioner

Abigail Cornish
Minister & Reiki Master

Miriam Karell
Ordained Minister
& Intuitive Healer

Introduction

"Love Letters to Our Bodies" is a contemplative, transformational workshop for women journeying with cancer. This first 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.

Throughout the workshops, the women participated in guided inquiry, meditation, contemplation, journaling, breath work and mudras. They were supported energetically with Oneness Blessings - to quiet the mind and open the heart, and Reiki - a holistic healing energy to restore balance. In addition, intentional Reiki was shared while the Love Letters were written.

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

moyo INSTITUTE INC.
INSPIRED CONSCIOUS LIVING

HEALTH FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Health is a cumulative
experience
of the
mind.

~

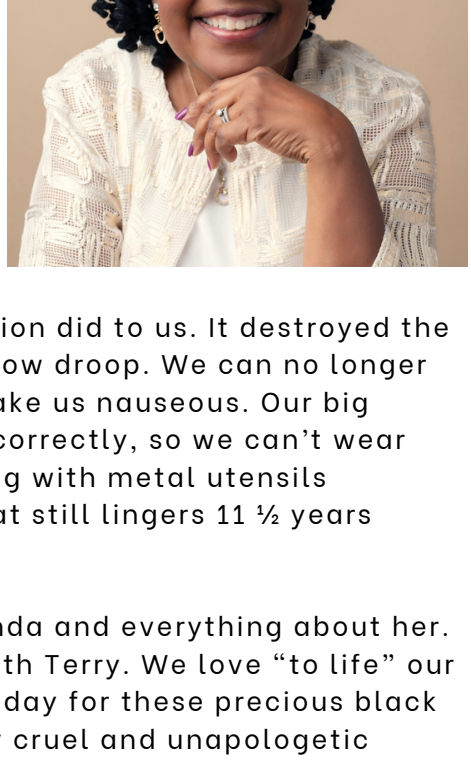
Health is not just treating the
physical body, but healing the
mind and
nourishing the
consciousness.

~

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

~ Sri Amma Bhagavan
Enlightened Avatar
Golden Age Movement

Brenda Dantzler-Mitchell



Hey Self,

This our time to be real. First, I want to tell you that it's okay to feel afraid of a cancer recurrence. We know that God got us through the first time, and if necessary, he will do it again.

We don't like what chemo/radiation did to us. It destroyed the collagen in our eyelids, so they now droop. We can no longer wear perfume because scents make us nauseous. Our big toenails have never grown back correctly, so we can't wear closed-in shoes. We dislike eating with metal utensils because of the metallic taste that still lingers 11 ½ years later.

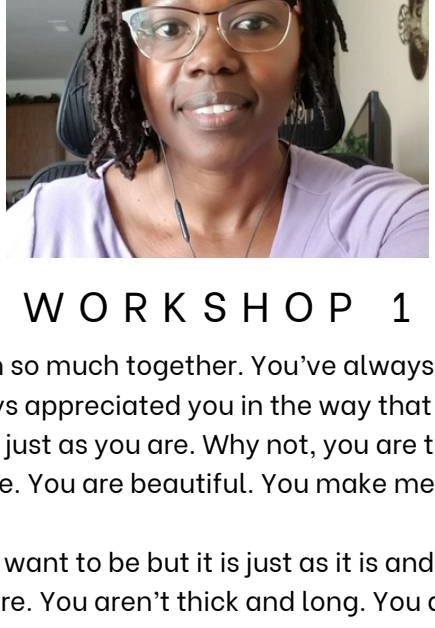
You know that we love some Brenda and everything about her. We love this life that she built with Terry. We love "to life" our two grand babies and pray every day for these precious black souls that must grow up in a very cruel and unapologetic world.

We know that cancer attacked our boobs, and we thought that no man would want us, but we still have a husband.

Thanks to cancer, we have a new mindset. We see the world as a beautiful place. We take pride in everything from the birds chirping in the morning to the rain hitting the pavement during the storm. It's all beautiful. We look at the formation of flowers & treetops and we rejoice because it's a wonderful world!

Thank you, cancer, for making us the better person that we are today.

Valarie Traynham



WORKSHOP 1

We've been through so much together. You've always been here for me, but I have not always appreciated you in the way that I do now. I'm learning to love you just as you are. Why not, you are the biggest most important part of me. You are beautiful. You make me look good.

My hair is not what I want to be but it is just as it is and I must learn to accept you as you are. You aren't thick and long. You are even starting to gray a bit. At first that bothered me and I wasn't ready to accept it. But now I am grateful for my gray hair. I have wisdom streaks. I have lived long enough to be wise.

My skin is still beautiful. You used to get comments all the time. I noticed after chemo you were darker in some spots and the compliments didn't flow as frequently. I tried all different types of cream to get you back to "normal" but it just wasn't meant to be. I accept you, the unevenness and all.

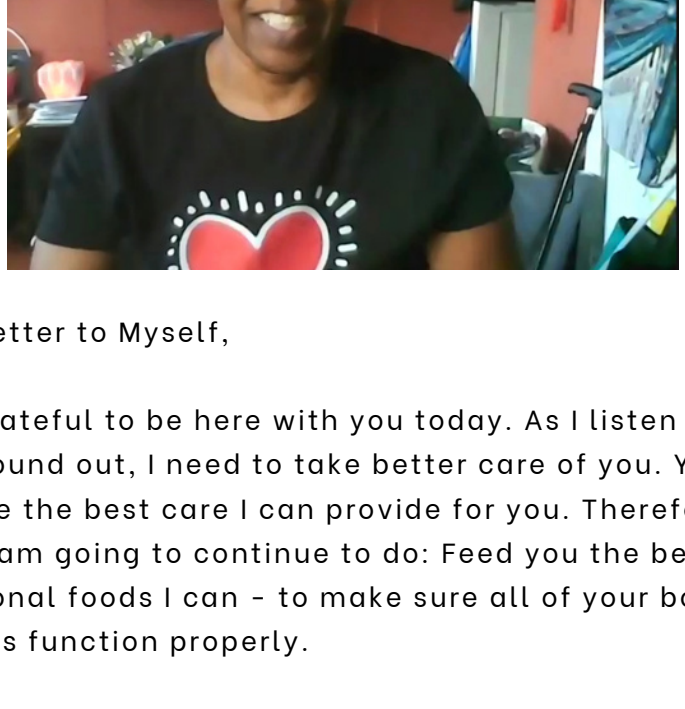
To the scar on my forehead, you have caused me to wonder, question, feel unpretty. I'm sorry I've not liked you all my life. I've wanted you gone. I've tried so many things to cover you. But you are a part of me too. You are a dear part of my story. Because of you, I know that I have a greater purpose. You have kept me humble.

Looking at you every day lets me know that there is something greater that looks out for me. You serve a purpose I may never know.

My eyes are beautiful. I thought you were black as I grew up but came to see that you are a lovely shade of brown. You allow me to see the world. You're not perfect but I can dress you up in all different types of frames.

My dear lips you are beautiful. You help me to receive daily nourishment to sustain me. Your not too big or small but just as I like you to be. You help me to convey my many thoughts. When you part, the white teeth shine through. You show the very best of my smile. Thank you, lips.

Lavonnia Johnson



Love Letter to Myself,

I am grateful to be here with you today. As I listen to you, I have found out, I need to take better care of you. You deserve the best care I can provide for you. Therefore, here is what I am going to continue to do: Feed you the best nutritional foods I can - to make sure all of your body systems function properly.

I am going to exercise at least once a week to physically keep you in shape. I will work on healing the body. I need all body parts functioning properly. While the medicine does help me to heal, I will be praying to make sure spiritually I heal you. I will continue to meditate to make sure we are in tune with each other and our surroundings.

I love you and I do not want anything to happen to you because I did not pay attention to you. I have my eyes on you daily and will never let you down. The greatest joy I have is knowing you are healthy and alive. I am a better woman today than yesterday and you deserve the best. Together we will conquer our problems, for tomorrow will be better.

Love you.

EMBODY GRATITUDE TO EXPERIENCE THE LIGHT

When you have become the Embodiment of Gratitude, think about how Pure the Water that fills your Body will be.

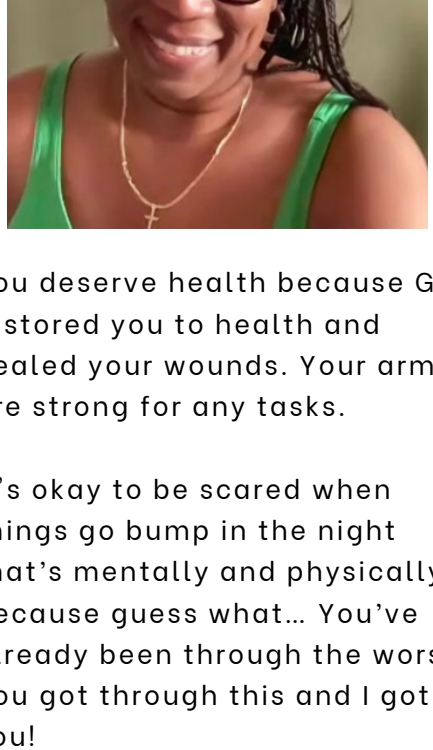
When this happens, you Yourself will be a Beautiful Shining Crystal of Light.

~ Masaru Emoto

Author

The Hidden Messages in Water

Tricia Griffith



Dear Sunshine,

I took you for granted for a long time but know that the love I have for you and have always had for you is pure and real. Thank you for this journey. I know it wasn't always easy but with ups there are downs. And it's amazing to come back up with you.

Please know that you won't ever have to deal with anything without me by your side – ever. I love and cherish the woman that you are and are still becoming. Your physical strength amazes me… the way you move through life getting better every day.

I long to see your smiling face, hear your joyful voice, look into your beautiful eyes, and fall into your warm caress. It's like home and that is where I want to be. You've grown so much since we connected on this level.

Your quest for knowledge encourages me and putting your knowledge into practice and sharing with others is commendable.

You deserve health because God restored you to health and healed your wounds. Your arms are strong for any tasks.

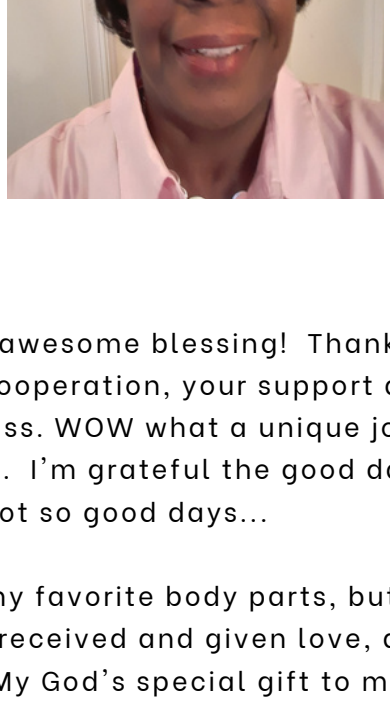
It's okay to be scared when things go bump in the night that's mentally and physically… because guess what… You've already been through the worst. You got through this and I got you!

Thank you for being who you are. Don't change that. I am okay with your "no's" or "not now's." Thank you for the quiet moments of stillness. It's priceless.

I want you to know that you are my everything. You are worthy of love. Because YOU ARE LOVE.

Love Ya Always.

Denise Triplett



Hello Me,

My Body what an awesome blessing! Thank you, body, for loving me, your cooperation, your support and keeping up with me is priceless. WOW what a unique journey we have traveled together. I'm grateful the good days have outweighed the not so good days...

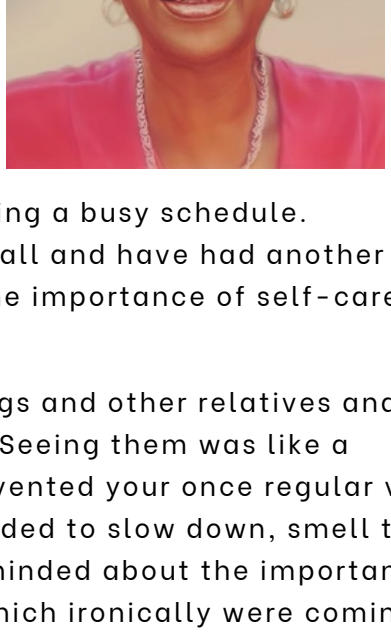
Not calling out any favorite body parts, but, KUDOS to my Heart, which has received and given love, and my beautiful powerful Hands. My God's special gift to me have worked, touched, and comforted others, fed my tummy and enjoyed making arts and crafts just to name a few...

Grateful for my Ears - I can hear others speak, listen and enjoy music (my favorite pastime), and tell my Legs/Feet to dance or just move. My favorite body parts list can go on and on - my Brains, my Smile, my Eyes, my Patience, and my Personality. When I have a moment of gratitude at the end of the day - Thank you God. I love and appreciate my Body you have given me.

Much Love Always.

Thelma D. Jones

Dear Thelma,



What a pleasant surprise to hear from you! I hope that you are doing fine or at least coping during these unprecedented and challenging times. You have dealt with the back-to-back caregiving task of your beloved Aunt Frances, her hospitalization, death, funeral in North Carolina and then Covid-19 during a busy schedule. Congratulations! You made it through it all and have had another chance to do some more reflection on the importance of self-care.

Yes, you got to see and enjoy your siblings and other relatives and friends at the funeral in North Carolina. Seeing them was like a Baptist Church Revival as Covid has prevented your once regular visits home. Yet I was reminded that I still needed to slow down, smell the roses, and enjoy more self-care. I also was reminded about the importance of saying “no” to the countless requests which ironically were coming from the same choir that sings the tune to me about self-care.

Prioritizing continues to be a challenge without any staff because I am so passionate about my mission and vision surrounding breast cancer. And I am confident that I am making a difference on a grassroots level with an extremely vulnerable group of people. I will continue the mission of educating, outreaching, supporting, and advocating for women, men, and young girls to help reduce the incidence and mortality rates of breast cancer, especially among African Americans and Blacks.

At the same time, I will remember that to help others, I must first take good care of Thelma. Sessions like these – offered by both Moyo Institute and Smith Center for Healing and the Arts – are a good first step toward this effort.

Finally, Thelma, remember to be good to yourself so that you can, not only function and thrive with calmness and peacefulness, but also be an example for others to follow.

PRAYER POWER AT WORK

Our thoughts are prayers,

and we are always praying.

Our thoughts are prayers,

Be careful what you're saying.

Seek a higher consciousness,

A state of peacefulness,

And know that God is always

there.

And every thought becomes a

prayer.

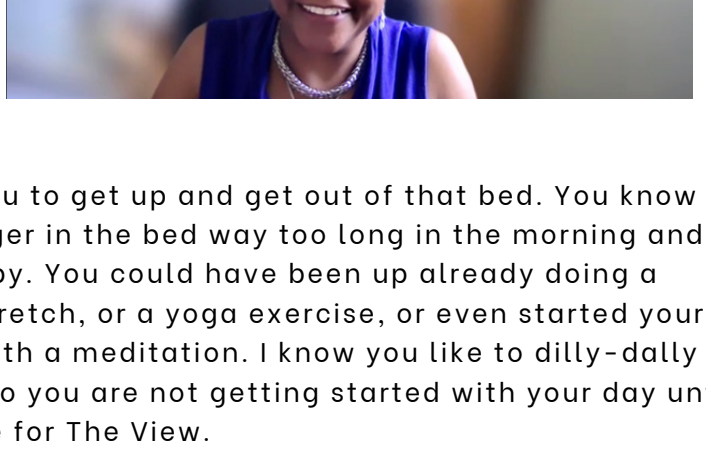
~ Lucille Olson

Music Director

Fellowship for Today

& Unity Spiritual Renaissance

Laraine Jones



Hey Laraine,

It's time for you to get up and get out of that bed. You know you like to linger in the bed way too long in the morning and time is flying by. You could have been up already doing a warm-up, a stretch, or a yoga exercise, or even started your day already with a meditation. I know you like to dilly-dally in the morning, so you are not getting started with your day until 11a.m., in time for The View.

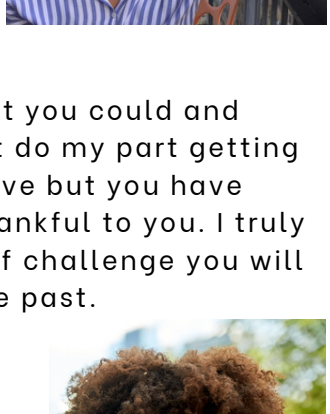
But do you realize how much time you have wasted? You should get up and out of the bed some time between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. This way you can comfortably get started with your day with at least a 30-minute bike ride and some floor exercises. You can imagine how great you will feel if you could do this consistently each morning. Well at least each morning when you do not have a morning appointment or morning activities on your calendar.

Laraine, it's time for you to become intentional about being more consistent with exercising. And you do not have any excuse for not being more consistent. I am looking at the calendar for June. Today is June 12th and do you realize you have exercised only four days so far this month. Now you know that's a darn shame. You definitely can do so much better. Just think about your goals for losing some weight and working on your core. How will achieve these goals if you are not exercising more and you are not being more consistent and intentional about exercising. I think this week you need to look at your calendar and set a goal to get out of the bed by no later than 8 a.m., and to make sure that you are exercising each day that you do not have a morning appointment.

What do you say? Do you think you can commit to this? Do you think you can give it a try? Let's work to get your body in shape and continue to work to keep yourself healthy and in shape. Let's Just do it.

Deidra Roberson

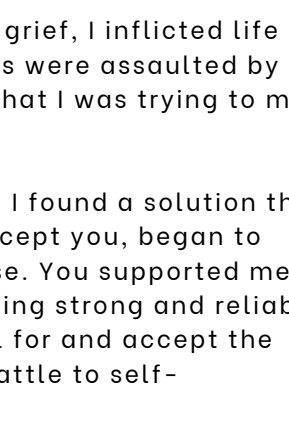
A Love Letter to My Body,



I am so proud of you and all that you have been though to love and support me during the most difficult times of my life! I appreciate your efforts to do for me that only you can do. You have sustained me when I might have given up and encouraged me when fear and anxiety threatened to overtake me!

You responded positively when I doubted that you could and would!! There have been times when I did not do my part getting adequate rest and nourish you as I should have but you have loved me better than I loved myself!! I am thankful to you. I truly love you and I believe that during this time of challenge you will strengthen and sustain me as you have in the past.

Privacy Granted



Dear Body,

I have never loved you or been proud of you. You have always been compared to others and you were always found lacking…your skin was too dark, your hair was too thin and short, your butt was too big, your thighs too large, your smile was lacking. I was always shocked when you were complimented because I could not see what others saw when looking at you. Looking back, you were strong, healthy, and beautiful and should have been appreciated and treated with respect. I had no gratitude.

When confronted with fear, doubt, disappointment, grief, I inflicted life threatening brutality upon you with food. Your bones were assaulted by excess pounds, your skin was stretched. It seemed that I was trying to make you look as ugly and unloved as I felt on the inside.

Then, God did for me what I could not do for myself. I found a solution that began to heal me both inside and out. I began to accept you, began to understand that you remain strong despite the abuse. You supported me through it all. I now appreciate you, my body, for being strong and reliable and reasonably healthy despite aging. I am grateful for and accept the loose skin, for these are the battle scars from the battle to self-acceptance.

With much gratitude and love.

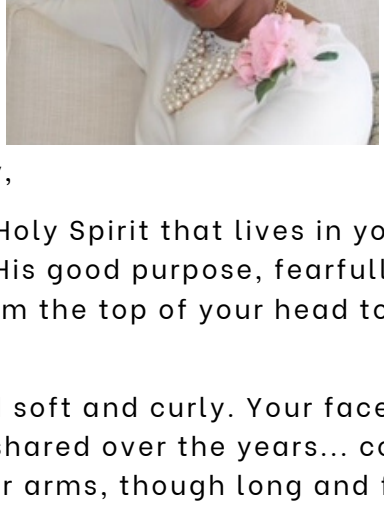
YOUR ONLY PURPOSE IS TO BE YOURSELF

We don't realize that we are actually perfect just the way we are.
We are born perfect, but spend a lifetime trying to be something we are not, and then feel inadequate for failing.

Your only purpose is to BE YOURSELF, otherwise you will deprive the universe of who you came here to be.

~ Anita Moorjani
Author
Dying to Be Me

Tamara Myles



Dear Tamara's Body,

I thank God for the Holy Spirit that lives in you! You have been created by God for His good purpose, fearfully and wonderfully made. I love you from the top of your head to the soles of your feet!

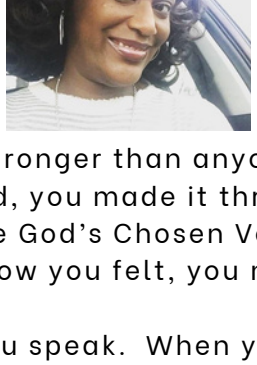
Your hair is fine and soft and curly. Your face, showing lines from the emotions shared over the years... compassion, laughter, tears. Your arms, though long and flabby have been raised in joyful thanksgiving and praise! Your feet are fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Be grateful for the additional weight from menopause; the curves and bump bump bumps...strong thighs and hips that have served well in sports, in childbirth and as protection during cancer treatment. Your left breast, though scarred is used for the assignment to give God all the glory. You don't look like what you've been through! Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is overwhelming to look at you, in reflection of how you have changed over the years. Once very small and lean, and now in this season, fluffy but still fabulous!

To my dear body made in His image, I am humbled and feel favored and blessed by the mercy given over the years in the recovery of injuries and surgeries, bad knees, edema and memory fog. They say the mind is the first thing to go - for you it was vision. Those glasses look good on you, girl!

I love you for what you are, what you have become and the testimony of all the hits. The Lord has truly been your strength. Through it all you maintain a big smile and giving heart, with steadfast faith that there will be glory after this! For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
Surely, His goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life, and you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!

Nicole Rogers



Dear Body,

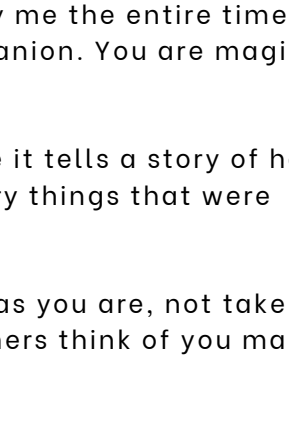
Thank You! Thank You for being stronger than anyone could ever imagine. With the help of the Lord, you made it through some challenging times. I know you are God's Chosen Vessel because no matter what it looked like or how you felt, you never gave up.

I promise to listen to you when you speak. When you lack energy, I will slow down and give you the proper rest. And when you are discouraged, I will feed you the word of God, for in His word there's hope, joy, and peace.

You are so beautiful! In your beauty there's strength and in your strength, there is unshakeable faith. There is so much more I could say, but for now I say thank you for being a beautiful vessel for my divine soul.

Valarie Traynham

WORKSHOP 2



Dear Body,

I am happy to call you friend. I didn't always think of you as a friend. I thought less of you because you because you didn't live up to the standards of what the world says you should look – thin, high cheek bones, flowing hair, etc. The list goes on and on. The world is wrong. I'm sorry I didn't appreciate you.

You've changed over the years. The aging process, two different cancers, chemo treatments and numerous surgeries have left your worn for the weary. Yet you never gave up. You have stood by me the entire time. You've bounced backed. You are a faithful companion. You are magical. You are beautiful and dependable.

Every scar that you bear bringing me joy because it tells a story of how resilient you are. How you have overcome the very things that were meant to destroy you.

I vow to take better care of you, to love you just as you are, not take you for granted, to pamper you, to never let what others think of you make me not like you. You are me and I love you.

THE FIVE REMEMBRANCES

I am of the nature to grow old.
There is no way to escape growing old.

I am of the nature to have ill health.
There is no way to escape ill health.

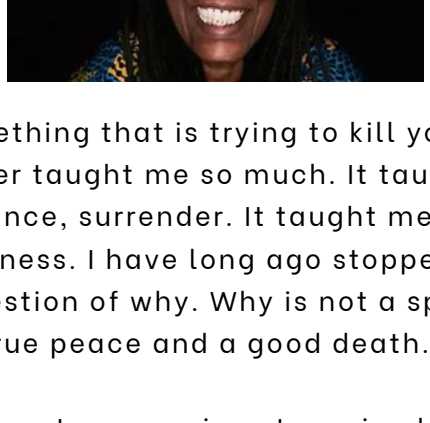
I am of the nature to die. There is no
way to escape death.

All that is dear to me and everyone I love are
of the nature to change. There is no way to
escape being separated from them.

My actions are my only true belongings. I
cannot escape the consequences of my
actions. My actions are the ground upon
which I stand.

~ Siddhartha Gautama
The Buddha

Lucretia Bolin



Can you love something that is trying to kill you? Can you forgive? My cancer taught me so much. It taught me acceptance, patience, surrender. It taught me self love and it taught me forgiveness. I have long ago stopped asking the unanswerable question of why. Why is not a spiritual question. It is a barrier to true peace and a good death.

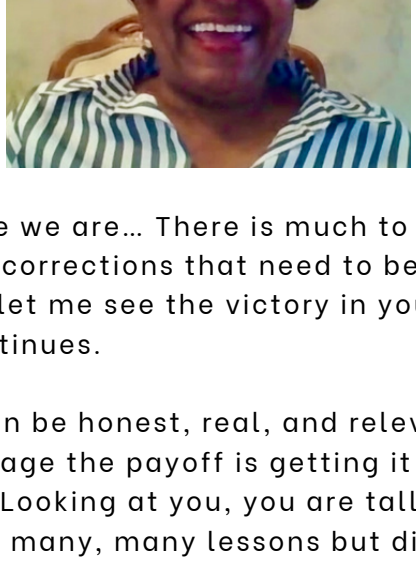
It's been almost twenty years since I received that phone call. The fear of the suffering one thinks of with cancer, the wasting, the chemotherapy, the weakness, the fragility of both mind and body, the loss of one's hair, the stigma and the fear of death have largely been replaced with a surrender and acceptance to the cycle of what is, the cycle of life. I have come to a place of gratitude for the opening of the door to the magic and mystery of life.

I have come to appreciate the incredible gift of the human body, of my body. I have stopped trying to contort her into an idea of some perfection that exists only in the mind of ego. I have stopped starving her and treating her with ill will and disregard. I have, with age, become more tender, loving and compassionate towards her. I do not fault her for having cancer or for any illness or for growing old. She has served me well and she has loved me, perhaps, even when I didn't really love her back. We both know that one day we will have to say goodbye. Everyone will, one day, have to leave their house. It cannot be avoided.

My Buddhist faith comforts me. When I find myself fighting with what is and will always be, I turn to *The Five Remembrances.*

I've made as much peace as I can with what was and what is, which is to say I made peace with cancer and the inevitability of death, my own death.

Sheila Finney



Hey Sheila,
Look now at where we are… There is much to be grateful for and so, too, are many corrections that need to be made, especially now. At 1 and 70, let me see the victory in you as well as knowing that the fight continues.

I hope that you can be honest, real, and relevant. Time passes fast and at this stage the payoff is getting it right… and that means right now. Looking at you, you are tall but now you are bending. You took many, many lessons but didn't learn all of them on time. You are kind hearted and charitable, almost to the fault line. You have frown lines across your brow and stitches in your heart from two husbands that you just gave too much.

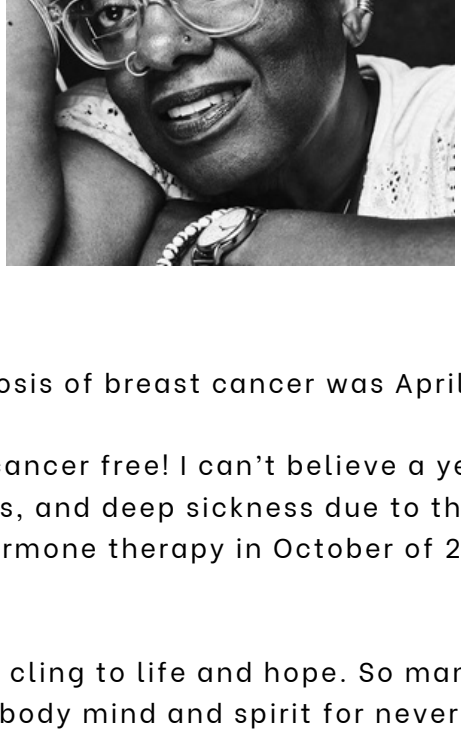
But now, you've learned to be the prize. And, you no longer feel the void that you don't even want to remember. You have learned to protect your heart, perhaps at the cost of companionship, but still Sheila, you are strong, you are a survivor, and you will continue to give.

When I think of you, it starts with the joy of adventure, stamina, and the courage to face down cancer, home invasions and the loss of your dear mother. Now I know that much of that joy that came to you wasn't the presence of the now departed, it was the love that you had inside that you learned to give and give and share and support others with.

So, when I look at you now, I see a sense of strength and a person who wants to enjoy these days. You want to give more to others and still save enough for yourself. You need to love yourelf more fully by taking more time for you, the things that you have worked for and now you are supposed to be enjoying.

This is something that you need to understand, and it is a promise that you need to be able to keep.

Delorme McKee-Stovall



Note to Self,

My initial diagnosis of breast cancer was April 26, 2021.

I'm now 1 year cancer free! I can't believe a year that was so filled with stress, and deep sickness due to the development of toxicity to hormone therapy in October of 2021 is now behind me.

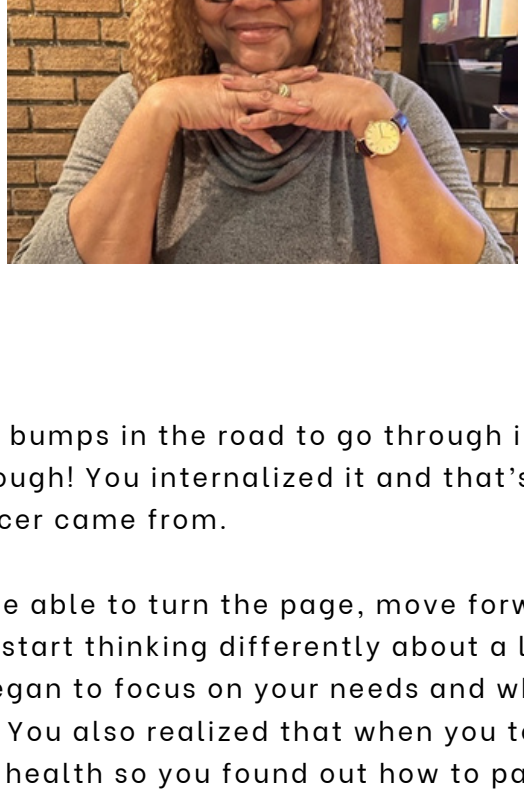
It was a fight to cling to life and hope. So many prayers. But I truly thank you body mind and spirit for never giving up on me, for allowing me to tap deeply into all my reserves and remain disciplined about my healing diet, healing body movement and healing meditations.

I am so grateful for all the healing disciplines that I have learned over decades and applied to the healing of my body. You have not let me down, even in my insightful intuition and my darkest hours.

I now know how really strong you are and how reliable you can be when it comes to my self care. Self love and it's application in times of physical and mental challenges is the best medicine. I'm so grateful and blessed.

Love to you Mind, Body and Spirit.

Quintina Hampton



Dear Tina,

You had a lot of bumps in the road to go through in your life but you made it through! You internalized it and that's probably where your breast cancer came from.

Luckily, you were able to turn the page, move forward and realize that you had to start thinking differently about a lot of things in your life. You began to focus on your needs and what Quintina was sent here to do. You also realized that when you took on too much, it affected your health so you found out how to pace yourself.

Thank goodness there were friends (aka angels) helping/guiding along the way. Ask and the teacher shall appear! That is so true!

You are such a grateful soul and that's why the universe has blessed you in so many ways!

Thank you for paying attention to all of your lessons!

REPROGRAM YOUR BRAIN LET GO OF FEAR

Thoughts are very powerful.
Repetitive thoughts form neural pathways in the brain.
The more you think them, the more ingrained they become.

Become conscious of your fears and other negative thoughts.
This is the first step to reprogramming your brain.

Focus on the good.
Express gratitude.
Engage in self-care.
Ask your Divine to help you to let go of fear.

~ Gwendolyn Mitchell
Founder
Moyo Institute, Inc.

Women You Should Know

ERIN BROWN
ERIN BROWN CONNECTS

After losing her mother and her closest cousin to cancer, then being told she too had cancer and would need her leg amputated, Erin Brown went from worrier to warrior. As an athlete and a mother of two, she also is the founder of Erin Brown Connects, an internationally recognized firm that fights for disability equity and inclusion.

Brown has created a movement to empower people facing cancer and living with disabilities, from paralympic development to disability rights. She has presented to the United Nations, World Health Organization and Pan American Health Organization. In recognition of her accomplishments, she has been named Godmother of *Odyssey of the Seas*, a Royal Caribbean Cruise International vessel.

Women You Should Know

TAMIKA FELDER, FOUNDER
CERVIVOR

Tamika Felder is on a mission to end cancer, advocate for the patient voice in healthcare, and mobilize others to live with purpose, whatever their obstacles.

She's an award-winning television producer, author, blogger, podcaster, mentor, cancer survivor, and motivational speaker. Her high-energy, humorous, and interactive talks share her personal story and translate her challenges and lessons into "goal crushing" action steps to help others move past fear and live without limits.

Byllye Y. Avery, is the Founder of Black Women's Health Imperative Inc., the first nonprofit organization created by Black women to help protect and advance the health and wellness of Black women and girls. The organization now has a history of 38 years working for health equality for Black women.

The breadth of the organization's work is far-reaching with numerous programs and policy initiatives.

BYLLYE AVERY, FOUNDER
BLACK WOMENS HEALTH IMPERATIVE

DR. PHILLIPS-REED, FOUNDER
SISTERS BY CHOICE

Dr. Phillips-Reed saw the need for programs that would increase public knowledge and awareness of breast cancer to reduce the mortality and morbidity of the disease.

In 1989 she founded Sisters By Choice. Initially formed as a support group for women diagnosed with breast cancer and their families, SBC has evolved into a multi-faceted organization serving women in Georgia.

Women You Should Know

KAREN E. JACKSON, FOUNDER
SISTERS NETWORK, INC.

Karen Eubanks Jackson, Founder/CEO of Sisters Network® Inc. (SNI), a 28-year four time breast cancer survivor and author, is recognized nationally as a true visionary and national leader in the Black breast cancer movement. Sisters Network Inc. is the nation's largest and only national Black breast cancer survivorship organization.

Sisters Network has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in financial assistance to pay for mammograms for women in need.

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. Nearly 1000 breast cancer survivors (men & women) have attended the monthly meetings of the TDJBCF Support Group.

THELMA D. JONES, FOUNDER
THELMA D. JONES BREAST CANCER FUND

SHEILA FINNEY, FOUNDER
DETROIT COMMUNITY HAT STRUT

After being diagnosed with Cancer 10 years ago, Sheila Finney got busy. Working with her service organization, the Detroit Chapter of The Links, Inc., Sheila spearheaded the Detroit Area Community Hat Strut - Breast Cancer Awareness program. This bold initiative enabled 5,000 women to receive mammograms. Students and staff of Detroit International Academy for Girls played a key role as trained Ambassadors.

Women You Should Know

Melbra Watts is the Executive Director of Charlotte Maxwell Clinic (CMC). Founded in 1991, CMC provides free access to compassionate, integrative care for low-income women with cancer, including acupuncture, massage, energy work, movement, and nutrition advice. These individual and group services are delivered by licensed and certified volunteer practitioners.
Melbra began with CMC as a volunteer energy healing practitioner in 2013, 4 years later joined the board & served as President before becoming E.D.

MELBRA WATTS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CHARLOTTE MAXWELL CLINIC

Lisa Simms Booth is Executive Director of the Smith Center for Healing and the Arts. Lisa's advocacy journey began when her mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2003. Lisa channeled her sense of purpose into leadership roles at the Milken Institute's FasterCures Center and the Biden Cancer Initiative. Today, she advocates for cancer patients and their families at Smith Center, DC's only independent non-profit focused on whole person care for those with cancer and the general public.

LISA SIMMS BOOTH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SMITH CENTER FOR HEALING & THE ARTS

Reona Berry is President of the African American Breast Cancer Alliance (AABCA) and a cofounder along with Linda Finney, Brenda Anderson, Theresa Davis, Mamie Singleton, Elaine Elliott, Sylvia Beamon, Bea McFadden, Carol Fitzgerald (d) and Norma Collins (d).

AABCA provides emotional and social support for breast cancer patients and survivors to help them have better recovery experiences as they cope with this disease.

REONNA BERRY
AFRICAN AMERICAN BREAST CANCER ALLIANCE

Women You Should Know

SYLVIA DUNNAVANT HINES
CELEBRATING LIFE FOUNDATION

Sylvia Dunnavant Hines is the founder of the Celebrating Life Foundation. This non-profit organization teaches breast-cancer awareness. Under her leadership, the organization has developed and distributed over a million breast self-exam cards to churches and civic organizations across the country.

The foundation has worked with major corporations across the country and also has assisted health education projects in the Virgin Islands, Africa, Ghana, and the Netherlands.

RICKI FAIRLEY, CO-FOUNDER,
TOUCH - THE BLACK BREAST CANCER ALLIANCE

As a Triple Negative Breast Cancer Survivor/Thriver, Ricki's personal purpose, passion, mission, ministry, and blessing is to bring focus, attention, research, science, and action to eradicating Black Breast Cancer, and supporting and coaching what she calls her "Breasties" through their breast cancer experience.
Ricki co-founded and serves as CEO of TOUCH, The Black Breast Cancer Alliance to address Black Breast Cancer as a unique and special disease state, with the overall goal of reducing the mortality rate for Black women.

VALERIE WORTHY, CO-FOUNDER
TOUCH - THE BLACK BREAST CANCER ALLIANCE

Touch Cofounder Valerie Worthy is a registered nurse with a master's degree in Leadership - Community Health Systems and has been a nurse for over 38 years. Patient Navigation, public, community and home infusion nursing summarizes her nursing career. Valerie, a 21-year breast cancer survivor understands the unique needs of cancer patients and their families. She works collaboratively with cancer centers around the nation to address the needs of African American women with breast cancer.

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.

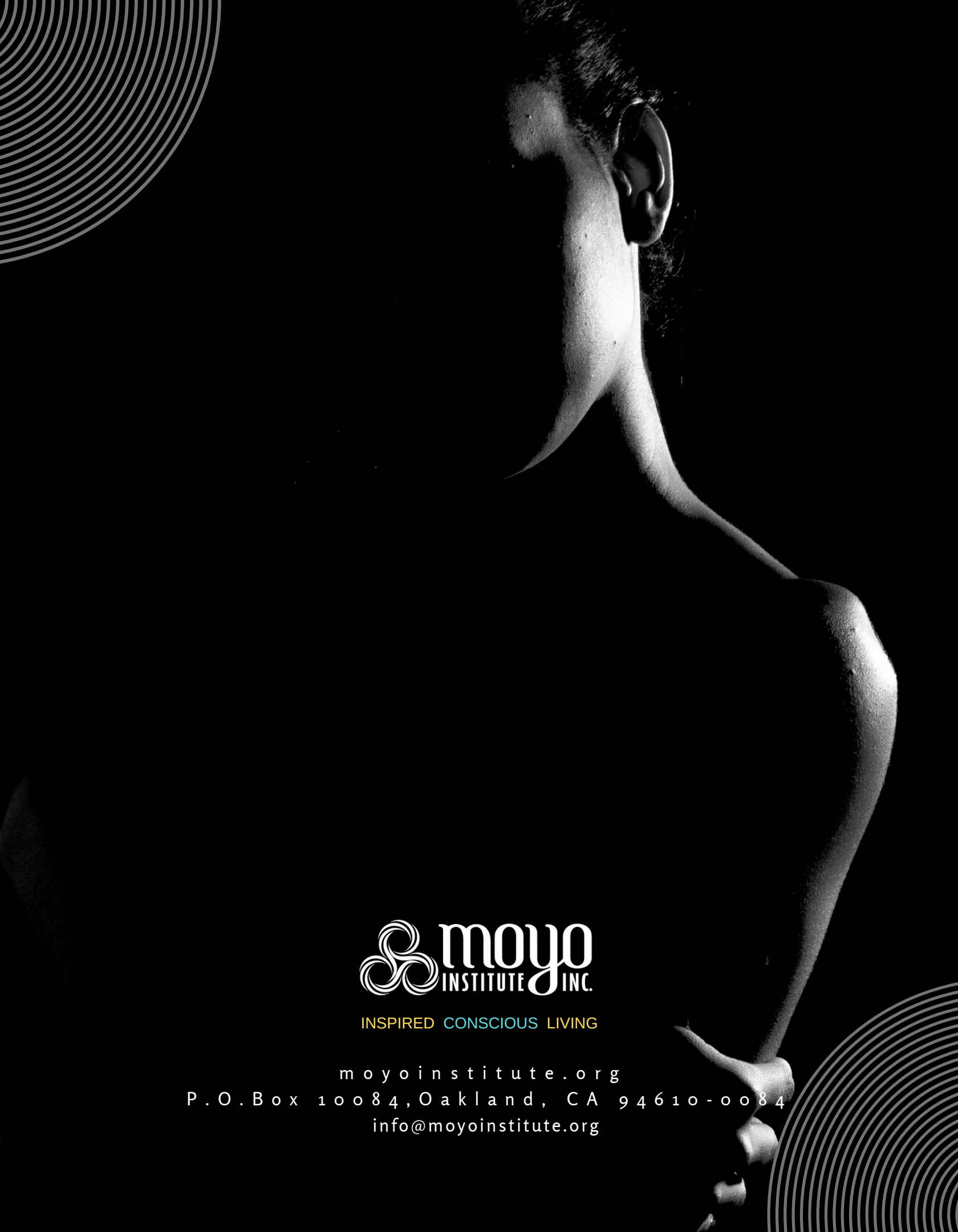
Founded by Reiki Master and Meditation Teacher Gwendolyn Mitchell, the goal of Moyo is to support the restoration of harmony and balance within individuals, families, and communities. The Institute facilitates the sharing of processes and practices that stimulate wellbeing from within. Moyo combines 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.

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.



moyo INSTITUTE INC.

INSPIRED CONSCIOUS LIVING

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