Cancer Caregiver Story-Dr Lemmon Interviews Tavares Garrett About His Mothers Cancer Healing Journey Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome to the Natural Cancer Support Channel. I'm Dr. David Lemon, a naturopathic cancer expert. And I'm here with Tavares Garrett, Health and Transformation Educator and owner at thebodiesynthesis.com.

So he has a caregiver story. He supported his mother through the cancer process and he's a a fitness and nutrition coach, and he has a really cool personal story as well.

So we'll get into all those details here in the next few minutes. Welcome to the show, Tavares. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Lemon. So happy to be here. Hello to everybody, all your supporters, everyone tuning in from around the world.

Such an honor to be in this space with you. Thank you. You're so welcome. Great to have you. So tell us a little bit about your background. What did you study?

Did you go to college right after high school or what was your path there and how did you get into fitness and nutrition coaching? Thank you for asking.

My path, yes, went to college, San Jose State University, go Spartans. You know, my journey began, I feel, Much after that, through college, great experiences, met a lot of great people, made a lot of great connections.

I was really interested in finding out more about myself, like many of us do at that time of our lives. So I was into doing other things. I was into the night scene.

I was out and about, but I felt like I wanted to do more with my life. And as time went on, I moved away from home, I came back. 2017, went through a pretty bad breakup after 13 years with somebody else a pretty long time.

And so I believe a lot of us, we reached those moments, those tipping points, if you will, that will typically propel us into another chapter of our lives.

And that's what that breakup was for me. So I came back home and I'd always been into fitness. Fitness, I feel, is something that's been a steady pillar in my life.

It's always been something that I've been able to rely on. So I decided to go ahead and make it a career. But a lot of my knowledge first had to come from my own experiences.

And that is what really led me into this particular industry.

Career Path and Sobriety Journey

I had a long, lovely career with alcohol and I had to call it quits. I've been sober now over 10 years, so I'm happy to say that. That was when my journey really began because I had to get clear.

I had to get intentional about my personal growth. So we were dealt the blow. My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020. And so that was heavy for us in our family.

Single mother of four, I have three sisters. And so being in the space of nutrition and health, I've always told my mom, hey, mom, a body of motion stays in motion.

I've always said that to her. And I feel like sometimes she probably did get it, other times she didn't. So when she was diagnosed with Dr. Lemons, I immediately decided that what she was eating was going to be important.

What she had already been eating perhaps would have to go and be replaced. And so after we went through the crying and all the what ifs, we began to come into what I call a solution-based mindset, right?

Because we're dealt a blow here and many people were emotional. No one's really thinking clear and typically we'll go to the end result. So we'll start feeding our energy into like the bad result.

And this was a space that I really knew I had to get intentional. So went to my mom's home and we cleared out her refrigerator because I did understand that a lot of these frozen foods, a lot of these processed foods, They weren't going to do the job.

I'm aware that cancer needs an acidic environment to really thrive in. And so I really wanted to focus as much as I could with my mother on more alkalinity getting into her body.

So I really wanted there to be more like water-rich foods, more than 70% water retain in these foods, fruits, vegetables, lots of greens. And luckily for me, my mom loves to eat salads.

Well, that was great. Good way to go. But during the treatment, we did stumble. We did hit some speed bumps there. Her taste, the side effects of the chemo, her taste began to drift a bit.

She couldn't really taste things anymore. They were changing her taste buds. Her smell, some things were too much. They turned her off. They weren't appealing anymore.

Texture, the food texture, again, side effects of the chemo and being her son, being the one closest to home, it was a lot. It was a lot to navigate. And so, because I'm so, I'm a better student as an adult, I'm grateful for that.

And I say that because I was able to retain a lot of the information that the doctors were sharing with me. And the moments where my mother was getting her chemo treatments, I had to be her eyes and her ears.

And instead of being overwhelmed with the information, I chose to implore some of my own breathing techniques and calm my own self down so that I could hear.

and see what was going on in these moments. And so, of course, my mother, you know, she fought back a lot because, again, side effects of the chemo, and these are things that we don't even see coming.

One day she likes the food, right? Next day she doesn't. And there was a lot of that. There was a lot of the back and forth. So I knew patience was going to be key.

I knew showing grace, not only to her, but to myself, was going to be key. And I knew that our intent was going to be key, our intent on her personal growth, our intent on continuously looking into holistic opportunities and options because my mother didn't feel good on the medicine.

She could feel good with the chemo. She was lethargic. Her energy was really, really low. It took a lot for me to get her out of the house in the earlier stages of the chemo process.

And I was the one taking her to all the appointments. So I saw all the effects. I saw the water retention in her foot. The lymphedema set in something so vicious that I'd never seen anything like that.

You know, we just kept it. It was important to keep her laughing. So again, I was not only there as a nutrition coach and, you know, her personal trainer and a behavioral change specialist, but I was also there as her son.

I was her cheerleader, right? Because it's so easy to worry about our problems. And I'm a firm believer in if we are worried about our problems, we're living in the past, but this was a different problem.

Supporting His Mother Through Cancer

You know, this is active. This thing is here. And it's the first time that we're dealing with this myself, my sisters, all adults now. And so we had to rally and I had to rally.

And it didn't matter if I was tired. It didn't matter if I had meetings to get to. None of that mattered. In fact, my entire life came second. My wife understood it.

She came through. I love my wife. She came through like a champ and just was like, babe, do what you gotta do. My schedule was all over the place. I'm a regimented guy.

Okay. I'm up at four in the morning. I'm in the gym by five, out by seven. I mean, it's like click, click, click, click. But with my, I couldn't, I couldn't do that because cancer doesn't, there's no schedule, right?

Like cancer you have to do at five o'clock the next day. So this was also about me being able to implement some of my own practices that I do for my members within the body synthesis.

But this time it's my mom, so it's different. I couldn't approach it like I may or may not approach everyone else. I had to be very sensitive to her emotions, her vulnerabilities.

She lost her hair, a woman losing her hair, man. That's identity for them, for some. And so being able to be there to manage the emotions, to manage her energy, and it not being about me.

So we made it fun as much as we could. We made the food fun, made the food appealing, colorful foods. You know, things that were very helpful, avocados, healthy fats, healthy carbs, you know, got her away from the processed stuff, got her out of the freezer.

She was always sobbing in the freezer section. I can have those chicken nuggets. No, mom, these are not the real chicken nuggets she wants. So keeping her energy up.

keeping her attitude available to optimism because in that space, my mother as a domestic violence survivor, it's very easy for her to worry about things and to operate from the state of survivor mode.

And we were eased in that state. As young kids, my beginnings are very humble. I come from violence. My mother and father had a very violent relationship.

He tried to kill her in 1977. I was born in 75. That will forever live on in my memory and my sister's. So we come from that. So we take a lot of work to not allow ourselves to slip back into what I call the program of life.

Because we know how trauma can really impact the mind, the body, and the spirit. And so keeping my mother and keeping her spirits uplifted during this time was paramount because I knew the more she endured stress, the more her cortisol built up or her adrenaline, the worse this was going to be for her and better for the cancer.

It would help the catheter to thrive. So food, hydration, alkaline water, in moderation, of course, because again, I'm talking with the doctors, they're telling me what is good and what isn't, you know.

And then of course, helping my mother to go to the bathroom because the chemo is just that toxic to the human. So there's a whole lot that we had to unpack as mother and son.

And then of course, as professional and well, client, because there was a part of me that had to put my mother in this space so I could actually serve her and not be just the child, because we both know the relationship between parent and child.

It could be a touch and go, especially in a heightened situation like cancer. When emotions are thriving, they're firing, people are short, attitudes are kind of in and out.

So I had to be mindful of that and manage those emotions. And then of course, be mindful as a professional and knowing when I should give a little. and knowing when I should be a bit more assertive.

And then, of course, knowing when I should just pause and let her be. And I found through a lot of that, creating a balance for her is really what served her best.

It's not just one thing. This is what I learned. It's not just one thing when it came to her treatment. I believe it's a continuum of things. It's creating and building good habits, strong habits.

It's leaving enough room for yourself to grow and to input new habits if current habits are no longer serving you. You know, so this was a process of not only getting to know her, but also getting to know myself.

I could unpack this for so many hours, Dr. Lemon, but I've never had a chance to really share this story. So thank you. I'm very grateful. I mean, I shared it with friends, you know, and family, but it's different with a professional like yourself, and this is your field.

And so you get to hear this story from a different point of view, because I didn't know what to expect. And a lot of people, We get afraid of the unknown.

We all know how fear can paralyze us. It'll stop us from obtaining our goals. It'll stop us right in our tracks. And for me, fortunately, I don't believe I had that luxury.

I don't believe we had the luxury. I felt like we were in a race against time. And at times I still do. I'm always still checking the floor. Hey mom, how are you doing?

What are you eating? Tell me what you ate today. How much water did you drink today? You know, she's from a different generation. And so to get her more involved with some of this more current ways of current holistic ways of keeping ourselves healthy, it can present different opportunities and at times a little bit of turbulence.

But I'm so grateful that my mom is a bit more open-minded and I'm grateful that I'm her son because We had a rapport there. So she's able to trust what I say to her.

And then of course, she knows I'm pretty good about doing my research. So when it comes to caring for her, when it came to caring for her, I took the role serious.

I still take it serious. As I stated a moment ago, I still check in with her because it is an ongoing process. We're still building good habits. We're still, you know, taking out things that aren't serving us, putting in new things that are serving us.

I'm always going to her with some new idea and having that idea fit in with the current plan, right? I don't just come out of the wall out of nowhere with anything.

I'm like, hey mom, let's try this. What do you think about this? Her input for anyone listening and watching, if you're caregiving, be sure to get their input.

They're still human. They're still people. Yes, they're in a condition. And yes, we are going to serve them, but get their input. I did find Dr. Lemon getting my mother's input made her feel really good.

It empowered her. It really did. And the cancer process makes you really feel out of control. And so the more control you can have that input and decision is really empowering and critical for emotional wellbeing for sure.

Yeah. So that was, that's what I really saw a lot of coming back bit by bit, her empowerment, the more she was able to be involved with the decision-making as far as her and I were looking together, the foods, things like that.

I never wanted her to feel like she had no power because I have a pretty good imagination and I would imagine

myself in her shoes often so that I was available.

to her woes, I was available to anything that she'd want to share. So it was very important that I'd be available emotionally, as well as mentally, have good brain health, right?

It's important to have good brain health. So I really wanted to continue to project that on her. So I had to make sure I was right before I even got to my mother many times in the morning, because I knew how much energy we were going to have to use on these days.

And after a while, the days blurred together. So it definitely is much better now. Things are much better now. She is cancer free. I'm happy to say that.

And she still gets tested. A lot's changed. A lot had to change, right? Cancer, amongst many other diseases, have a way, and you can speak to this doctor there, but way of waking us up.

And not just the person who has been diagnosed with the disease, but their family, their friends. And that's what it did for our family, for myself and my three sisters and my mother.

That's what it did. It woke us up. It was like, oh, okay, this happened here too. And we just sat my mom down and talked to her about lifestyle and lifestyle change.

My mother did not really want for change. Let me tell you, I got a lot of pushback on that one, but it was worth it. I knew she was going to be tough to work with.

I knew that. I know my mother pretty well. She's a, you know, I knew it and I know all of the things that come with her. And so I would say this to mom, you and I both know this is going to be a challenge for both of us, but let's work together.

We're going to come out the other side. And as long as we're working forward and we're thinking this thing forward, We're going to come out the other side and sure enough, we did.

We really did. So it's now it's all about upkeep, maintenance, again, keeping those good habits in play. And of course, working with her as far as like even like meditation, we work with meditation.

We practice stillness. I help with breathing methods as well.

Nutrition, Hydration, and Treatment Side Effects

Again, I believe it's a continuum that we have to put in place when it comes to keeping ourselves in more of what I like to call a peak state or a beautiful state in my body, spirit, and nutrition.

So yeah. Did she do a surgery and radiation as well or what was the? No, no surgery, no radiation. Did radiation once, but mainly just chemo. The chemo for her, I believe, was as much as she could bear because I'd see her for days after, like I'd stay with her after the treatments and it really did a number on her.

No appetite, as you can imagine. Again, smells really made her nauseous. She couldn't really hold anything down, especially in the earlier part of her treatment.

I'd never seen somebody so ill and so dehydrated and she didn't want to drink water. So that was another stumbling block that we ran up against. I was like, mom, you got to drink water.

You can't not drink water. She's like, I don't like the way it tastes. There's no taste to it. It tastes like sandpaper. She kept saying that. I was like, sandpaper?

And so again, her taste buds were just not like they were, not what she was used to. And for her to be in a position

to see her that vulnerable, you just want to help.

So I just, I would get her to just take sips, take a sip here, take a sip there. And I'd probably put like a little game of like, all right, one, two, three, sip.

So I kept it. engaging in light as possible because the moment, the actual moment was so heavy at times, it felt excruciating for her. I remember one time I came over and she was hallucinating and I didn't understand why.

And she kept saying to me, stop laughing at me. And I said, mom, I'm not laughing at you. Stop laughing at me. And I'm looking around and I'm like, mom, who are you talking to?

That person standing next to you. And I looked like, okay, we got to sit you down and let's just kind of calm this. So I dimmed the lights running in the room.

I kind of dimmed them and we began a breathing technique. I began the technique and I just, I wanted her to just focus on me so that she could then relax.

And once she focused on me, just watching me breathe, she then began to take note and breathe as I did. And once I got her in that place, we were able to hold hands.

And just in that space, we were able just to exchange energy in that space. And I just took the lead. And as you know, she calmed down. She wasn't seeing anything anymore.

I gave her some water. And I realized that I believe she needed some sleep. I believe the side effects of the chemo had kept her up for hours overnight.

And she didn't share that with me until I started, you know, inquiring. And I was like, asking questions. Hey, how much did you eat? Did you drink some water?

What time did you go to bed? I had to dig a little because she is afraid of perception at this time. So she doesn't want me to see her this way. And many times she wanted me to not come over.

It was very tough, Dr. Dilliman, but I, I mean, what do you do? Like it's your mom. What do you do? You, you have some tools that are helpful and you love your mom and you would trade places with her in a moment.

So I knew what I knew she would tell me to do. Go over there, lend your tools and don't leave, even if I tell you to leave. So I stuck through it and it was.

such a learning experience, such an honor, really, to be in that space and to see her strengths, to see her will to power through, to see her determination, no matter how sick she became, whether she was on all fours, you know, over the toilet, or, you know, if she was trying to get to the bathroom itself.

I mean, there was just so many moments there where I was like, Mom, you could have given up at any time. Why didn't you?" And she was like, because of you four.

And so, you know, when you hear that, it kind of hits you right there. And I knew then that I just had to just, I had to be there. I had to be there. And my sisters and I, like I said, they were in different parts of the Bay Area, but we would work together.

and got a schedule and trade off sometimes in watching my mother, but because I was closest in proximity geographically to my mom, I took the leap and I'd do it again for sure.

You know, it's when something is put on you like that and you don't see it coming, I believe it's important to react. It's important to react with a massive step of action.

And that's exactly what I felt we all together in totality did. I'm just a symbol, but I believe it was the four of us together. We just all gave like, we brought the energy my way because I'm the one who's here.

And just so grateful that we were able to do and be a part of such an experience. And again, it woke us all up. And so now in my practice as a health and transformation educator, you know, I've worked with many other cancer patients since then, people that I know close to me, a friend of my magic, Lindsey, his wife, Melanie Lindsey, she had cervical cancer.

And so we worked together on some of her nutrition and her diets. And she and her and my mother had very similar experiences like the taste and the texture and smell.

And I had to put together a very specific type of a meal plan working with Melanie. So. It's been an experience and I never thought that the work that I would do on myself or the work that I would do with my mother would put us in a position to work with others, including yourself, Dr.

Lemon here at the podcast. So it's, you know, it's a, this is a beautiful story, this one, but I know there's many others that don't end the same way, but I do want people to keep hope.

I want them to stay hopeful. I want them to. continue to look for holistic options, which is what you are as an expertise, Mr. Lemon. So thank you for the service that you provide as well.

First, did you work with any other integrated professionals or was it just you and the oncologist helping your mom? It was myself and the oncologist helping her.

That was it. He was impressed by some of the things in my approach, in my demeanor, like my ability to kind of not, well, to not break. to not break up.

He liked that steadiness about me. He felt that was good for my mother. He felt that type of strength. That example was really good for her. But little did he know, I learned that from her.

Totally full circle. You know, when we're called to serve, I believe that we should just step into it. I do believe that. And I believe that when we're called to serve, we don't know how it's how it's gonna look.

We don't know where it's gonna come from, but I do encourage anyone, when it's put over your heart, you will know. And when that time comes, respond and serve.

I believe becoming a servant leader myself, one of my greatest honors. I've been many versions of myself before. I'm this one here in front of you, Dr.

Lemon. And so I'm very happy to be here with you and be in this space and to be a servant leader, because there was a version of me that could never have even fathomed that.

And it's because of that mindset. It's because of that outlook on life. It allows me to be available. And this morning, I'll give you a little story. In the gym, that's my quiet time.

I don't want anyone to disturb me, not even a text message. Has to be an emergency, fire, flood, or blood. This is what I tell myself. My wife texted me this morning, honey, can you go by the store and get these items?

In my head, I'm like, babe, you know, I don't like to be disturbed. It breaks my concentration. So I'm already in this space where I'm like, okay, I have to go to the store after the gym.

Now I'm on the way to the store. I get to the store. I go inside. I get the things I needed to get come out to the car. Look at my text message. I forgot a few things.

Damn. So now I'm really in my feelings. Go back in the store. I get the rest of the items. I come back, hop in the

car. But this time, as I pulled it off, there's a man dying in the street.

I roll down the window. I say to the lady, hey, is he okay? She goes, I don't know. Another car comes by, this car is honking the horn, yelling at them to get out the street.

The lady happens to ride on her driver's side when I say, the guy's dying, I'm pulling over. I hop out of my car, come on over, we turn him over slowly.

Two other bystanders come over, and we began CPR. The lady, myself, another gentleman, and the lady pulls out two 0.08 milligrams of Narcan. I've never seen what this stuff looks like even in real life.

This is the first time. She hits the guy with one in the nostril. Nothing happens. We give it a few moments, something happens. We go back to chest compressions.

She hits him with another one. Nothing happens for a few moments, and then all of a sudden we hear, so now he's back. We stop the compressions. I said, let him breathe.

I'm listening. I put my hand on his heart, on his chest. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. I go, okay, he's back, he's with us. In the distance, you hear the fire truck coming.

So they're coming down the way. They roll up. I turn to them. His heart started to, the beats are starting to go shallow, like it's starting to slow down, getting real faint.

So these guys hop into action. I share this story with everybody and you Dr. Lemon because many times in life, we don't know. We don't know why. And many times we feel like we're being imposed upon.

Today was one of those days. If my wife hadn't texted me, I wouldn't have made it to the store. If I was in my own way, I wouldn't have even responded to her text message to make it to the store.

It's so interesting how life connects all of us. You just never know. So please be available to your life. Life is not happening to you. It's happening for you.

And today, I almost let life happen to me instead of happening for me. And I'm so glad that I was able to be there where I was supposed to be. Leave everybody with that.

It reminds me of that quote to coincidences or God's way of remaining anonymous where he's guiding everything and we're just going with the flow and we're either in his flow or we're going the wrong way.

Man, my brother, you got it. Absolutely, Dr. Liman. Absolutely. I couldn't have said it better myself. It was just something that really, I mean, even my hair and my body is standing up right now.

It was, Dr. Liman, it was one of those moments.

Passive Exercise and Emotional Support

It was one of those moments where you're like, whoa, and you just connect the dots. So on the journey with my mother, I had to connect the dots. We together had to connect the dots.

We'd never been in this space before. But because I was available emotionally to what was going on around me and her, my mother and I haven't always had the best relationship.

But when it came down to it, I was so happy to be there. And I'm so happy that she has the courage that she has to even fight such a fight. It was a long fight.

It was an ugly fight, but she definitely came out the other side and we both came out different. We both grew.

continue to grow because, let's be honest, an experience like this, I don't believe it has an end because you're always looking out, right?

You're always being ready. You're staying ready. So nutrition, absolutely. Spirit, absolutely. How we speak to ourselves, how we think to ourselves. This is important.

It starts with the self. That's my belief. The more we love ourselves, the more it shows up in everything around us. That's my belief. Okay, body, a body emotion stays in motion.

Gotta take care of the body. We get one for the rest of our lives, only one. So we gotta take care of it. Lot of greens, some lean protein. Don't really need the carbs.

Carbs do nothing for the body at all, by the way. Nothing. Empty calories. Absolutely nothing. But yes, veggies, protein, lean proteins with every meal.

You'll have a good life. Move your body. 30 minutes of activity a day. Absolutely goes a long way. This thing called the compound effect. And that compound effect, I tell you, it's a real thing.

So if you start with a small step, you can get some big rewards and big results. Yeah. Your mom, as far as exercise, when she's so weak from the chemo that it's hard to even walk, how did you navigate that exercise portion?

One step at a time, really. We had to work on days where she felt better than most, and it was small steps, literally small steps. We had to move very slowly, very intentionally because her body wasn't always ready to respond.

And so even at home on her couch, I'd move her arms, you know, I'd move her legs, like literally move her legs up and down, circular motions with her arms.

I do things like that. I massage her wrists, her fingers, you know, if she could turn her head. It was important to keep her body moving. That's what I knew.

And I'll be honest with you, that was hard work. That was harder work, like literally moving her limbs for her. And it was hard for her, too, because she was in pain.

The chemo didn't always feel good to her. She felt it coming through her body all the time. The lymphedema was a huge issue because the water retention in her left foot, I mean, her foot swirled up to at least almost probably eight to 10 inches circumference.

I mean, it was huge. I'd never seen anything like this. Never seen it. You hear people use terms like elephant foot. And I'm just like, yeah, that's on the movies.

No. Like my mother's foot, it was huge. And so we had to be mindful of that. We had to move her foot around. I had to massage her foot and that was painful.

She always told me it felt like needles were poking her. And so I had to take breaks. I could massage her gently, massage her a little bit, you know, break that fluid up.

and then let the fluid run its course. Sometimes it would dissipate. It would go to other parts of the body and then accumulate there. Other times it would dissipate and then come back.

light movement, steady movement. I was over her home four to five times a week, easy. The only time that I wasn't there was probably like, maybe on like a Saturday.

But then again, that was like a floating day because I was the closest to her in proximity. So I wanted to be available. And I take leadership quickly and seamlessly.

So when it comes to being in that position as a leader, I take that role also seriously. And so I prefer to be effective. I don't like to make decisions without having good information.

but I also don't want to wait too long. So it's important that I be in a position where I can make high caliber, quick sound decisions. Okay. Cause that's very important, especially when it comes to working with my mother and moving her body.

So that part of it, the physical element part of her treatment probably was for her. If you asked her, she probably said that was probably more excruciating than anything else.

But I, yeah, we did a lot of work walking, no jogging. Jogging came later, much, much, much later. It was, you know, doctor had to go back to the basics.

We had to go back to the basics, man. A couple steps a day, you know, this much, you can walk this far, you know, because she got winded pretty quick and she didn't have a lot of energy.

Her energy was peaks and valleys. And sometimes her energy would be low for like, you know, a week, maybe two weeks at a time, maybe even a month. I think one time she didn't get out of bed almost for a complete month and I had to get her out of the bed.

Hey, mom, let's get out of the bed. Let's walk around the corner. Let's go somewhere. Let's get in the car. Let's go drive. Let the sun hit you in the face.

You know, that sort of thing, because I knew there were times where she would also get down on herself. I knew there were times where she would let those inside voices perhaps creep on in and they would start to weigh her down more.

So I wanted to be also mindful of that. I wanted to help her with her mindset. And we did that. We did that through, again, meditation, reading, writing as well.

And then, of course, sharing. Just sharing. Got to know my mom really well. Got to know her really well. Asked a lot of questions about her childhood.

Asked her about her teenage years. you know, because there was time where we had time, right? You know, there's family therapy here and there, right? And so many gifts, you know, I know people are talking about the benefits of cancer, and I'm not about to go through the benefits of cancer, but I will say this, there were some beautiful things that came out of this experience.

I will say that. I will say that we did not, we chose not to allow cancer to dictate our circumstances. We knew that it already came in packing a hell of a punch.

We knew that it had the ability already to fill up our lives and completely consume the life. So we wanted to be in a position where we could meet cancer at that space instead of having cancer meet us at our space.

And I believe we were able to do that and continue to do that by being owners of our temple. by understanding what we put in our mouth matters. You put junk in, you get junk out.

And in this case, we were able to tie the food with the body and the spirit. And we were able to have my mother in more of a beautiful state of mind, more of a optimistic state of mind where she could see and visualize seeing herself.

I used to do that with her too. I practiced visualization with her. See yourself walking. See yourself in a beautiful state. See the future version of yourself after you beat this.

believe doing that repetitive and us having those, those sessions with each other. She, she told me, boy, you crazy

as I'm locked up. Boy, you sound so crazy talking at, why are you talking like that to me?

I'd be like, mom, how do you feel though? I feel great. I did all I could to keep an element of humility and not buy into the fears, right? I didn't want to buy.

Realistic, yes. Definitely optimistic. And so I felt like that was a huge component. I know people who have gotten sick and they focus on being sick. And before you know it, that sick becomes more sick.

And then all of a sudden it's like, oh, such and such is no longer with us. And I didn't want that. We didn't want that. We didn't want to focus on the cancer.

Because we understand that the more we focus on it, the more that's gonna come into play. Our body, what we think affects our body biochemically, it does.

So if we're not thinking about the cancer or we're thinking about, or we're laughing and we're thinking about a vacation or we're thinking about having dinner or we're thinking about the grandkids or her great grandkids, well then that occupies her mind with more pleasant thoughts and pleasant emotions, right?

So if we think it, we create it. So I knew. By thinking beautiful thoughts, by thinking about her kids or her grandchildren, by thinking about their accolades and accomplishments, I knew that would bring in those feel-good emotions.

Neurons that wire together fire together. I knew that too. And my mom was like, she was like, huh, okay. And so we started. And before you knew it, she's feeling good.

And again, this isn't just one day. This is a continuum. This is continuous effort. This is every day going through a routine. Routines are important.

Morning routine, afternoon routine, evening routine. Take your pick. But for my mother, we had to have a morning routine. We had to have an afternoon routine and we had to have an evening routine.

Because without clothes, she had no baseline. That's why I couldn't really leave her by herself too long. If I leave her by herself, my mom loves that sweet and sour lifesaver candy.

So if I left her too long, she finds her way to those candies and she would devour them. And we all know. too much sugar is not a good thing, plus she's diabetic.

So we had other things that we had to manage while just managing her cancer. But yes, a lot of beautiful opportunities came from it, a lot of great information, a lot of good growth for sure, for sure.

Yeah, you definitely never wish cancer on anyone, but it can be, it depends on how you respond to it, right? But if you respond to it in the right way, then you can come out healthier, happier on the other side.

Absolutely well said, Dr. Lemon. And that is really what our focus was. That is where our attention, you know, attention goes where energy flows, right?

And energy flows where attention goes. And so I knew that. And that's why I was like, Mom, we can't sit around here. dwelling. We can't be around here being pissed off.

We're here. This is what it is. Let's handle it. How do you want to approach it? What's the plan? And we put the plan together. Had to have a plan. And she knew that about me because of my regimented lifestyle.

And I knew going with my mom, I'm like, okay, a better approach may be to step this out for her, give her a plan.

Caregiver Lessons and Self-Care Practices

And I knew if she could see it. that she could ingest it a bit better. Me just telling my mother, hey mom, this is what we're gonna do, wasn't enough.

I had to write that out. I had to show her, this is what we're gonna do. And feel free to input anything, anywhere in this plan that you feel may work for you.

I want your input. The more I encourage her to input and to give it, again, the more empowered she felt. And every time we did those exercises, she felt more and more empowered.

It wasn't so much that the cancer was affecting her now, it was more that she was affecting the cancer. and she was affected by how she spoke to herself, how she thought about herself in the current condition, even the way she spoke of it to other people.

Did you speak about it too much? Were you speaking about it too often? What kind of energy did you have behind it when you were sharing? Are you being optimistic or are you being pessimistic?

And all these things in the beginning she didn't quite get. But again, the more we sat with each other, the more we actually had the conversations. Again, after we get through the emotions, after we get through the yelling, the crying, the screaming, the what is, after all that stuff is done, let's put the plan together.

What is our plan of attack? And so that's what it's been since then. It's been being active. It's been the solution-based mindset, SBM, staying in that space and being able to function in a way that doesn't have her or me or her family constantly waiting on the cancer to return.

Instead, we're focusing on moving forward, lifting as we rise and basking in the sunshine. I love how you brought up the aspect of passive exercise. We think of, like you said, it's on a continuum.

So exercise is anywhere from triathlons and marathons, extreme athletes on one side to, like you said, we often think that edge is standing up and walking, but passive exercise, if people don't have the energy to even stand up, to even walk.

getting the body movement passively, grabbing their arm and moving it for them, still that lymphatic fluid still gets the joints moving and you have some muscle flow and nerve flow and limb flow to cleanse and nourish and exercise the body passively.

Absolutely. I often with my mother, because she wasn't A fitness person, she wasn't really into activity and physical activity. I mean, she, you know, she walked and go to the store, but I say, mom, you know, shopping isn't exercising.

I mean, at the form of it, I suppose, retail therapy, you know, you are walking. I get it. I totally get it. But she wasn't always an avid, you know, gym goer.

And so again, that was another hurdle that we had to get over. And we did, we did. What I learned working with her through this particular experience is that, gosh, people will, people will give up.

if they have a reason to. And they'll even be more likely to give up if no one's willing to believe or help them. And I knew that. I knew that being there for her just as a support system was going to be just as important as getting her on a nutritious meal plan.

I knew that because of her background as a domestic violence survivor. So my mom's guard is always up. Remember, she's operating from a space of survivor.

So here it is what, again, she's having to be a survivor in her life, but this time it's a different enemy. And so being in that space, being compassionate enough to be in that space with her, she told me it really helped her to process what was going on because she was feeling a kind of way about losing her hair.

She did feel a way about the flux and weight. This is a woman we're talking about. We know how sensitive women can be. They are our counterparts. And so we understand how they can feel about certain things.

And I allow that part of myself to shine through and to be more available than ever before, because I knew that I was going to see some things that I hadn't seen before.

And I couldn't be like, oh my God, mom, look, you know, I can't do that. You know, you gotta keep it together like you've been here before. So that was an experience.

That truly was an experience. But I'm happy to say that I was able to navigate through those times. And my mom and I were able to have those conversations when she was ready to have those conversations.

So I never had to put my mother in a position where, mom, I need to know this. There was never none of that. In fact, the one time I did ask that she let me know that I could politely leave the, you know, I could leave.

So I learned quickly, don't ask those questions. In fact, just make the space comfortable and inviting enough for her to want to share. And that is when she began to really share.

That is when we were able to connect and get to know each other a little bit more. And I was like a little kid again. I'm asking her all kinds of questions about her childhood, about her teenage years and what was it like, you know, being raised by my grandfather.

He was also in military Vietnam Air Force. So, you know, connecting in a moment where everything looks grim, where things look dark, where most people throw in the towel, we were able to find a little slice of light so that we could thrive off of that.

And that is really what I was able to take with me into the body synthesis and really infuse my practice even more so, because that was an experience that I probably knew I wasn't gonna get that anywhere else, like after it was all said and done or to where it is now.

I look back at that experience even now and I realized that that was truly a magnificent experience and that I was part of it and get that experience anywhere else.

So I know how important it was for me and my mother to be there and for us to work together. I was helped with a boot camp for you. It was, it was, even I did some soul searching.

Even I did. You know, it's a full circle moment. You touched on that earlier. A child taking care of the parent during a tough time like this. It had me thinking about my own kids.

And would my own kids do this for me? You hope so, right? But yeah, it had me thinking about my own kids and it just, it really, for myself, it really, I feel like for me, it really quieted the noise within myself that had to do with life and how we show up to it and being available to it.

Let me tell you something, everyone's busy. until someone you love has cancer. Believe that. No one has time until they get that call. You get that call, you got time.

You make time. So we made time. So the scene that came up for me is the original Christian referee of Superman falling out of the building and catches her and he's like, okay, don't worry, I've got you.

And then she's like, you've got me, who's got you? So my question for you as a caregiver is, How did you, who was, who was supporting you? How did you get your energy?

You had to be Superman for your mom. Who was your support and where did you get your self care from? Great question. Thank you for asking Dr. Lemon. My wife, Amber, my wife is amazing.

She is a luxury event designer, but she also has this incredible side hustle as a life coach. Let me tell you, she's awesome. And so. We're very transparent.

It's one of our love languages in our relationship. We're happily married, been so about three years now. And I tell you, it was that level of transparency that allowed me to just share.

I wouldn't dump on her, but I would share. And it was a two-way. So the synergy was, it was, it was on and it was living.

Closing Reflections and Resources

And so she'd ask questions, I'd answer, and then she may want me to elaborate and I'd answer. And then we kind of left that. So we checked the boxes, so to speak.

I didn't want to go into it too much because I didn't want to bring her energy down. And then of course, you know, I knew how private of a matter it was for my mom at the time in the earlier stages.

So I wanted to be mindful of that. And Amber was so good about that. She's like, hey, you know what? I know it's a very private matter. When you're ready to share, I'm here for you.

And that made it super easy. I didn't feel obligated. Yes, she's my wife. But I didn't feel obligated to come home and give her this rundown of what happened.

Because let's be honest, there's a lot of energy being transferred between my mother and I in this space. And that energy's being compounded over days and weeks and so on.

So I didn't want to be in a position where I come home and I want to dump on my wife. So with her being available to me, me being available to myself and her, that made that communication that much more easy.

And then of course, going to the gym, as I mentioned earlier, I'm a six day year. So I'm there Monday through Saturday. Drinking a lot of water. I'm a huge hydration advocate.

I drink a water called Cognitive Water. pH is 9.5, has several others, 8.5, 8.0, 7.0, but for me it's 9.5. And then greens and protein and meditation.

I practice stillness a lot. I do a lot of breathing exercises, a lot. Mainly because I love the calmness that it provides me. It's amazing. It's like almost magical sometimes.

So that consistency, my mindset, I practice this mindset, right? I don't just expect to wake up like this. I literally am intentional about my personal growth.

If you ask me what that looks like, it's very simple. I show up to myself. I show up to the day. I don't let the day show up to me. There's none of that.

I go into the mirror, I have a method called Tavares's Famous Mirror Talk, and it's exactly what it sounds like. And every time I say it, people smile, just like you do, Dr.

Lillian. In that field of me, they get it, because it's very simple. There's a mirror everywhere. Car, home, bag, backpack, even your phone. Hit the little button at the bottom, it flips it around, that selfie, that's a mirror.

And we go into that mirror. And we look at ourselves and validate ourselves. We observe ourselves. If you have nothing to say at all, that's totally fine.

Look at yourself. Appreciate yourself. Take yourself in. And then if you want to speak, well, then you be transparent. And so I use DeVar's famous mirror talk, along with my gym going, along with my meditation and my

stillness, great conversations with my wife.

And then of course, being present. I practice being present every day, several times a day, and it's just as simple as this. I ask myself what I'm feeling, how I'm feeling, and why I'm feeling it.

Those three questions and those three answers bring me back to a space of being present and repeat. And that's what I mean when I say show up to yourself.

Have a routine. If it wasn't for my routine, Dr. Lemon, I'd have no baseline. At least that's what I see. But because I have that routine, it gives me a baseline.

It tells me, hey, Tafaris, this is where we got to be in order for you to be what you want to be. Cool. I'm game. Let's do it. And that's the attitude that I have when I show up to myself every morning because I realized Got a lot of people didn't wake up today, but I did.

So I better do something with it. And that's what people do. People are always asking, what are you doing? What are you doing? What are you doing? What are you doing?

What they're asking is, what are you doing with your life? That's what they're asking. Everybody wants to know, what are you doing? And so you simply tell them, I'm showing up.

How about you? Do you work with people long distance over on Zoom or do you work mostly with local people in California? I work with people on zoom and locally.

I work with anyone who is ready to transform anyone who's uncomfortable in their skin. And I mean that if you are uncomfortable in your skin and you are trying to figure out some things, I am so happy to serve you.

If you're ready again, transformation ready. I understand how fear can work. I do. I've built my whole practice based on my experiences and not only mine, but those are the people that I serve.

And then of course I think it forward. I believe that great leaders can see the future. So I'm not just only worried working and worrying about now. I'm also looking at the future of the industry.

I'm looking at the future of wellness. I also provide on-site wellness because I saw there was a gap in the industry. So I provided that as a part of my practice.

But yes, to answer your question, absolutely. I have a lot of customers, a lot of clients, a lot of members on Zoom. I have them around the world, Singapore, Germany, Venezuela.

It's amazing. You know, the pandemic, Dr. Lemon, and you know, there's a lot of people. are trying to iron out the wrinkles, okay? A lot of people are.

I never quite really knew how many people, let me tell you. I never knew. I run a couple of groups on Facebook. I have a men's group called The Love. It's a men's discussion group that we're cultivating.

We're creating the space for us men to come share our peaks and our valleys of experiences, to be heard and supported by men that look and sound like us.

A lot of fun. And if they don't want to speak, guess what? You don't have to. Because it's an inclusive space, okay? This isn't a space where men are made to feel small or shamed or shaded, none of that.

That's why it's called the love, because it's amazing what people will do for the love of others, but even more amazing what they will do for the love of themselves.

Excellent. Tavares, so wonderful to speak with you today. I wish all mothers can have sons like you. Oh, thank you.

Yes, thebodysynthesis.com. Check out Tavares there and thank you so much for sharing this caregiver story and we will talk with you soon.

Absolutely. Thank you, Dr. Lemon, and thank you to all the people who support Dr. Lemon. He's great. Congratulations on your podcast. This is a podcast to like, share, and add, and you guys make sure that you guys subscribe, okay?

Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Lemon. Thank you so much. Such an honor to be here with you, sir. You're so welcome. Take care. All right, take care. Bye-bye.

Hey guys, I'm on a mission to touch the lives of over 10,000 cancer patients this year and I want you to join me in this cause. So if you or so many love is dealing with a cancer diagnosis right now, I want you to like this video, share this video and subscribe to the channel so you can continue to watch this life-changing content.

There are a few links down in the description below to join a free private natural cancer support group on Facebook. You can join this group or invite any of your friends, especially cancer survivors.

We need their input and emotional support in this group. For you or anyone that you love, click the link for 3cancerinsights.com to watch the short free presentation to understand how to transform your health, the right way to treat cancer, and ways to reduce cancer treatment side effects.

I created the Cancer Detox course to support you and your loved ones through the cancer journey. I take you on a guided tour through the seven pathways of healing, talk about the causes of cancer, the ways to reverse it, and how to integrate natural remedies into your conventional treatment plan if you so choose.

And if you'd like to read, my book Natural Home and Herbal Healing is available on Amazon and Audible. And it takes you on a room by room guided tour of all the powerful healing remedies that can be found throughout your own home and property.

So check out the links in the description below and I'll see you in the next video.