Cancer Diagnosis and Wake-Up Call

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What am I complaining about? And at the time, I'll be honest with you, I look back. Cancer was the best thing that ever happened to me. Because at that time I was very arrogant.

I used to say things, I really said this. I want to make a good looking corpse. I really said this. I said that I don't want to be old and wretched. I want to be that person.

I really thought really highly of myself. And I actually needed this. Because without this, I don't know where I'd be today without this gut check. And it's funny when you meet people who have never been through anything serious in life, you can tell right away they've never been humbled by God or whatever you believe in.

And I knew that. Humbling. And I asked God, I go, God, if you get me through this, I promise I'll be a different person. I won't be nearly the arrogant person I am.

So welcome to the two curious MD podcast, where we dive into stories about medicine of healing, transformation, and the wisdom that comes from the lived experience.

Today's guest is Shaquille Biggs and I know him very well. He's also known to many as the inspire coach. He's an executive fitness and mindset coach to, I guess, high net individuals, but I would ask him about that.

He's also has a podcast called chasing 100. He is a cancer survivor. He's an educator, and he really believes in really directing and coaching with really, I would say practical advice on nutrition, exercise and also on the emotional, spiritual and psychological aspects that affect physical and mental health.

I would call him an alchemist, and I don't know if he would call himself a trauma informed coach, but I feel he does represent what trauma informed care really involves.

Today, he is going to talk to us about his own story and what brings him to the work that he does, as well as to what we would call root cause healing.

And I'm I have many, many questions to ask you and I'm so happy to have you here. You are really again. We've known each other as children in our childhood in Houston, Texas, and that's where you live currently.

And our families know each other very, very well. And I just been following you on Instagram and social media and and there's so much pride I have. And I see people from my past in my present now and even to the work that they're doing that really represents so much more to so many people.

So thank you for being here. That was a long intro. Welcome. Thank you, doctor Ahmed. You're too kind. You're too kind. And yes, I'd say I'm more of an alchemist.

I think that's a better term. Yeah. I like to intersect health with mental because one without the other is not good. Not good? That's right. We are not just organs.

We are not just a brain. There. There's a lot more that goes into people's health and. Absolutely. And includes that

spiritual aspect of health. I would ask you about that too.

I hope I get to ask all these questions. So can you tell us a little bit about your own story as a cancer survivor? And you? We also talked earlier before the recording about, you know, your father's passing and, and how that affected you.

Did it bring you to the work that you do? In a way, yes. But let me start out with my cancer story. So I was 24 years old when it happened. I would have these weird rashes, would randomly show up on my upper thighs.

I was going to a dermatologist and they thought there was nothing. Nothing wrong with me, just some rash. But then one day I actually had a bump on my shoulder, a random bumped peer from nowhere, and I went to one of my doctors, one of my father's friends, who was an internal medicine doctor.

I was much bigger than I am now. I was a big, muscle guy. And, he basically did not even do a chest X-ray or any kind of scan. He basically felt it and said, you pulled a muscle.

I'm like, well, when you pull a muscle, there's usually some pain. This is just like, soft and like, he's like, no, you're fine, trust me. So of course, at that age, I want to think everything's fine.

I'm not going to second guess someone that says, I'm healthy. So two more months go by and I'm at the gym, and I just stopped breathing during a set. Like, I can't take a breath.

I dropped away. One of my friends, he starts pumping my chest. Somehow. I start breathing again, and then I go home. I tell my dad, we need to go to the emergency room.

So we go to the emergency room and they do a simple chest X-ray. Now I don't know how it is in the movies. They always say, you might want to sit down before.

Before this, I even remember what was on the TV in the room I was waiting on. It was Doctor Quinn, Medicine Woman. It's funny, when something like major happens in life, we tend to remember it down to the detail.

If anything big happens in our life, you remember exactly where you were the exact time. I remember everything. Here's what we looked at your test and it looks like you have cancer, he said.

Just like that, the first thing I think of, okay, this is coming. It's death. Okay? This is not good. He's like, well, if we cut it early, you have about a 70% chance of living.

Of course, that means a 30% chance of dying. Let me go to the restroom. And that was the longest restroom break. I ever had in my life. I came out and told my dad, we can't tell my mom about this.

She's not gonna be able to handle it. He's like, okay, but I knew he was going to tell her that night. I cried like a baby. And then like, I, okay, you know, we'll get another test done.

And I'm sure you don't have cancer. Now, I knew I had cancer, I had a feeling. So I go to another hospital and they do the test and it comes back Hodgkin's disease level two a so I asked a doctor, I go, so what are my chances of survival?

Do you have any patients that, you know? He's like, well, I know one person that's still okay. Ten years later, I'm like, okay, I need to get out of here.

So at that time, my sister, who's a doctor, she wasn't a doctor then. She was just volunteering at hospitals. She went to Hermann Hospital and she basically begged the professor there to see me.

So this guy cleared the entire calendar, said, I'll see your brother tomorrow. Now, I saw him and his mindset was much different. He kind of lied to me, but I was waiting to hear.

He was like, you're going to be fine. Don't worry. You'll soon be able to lift weights. You'll still be fine. Three months, you'll be great. Okay, so this wasn't the truth, but it's exactly what I need to hear.

Then he's like, okay, you can also go to these different these different, you know, groups like therapy groups. Now I didn't I'm not saying this is the right thing to do, but I purposely didn't want to go to any therapy groups because I didn't want to see people.

I was close to dying. I didn't want to see that. So I didn't do that, and I felt really sorry for myself. And then I went to the children's ward, and you see these two three year old kids who are bald, they haven't even live their life.

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I really thought really highly of myself. And I actually needed this because without this, I don't know where I'd be today without this gut check. And it's funny when you meet people who have never been through anything serious in life, you can tell right away they've never been humbled by God or whatever you believe in.

And I knew that humbling. And I asked God, I go, God, if you get me through this, I promise I'll be a different person. I won't be nearly the arrogant person I am, but I don't want people to ever be able to tell that I had cancer.

Like, I don't want to be missing an arm or something. So a lot of people prayed for me. You know, I went through three months of chemotherapy, which was really difficult.

I went to two and a half months of radiation. But God bless. It's never come back since then. Now, the problem with that was is I had a lot of anger towards the doctor who misdiagnosed me for lack of even trying to find out what it was, and he never apologized.

So I kind of held it against him, and I kind of held it against the people. I didn't call me, but I was sick. It was funny because there are some people who I barely knew they would call me regularly, and I remember the rest of my life, so it took me a long time to get rid of that.

That anger towards these people. But I eventually got over it because, you know a lot. That's why I coach people. Like a lot of people don't know what to say when someone passes away or someone's sick and it's, you don't have to say anything.

Just call and say you know, how are you doing? You know, like I always talk about, well, someone died. The best thing you can do is don't ask them how they died.

Say, like, what was your father like? Because then you're going to bring a little sense of happiness, a little bit of joy. That person who's mourning because they'll remember the good things about this person.

Like, what was he like? What do you like about your dad? And then I'll tell you what a great person. Well, I want to highlight a couple of things that you said that were really important.

And I think you talked about that moment, right? That flashbulb moment. And in there, the medicine we do there is there's a lot to be said about that flashbulb moment where time stands still. Yes.

And you can recall everything. The scent, the smell, how you who, where you were, the whole scene and everything that stays there. Of course, that is a trauma response to. Right.

Because your brain has to remember something so significant it has to market. It's instead that memory, that cellular memory that the body makes. So I, I'd like to kind of highlight that because that flashbulb moment, so many people speak to that and thank you for describing it so beautifully because, you know, you not only described it, but you really represented that emotional growth that came from that.

Absolutely. You know, that cancer was the best thing for you. And I've heard that many times too, from patients. And one of the things that I, I had to write about too, which is why I started writing and started studying medicine, because it there's that processing of the experience that writing can provide, and then it takes you back into that story, and then you get a version of it, you get one version of it that you can recall.

But then by that writing process, you really kind of engage with your perceptions and, you know, you put it and you take it out of your body onto a paper, right?

So you can really know, look at it in this sometimes objective way. So you really describe that like a story.

Father's Death and Depression

So it's good because it it humbled me. But also now when anyone is young and they get cancer, they call me because like, okay, this guy's been through it.

He can kind of like, you know, help you. That's not the end of the world. Like, you go meet this guy. Like, you know, he looks totally fine, like it's not the end of the world.

And one thing I like to mention is, I hate when people say that they beat cancer. I don't believe that because there are a lot of people out there much better than me that passed away.

I was blessed. I don't know why I was chosen by God to make it, but it was nothing I did. I want to make that very clear. I'm not so Superman. And no, there are a lot of great people who I've seen passed away from cancer.

I was blessed, and with that second opportunity I hoped to live a better life. I have heard that as well from so many people too, that I did not beat cancer because again, so many people don't make it.

And you there is that sense of moral injury, right? That you survived something that others didn't. And carry that burden too. I'd also like to ask you a little bit about what you started to speak about with, which had to do with your father and that relationship you had with your father.

It's funny, a lot of people, especially as you know, in the South Asian community, they don't have a very good relationship with their parents. It's more of like a sergeant and like, private relationship.

My father was different. He was like my best friend. And I really mean, he was my best friend. He was great because I could ask him any question. He'd always answer it.

Nothing was off topic with him. So, you know, a lot of people, like, especially in our religion, in our community, you can't talk about girls with their parents.

I had no problem with it. And, you know, he had been in America since the early 60s. So he kind of understood how this worked. And I kind of took it for granted.

He was going to be around forever. And he passed away very suddenly. My father was one of those people. He even said that he wanted to go out like walking, like he didn't want to be a burden on anybody.

And sure enough, he wasn't. He had had double bypass surgery previously. It was funny because he was ten. He had it was not that he was a he was a type one diabetic.

So it was like it wasn't anything he did. He saw his cardiologist six months free pass because he had a prostate

cancer, which is very curable. And his doctor said you need to put a stent because it's going to the radiation will affect your heart.

So he of course got a second opinion from someone said you didn't need it. And he actually went through the prostate treatment and he was actually declared cancer free.

He passed away a week later, and at the funeral, one of his friends said, you know, eight months ago we were on a we were on a car ride to Phoenix with your dad, and he passed out for 15 minutes and he woke up and said, don't tell my family.

Why would you tell someone this at the funeral of their father? So that really that made me think, okay, well, he didn't have to go. Of course, now I know everyone. Everything happens for a reason.

There's a time and place. But I had a lot of anger there. And I remember the last day he was alive. I was on my own. I was one of the few people, our committee who moved out 25 because I was like, look, I'm going to do my own thing.

I'll visit my parents once a week. I visit my parents that day, and I was watching a basketball game with my dad, and he fell asleep and my mom said, okay, hit the lead leading kiss your dad goodbye.

I go, yeah, I'll see him tomorrow. I didn't do it. Sure enough, that night the ambulance came and took him to the hospital and I get a call and they're like, hey, your dad's hospital.

I go there and me, my brother, just joking around because he's been in the hospital for it's not a big deal. And my sister got really angry with us. She was, what are you doing?

Don't you know? You know, that's that's sick. I'd never. You know my sister. Yeah. I had never heard her that angry. She never gets angry. I always tell people she's the best person I know.

And when she did that, I realized this is not good. I went and visited him, and he had a bunch of, you know, wires connected to him and stuff. And I didn't leave this hospital bedside for 36 hours. You.

Oh, go eat, go. Whatever. I was like, I'm not ready to die. I'm inimigo. And then he passed away. And that was the start of my depression. It was so bad to where I couldn't even talk about him without falling over.

They did like a big thing from a hallway. He talked about his life and I couldn't speak and I was just crying the entire time. It was it was it was pretty tough.

It was really tough, to be honest with you. Even now, I, I tear up just thinking about it. But, you know, like I said, that was the start of my depression.

Unfortunately, that went on for two years. So yeah. I know this is this is real, right? These are the emotions that we carry in our body. The anger, the grudges, the sadness.

How did this, this, this kind of breakdown with the cancer, I mean, soon after, I imagine. Yeah. Five years or so. Yeah. So, you know, very recent in what you were going through.

I remember the phone call after the fact, like, oh my God, what didn't make sense to me either, because I used to go and see your father at the restaurant.

Right. Exactly. That was I was like that. That can't be right. And and, you know, my father also passed away in the same time frame, probably six months later.

You know, and I heard about that very late also. Yeah. Yeah. So back to your place where, you know, where growth occurs in, in the Quran. I think it says with every hardship there is relief.

Absolutely. With every hardship there is really it's not before or after. It is actually with that moment, in that moment and those moments that we carry in our body, that there's the growth.

Tell us about that and to what has taken you in your journey now. So at the time, I didn't I didn't see it. You know, I started I developed a gambling addiction.

I used to be someone, I used to go out all the time, and I basically stayed indoors at all times, wanted to go to work and to the gym. And then I started taking antidepressants.

And this was near the end of the second year. So I started taking antidepressants. It was crazy because I automatically felt better. I couldn't explain it.

There wasn't a reason. I just felt better. So then I got out of my father's passing. I was like, okay, you know, he won't let me live like this. And I was taking the depressants and I was like, you know what?

I'm an addict. I'm addicted to this. I'm going to go cold turkey. Now, before I did this, I had a plan. So I started reading a lot of self-help books.

This kind of started my journey, right? I was like, okay, how do I deal with issues without medication? I read a bunch of books and one day I thought I was ready.

I told my doctor, I'm stopping the whole, you can't do that. You're going to spiral out of control. I go, just trust me. I know what I'm doing. And I quit that day.

Now, the funny thing was some of these prescription medications, it was a side effect, like the flu. I literally had the flu for a week. The it's almost like they make these drugs on purpose.

To be like this, you have to go back. I was like, I'm not going back. And that was the beginning of my journey into self-help and dealing with issues without the help of medications and everyone back.

And now when I look back at my father's passing, I knew it had to happen for me to grow up because until your parent passes away, you're still a child.

Like some people say, well, you know, until you have kids. Yeah, I agree with that also. But as long as your parents are around, it's like you're still a child.

But once they go, you know, especially your father, right? He's like the strong force in your life, especially in my life. He was so close to me. So it was really needed for me to grow up.

And because sooner after that, after my depression, I met my wife, you know, and I got married. A life where I'm from. There. Wow. Well, you are an inspire coach. Yes.

You inspire. That's my job. Yes. But let me tell you something earlier. I always tell people if when people, you know, go through struggles and they kind of give upset, I'm like, okay, if you were to build a perfect person, right?

Theoretically, would you want someone that had been through some things in life, or would you want someone who's have the perfect life? Of course you would want someone who's been through a few things.

That's what Bill strength. That's what brings, you know, that's what builds a person and identity. If you ever been through anything in life is a joke.

When anything comes, you're not gonna be able to handle it. So all these things that I had been through, it just helped me make made me a stronger person.

So I don't look back at any of these things as a bad thing at all. They're all positive and didn't see me at the time

because I'm not all knowing. But looking back, it was exactly what I needed.

Yeah, well, what would you say to yourself, to your younger self? The version who was arrogant and disconnected. I would say is good. I think it's really good to have self-esteem, but what you have is arrogance.

Self-esteem is like you're confident in yourself. You can do anything. You can put the work in arrogance. I'm better than other people, and I don't think that's the way to live.

And you're not better than anybody. And if you don't, if you continue this lifestyle, you're going to get humbled. Now, I've seen people like myself and they all got humbled in different ways.

Maybe not cancer, but some other way. Sometimes worse, sometimes better. But they all get humped. Whatever you believe in, whether you believe in God or some outer force, they don't like arrogance.

They don't like pride. They don't like arrogance. These are two things you can't have. Yeah, well, it's the ego, right? It's the ego. Yes. You have to kill that ego.

It's the nerves or the eagle. And of self-importance and and we can talk hours about that. When you're young, it's really hard to control it because of society and media.

You know, it's hard to control your ego, especially if people cater to you. Right. As you get older, it's a little bit easier, in my opinion, because that's why they call it wisdom, right?

You don't have wisdom 18 years old, but you could have wisdom at 48 from everything you've been through. I find it really ridiculous when you have some of those six years old and they still have no wisdom.

They still have. No, I don't get that. I think it was hard to help. Someone doesn't want help. Yeah. That's right. I mean, people people seek wisdom as well.

And I think wisdom comes from, you know, vulnerability, being able to be open to sharing. And there comes the wisdom that you share, too. I think we will have a private wisdom that they keep in a box right for themselves or in their home, or when they go publicly.

It's not it's not the same persona that you see. For my entire life is about growth and wisdom. I like to be the stupidest person in the room, because I want to learn from others who know more than if I'm the smartest person in the room.

I need to find out the room. So seriously about growth getting better at stuff. I am not someone that knows everything. I have my specialties, you know, it's like it's funny when you talk to somebody and they're telling you how to buy and sell a house, but their brother in law is a real estate agent. Like they won't take his advice.

I go to the experts. So yeah, like a lot of my clients are doctors. It's funny because I'm like the doctors. Always the people. Never second guess me and I.

So I'll ask them. I go, okay, no, I assume before working with the you would second guess everything I tell you regarding nutrition and health, they go, no, I know my lane.

I know what you're really good at. So I'm just going to listen to you and be successful. I go, okay, that's smart. That's the way I have to. Yeah, I go to the experts.

You know, I don't just, you know, randomly think I can handle something I can't. Yeah, well, you are a healer. I would call you a healer because you're in the healing space.

I have scrolled through your Instagram and seen that you've been online for. I don't know how long, right? Five years. Five years? Well, it's. And you are an avid, I guess.

What is it called? Instagram person. Hoster. I guess. Host yeah. And you I see a vulnerability. I saw practical you provide the information that you provide to people.

It's very practical, very direct, very clear. Your persona as you are on you know, on social media. It's deeply intentional. But when we talk about vulnerability online sharing to the wisdom, what have you learned from from yourself in that journey?

Right. As a person who speaks to this, I'm. Not the first person that said this, but as long as you things I listen, as long as you do whatever's, as long as you follow your beliefs, you can't care what anybody thinks, you know.

And that's kind of been my life last six years or so. I used to care, like I say, low jacking, right? Like, for example, like, look, I've dated women.

I wasn't always married. So I will tell people like, you know, okay, we have a situation with a woman or man how to kind of like what I've learned. And I've gotten messages from people like, hey, you're Muslim.

I'm like, so Muslim people don't date. Are you serious? Like, what? What world are you living in? Like, you know, don't you? Do you think your daughter just magically met hang out with somebody for two years, and then I'll have other people come up to me and say, you know what, thank you for these videos because I'm having my son watch these like I'm not proud of.

Look, I'm not proud of this. But a lot of times, especially in the Muslim community, we don't we don't get our children ready for how to pick the right person.

It's always, oh, what does he do for a living? Or like it's never about anything else. And if you like, like I did, like I said, I'm not saying what are you supposed to do, but when you date, you kind of understand what you want and what you don't want to.

So people surface, or even the first couple of weeks is totally different than who they are. And some people who've never met their other half till the day they get married, they find out really quick, like I made a mistake.

Healing, Self-Help, and Growth

So I'm not ashamed of this. And like I said, I don't care what anyone thinks. The one thing I've learned is, you know, we all have basic needs, but if your two most important ones are growth and contribution, you will always be happy.

I think about that. Even the most richest people I know who aren't happy, it's because they're either not about growth or they don't contribute anything to the world in general.

Right. And then I see people who are really happy but don't have much, and they're all about growth and contribution. So that's what I'm like every day I'm reading, every day I'm trying to learn something new.

As far as contributing, I give away so much information on Instagram. If someone messages me like, hey, like I've had in the past, like, hey, I, I had an eating disorder.

And so I started watching your videos. It means the world to me. If and if only if I only affected one person and I made 500 videos, that's okay. That's okay.

Because it worked. It worked. So I kind of center my life around growth and contribution. And I'm not trying to brag, but I'm always a great headspace no matter what.

And thank you for sharing that. That's the growth and contribution that we need to have in a sense of a sense of purpose, a sense of dry or some motivation that is also physiologically healing, coming from a place where you carried pain and anger and and what I imagine is really you were opened up, right?

You're you you had to grow. If you look everything at everything in the terms of giving love. Now, the funny thing about love is there are people who give love, but when they don't get it back, they get upset.

That's not love. Love is giving love and you don't ask for anything in return. If you do that, you always been a good at space. For example, if I say hello to somebody and they say after you back, that's not a problem, that's a damn problem.

So why would you get upset about that? I'm not going to be. I'm giving out love however you want it, however you want to acknowledge it. That's your business.

I'm just giving out love. However you want to deal with that, that's fine. I'm not going to care. I'm not going to get upset. Yeah, yeah. So contribution can be just what you want to contribute.

And there's no ownership on love as well as what I say. The ownership and the love is as that is. And this is very important in healing. You have to be able to really empathize with somebody for.

Purposes of this huge. System from a different history and a different, you know, you have to be able to see them as human. And humans are naturally designed to love.

I think we. Are, you know, absolutely. And full until they're traumatized, too. So growth, your growth, your journey, your wisdom, I would say came from from that place.

Has it come from any other places in your life? What would you say about where you are now? I would say the birth of my children. So I don't know if you remember me when I was younger, but I was one of those people that I wasn't good with kids like I was always a failed break.

Them like I didn't. I didn't hold them, I didn't do anything. I was like the other weird guy on kids, but I knew I wanted them right. And the day my daughter came out, well, it's actually a funny story.

So me and my wife had this foolish thing that we didn't even think a daughter was a possibility. We just thought we would have a son. So we even that was a battle, because we had to go through years of not being able to get pregnant, that we had to go through, you know, IVF, which was tough, and my wife was pregnant.

So the day of we're going to find out the daughter's, we're going to find out what if it's a boy or a girl, I find out I has a daughter and I was Chicago at the time.

Have you ever seen movie, Ferris Bueller's Day Off? Yeah. Of course, under ten. When Cameron wrecks his dad's Ferrari, he goes comatose. That was me. I literally went comatose.

I couldn't talk for 24 hours. Come back. What's wrong? And I was thinking, okay, God's punishing me for everything I've done, for everything I've done.

He's given me a daughter, and I just snapped out of it. I was like, okay, I want to be the best father humanly possible. Now, my dad was a great person, right?

But one thing he didn't do correctly is like, he would hang out a lot with his friends. I mean, he was always there, you know, to answer questions, but he was a lot.

I was like, you know, I'll be very close. Let's put an plus. Now, this might be controversial. I might get canceled by my side. Anyways. Whenever I was dating women, the women were in a very good relationship.

Their father was incredible. Now, mind you, I didn't date anybody from my race or my religion of birth. And whenever I met a girl who had a bad breakup with their father, they were, you know, their life was a mess.

So I knew it, that if I had a daughter, I had to be super close to her. And the day she came out, like everything

changed, I was like, okay, I'm going to worry more about my health.

I'm going to protect her. I'm going to be a better person. I'm going to read. I'm gonna be around her constantly, and I think I've done that. And then my son came afterwards. I got a son also.

And yeah, so that was that was a big moment in my life, was at the birth of my daughter. Like at first I thought it was a, it was a curse. But she's been great.

Yeah. I couldn't ask for a better normal or a better son. They're young, but my daughter's only six and my son is three. Yeah, you're absolutely right.

I had a great, good relationship with my father as well. I love you, I love your father. I love the way he dressed. I don't think I ever saw the guy dressed casual in my life.

He only had an Ascot. That's casual. We are in the dry cleaning business. Do you there with him? Hot and laugh. And, you know, he wore it when? Yeah. Yeah, yeah, he was, He never wore t shirts or jeans.

Never. It never was. Casual. You're right. I was like, you got I respected that. Yeah. So that relationship you have with with people, with people in your life.

And when I see patients, I do it what they call it ace inventory. I check to see what their adverse childhood experiences they have had. And and I also look at resiliency.

So scoring on that. But I always look for in the resiliency if they've at least had one adult in their life, they've had one adult in their life who was there for them in whatever moment they need needed them.

They're there's usually that, that that is a highlight of her resiliency. Right. That is very, very strong correlate to to resiliency. But, you know, I didn't realize that was also the father daughter relationship or either their son.

His wife saying yes. Yeah, yeah, I guess I look for men who have had a good relationship with their mothers and make sense. Right? They did come up to me.

That's a that's a kind person who, you know, because I have two boys and they're very different each both of them. And they have a very different relationship with me because of that difference in their personality.

But I think it is important for people out there, right, who are taking care of raising a child like that relationship is so such a vital. And the pediatrician I'm a pediatrician too, is I used to look for like calm and then walk into the room and say, okay, I would observe like, what's happening here?

You know, who's who here. Often you had to kind of do that, especially in the hospital setting where cases were very, very heavy and decisions have to be made.

And when you walk into the room, you have to be able to assess, like, you know, what's what's the resources here. And I'm very, very sad to hear your experience, how you were told about your cancer.

That's just, you know, I mean, doctors do a lot of harm. I yeah, I. Think, you know, you're right. They do keep you. They do a lot of harm. Words are very, very important.

I was just telling one of my persons that I work with and the words we use are so important. Everything you share is so important because patients will remember it.

They will remember it. You may not remember it, but they will. Look for word. For word. They will remember it and it rings and it will ring always in their head.

So you know, be very, very mindful of what you can, what you communicate and how you communicate. What

people don't understand is that we remember the negative a lot easier than the positive, right.

So y'all be very careful when you say something negative. Somebody. Yeah, yeah I gotta be careful. Gotcha. And it's a it's again is a trauma response.

Your brain will remember the negative before the positive. In fact we forget more than we remember. It's weird. Yes. So I wish we could remember everything.

And there are people who do who can remember everything. That might be a curse, though. Like it's too much. So what? What drives you? You know, I know you like good things.

I remember you always dressed well as well. You. You matched everything just right. You drove the right car. Tell us about your cars. I know you and your brother have a very, I guess, fascination with cars.

So it's funny, I. When I was single, I had a, I had a Porsche 911 turbo. And it was funny when I got married, so I and this is a horrible thing. Bias always test women because even though I'm not a rich guy, you could assume I'm rich.

Buy the car. Anyway, I dressed so I would always first date. I would take the girl out in an old Nissan Maxima. Her reaction and if the girl is kind of like, well, I'm not so great about it.

Not didn't feel so great. You know, I would I would never have a second date. I would never ghost a person. I would never second date. Now let me tell you about how I met my wife.

So it was never planned. Like, you know, people. And I think that if you're one of those people that is like, I need to get married, it's not going to work.

So I met my wife, which we're not ever supposed to meet somebody in a club, but I met her at a club and she had a good sense of humor. I took our date in the Nissan Maxima.

She didn't care. Then when I showed her the Porsche, she wasn't impressed. But the one thing about her is, and this is true to this day, she has never, ever flaked on me.

Ever. So she says, we're going to have dinner at 7:00 tomorrow. It happens. And that's a very rare quality in men and women, because back at that point I was so choosy.

If a woman even flaked on me once after 3 or 4 days, I was like, I'm done. She can't be trusted. Another and here's the shining moment where I knew she was the right person.

So my wife is Brazilian and she won some Miss Brazil Texas contest. So we were at the celebration and one of my best friends in the world saw her. He talked to her and he calls me on the way home.

He's like, Shaquille, you know I love you. Death. Please don't hate me. I go, you can tell me anything. He goes, I don't think she's right for you. I go, why do you say that?

She goes, why? She seemed kind of like uppity the way she, you know, she just seemed like she wasn't your type, like, down to earth. I go, okay, you know what?

I'm going to take that into consideration. So I go to her place, right? And she's sitting there at the table. And I said to her, you know, my friend Omar, she's like, yeah, he's like my brother.

And this is what he said. I said, word for word. I go, you know what? I'm actually going to take what he said seriously. Now, how would most women react, Chuck?

Like or like I don't care, what do you say? Who the heck does he think he is, right? Yeah. There's no me, right? You

know, she said. And this is the exact words you said.

I'm just going to have to prove him wrong, okay? God has said, submit to me like, you know, my playing days are over. I go, I go, I bypass this, I'm never going to live a good life.

I got I couldn't believe the answer. I know because, you know, she had told me of her friends, felt a certain way about me because I didn't drink right.

And I was, Who the heck are they? I would hold off on that. She said, I'm going have to prove them wrong. And I was like, okay, there's something special about this person, you know.

What would you say is special? I would, I would call that agency. Really? Agency? Yeah, right. High agency, high agency. And it was like, oh, it's like, okay.

You know, we had we had our ups and downs. And that's the one good thing about me being an open book. When I was dating with her, I brought her to a family event.

I wasn't scared how to hide their girlfriend. I didn't because I always tell my parents it was funny. My parents had a conversation with me. Maybe we were off topic, I don't know.

My parents had a conversation. Me at 22 years old. But hey, look here, you know, it's time for you to get married and find this woman. Where will I go? Stop!

I will stop right there I go. Look, I'm not someone I've always looked at, you know, people of the same culture as almost like my sisters. I go, I'm attracted to other things, but trust me, I will make a great decision.

The time is right. If you guys don't like her, I'm done. They never ask me again. So I brought her to my brother's son's birthday. He's like three years old and everybody was cool water.

And I kept bringing her. And then one day I brought her to the mosque. The header. My cousin said, what are you doing? Bring her to the mosque. I didn't care what they thought.

I didn't give a damn. And then, you know, they talk about they talk about where they called the beings in Islam who are they're not ghosts. But then, Jim, listen to this.

This is a true story. I go to a mosque by near the house, and I go, I got to pray real quick. So she waits in the woman's section. So this Hispanic girl comes in, she's covered, and she's like, hey, what are you doing here?

She goes, I'm on leave. My boyfriend is praying. She goes, well, we have that. My wife is Brazilian, so she speaks Portuguese, but she understands Spanish too.

So the girl goes, hey, you know what? We have an Islam class once a week here on Friday nights. It's in Spanish. You should come check it out. Wife goes. Okay, cool.

So she went and she went every day for a year. And one day she calls me and she goes, I'm ready to take. She knew sure about this. She took. She's out of there.

Now here's the crazy part, that initial presentation where she met the girl in the mosque. She never saw a girl again. And when she asked people at the mosque about her.

Don't even heard of her. Wow, isn't that crazy? That's crazy. I don't know what was this was, but definitely it's the great place. I don't know what. You want to call that. You know, it's.

It could have been. Well, God is everywhere, and God doesn't say, I love you. And. You know, we've had our trials and tribulations. And, I've also been a big speaker about going to therapy.

Like, we go to marriage therapy every week. And I think it's I don't think it's a bad thing. I think it's a great thing. And, you know, so I'm trying to get rid of that stigma too, of that therapy is, something wrong with you or.

All right. It's a necessity. And, you know, I have a great life, but I still need that outlet, right? To where I can say anything and and get feedback from from a non-judgmental, you know, person in the.

Middle, professional. Right? Right. And professional I do. And see both of you. Right. Because we often do see what what we see is. Yeah. You just hear one side of the story. No, we here's both of us.

Yeah, yeah. Wow. Well, you are unapologetic. I would say, you know, years in, and I'm curious and I'm speaking because as people listen to this, they might say, wow, you did.

You just know this at the time because each event that you described, you know, the cancer, your fathers, your relationship, the depression you had to your growth as a as a person in practice and and in your story with your wife.

Did you just know this at the time? Did it just or was it something that you step away from and reflect on, or how does that happen? Tell us and recognize that at the time I have cancer.

Yes, I understand recognizing something and taking action are two separate things. Right. So and I think the Slough problem, a lot of people have. Right.

We have these all these great plans are ahead of what we're going to do, but no one takes action. So I'm the kind of person now I take action and I'll figure it out later.

But you got to take action first. So the cancer thing, right? I knew I had to make a change. I took no action towards it. Right when my dad died and I got my depression when I had that pill, the pill problem.

That's why I knew I had to start taking action. I picked up books, I started reading, and I think that's the problem with society. Say nobody reads. Yeah, I tell you what, doctor, but and this might sound stupid, I can't even be enough to say to people I don't read because they just like.

And, you know, I used to hear like these billionaires, they read ten books. I'm like, what are they doing? I totally get it. I've read hundreds of books in the last ten years, and only over the last few years I started doing something different, like because I read so many books.

But I didn't remember anything. So now if there's a book or an audiobook, if I hear something important, I will actually stop the recording and take a note.

If you look at my phone, I have notes and I will go. Even today I will go over the note starting at note one. It might take me three days, but I go over everything so it becomes a part of me, not something I just read.

And I've been doing it for the last three years, so I think it's made a huge difference because I'm the living, breathing embodiment of these books and we're never like that because just reading it keep Move On is no.

It might take me 3 or 4 times longer to read the book, but I'm actually absorbed. I am the book now, as opposed to just kind of reading and kind of moving on.

What? So the cancer thing. Yeah. So until my dad passed away, that made me start taking action. And then the birth of my daughter, that's where I went.

Ultra mode with my nutrition. And and then, you know, I still because before I was doing all this work to kind of build myself up to be a certain kind of person, to be almost impenetrable as far as, like, you know, anger.

Like, I haven't been angry in months because I always look at perspective. Right. That's funny, cause I help out

other people. So a friend of mine was saying, you know, my brother tells me that he wishes I was back in California and he can't stand to see me like, oh, how old is your brother?

He's 14 years old. How old are you? 26. Okay. That's perspective.

Marriage, Fatherhood, and Purpose

Let's put yourself in your brother's head. You're 14 years old. You're a spoiled kid. Your dad gives you everything. Your mom gives you everything, isn't it?

No more from the system like that? Yeah. Your problem is you're judging him by your standards. Put yourself in his shoes. That's totally normal. What are you upset about? He's a 14 year old kid.

He's like, you're right. I go, next time you say something stupid like that, I just want you to repeat what he said slowly and be like, okay, cool. And walk off. So happen again.

I wish you weren't here. And he goes, you wish I wasn't here? Okay, cool. He walked off and he goes, his brother couldn't stay. Yeah. Work. Yeah, it worked because this is a 14 year old kid.

Understand? He's a 14 year old kid. You know. You know, a lot of times I used to get upset with my wife. And, you know, the therapist happens a lot less.

But I understand that a lot of women say things out of emotion that they don't actually mean. You know, that's not a good thing, but it occasionally happens.

Okay. If I'm my wife, I wrote this job is consciously stressed out. I have to use masculine energy because I'm in the in the male workforce. Well, she forgot to turn off that masculine energy when she came home.

Maybe I was my problem because I did not let her become a woman. I did not let her be feminine. I should have told her, hey, I got two kids. You like to take a bath, do whatever.

So I look at everything, profits. I'm not going to get angry at all because I totally understand. The problem is people hold each other whole. Other people to their standards.

But they're not you. They're not. You do a little perspective, you understand it? Yeah. That people see themselves and they can only see themselves. What I see in the head. Right.

The world is in their head and it's a representation of what they believe and the colors to the frame, you know. Very right. Different. That's and things you don't read.

You're not going to know these things. You're not magically born with this ability. You have to read people who are more intelligent than you, who are teachers and learn from them.

Yeah, you have to have that wanting to learn. That's right. So which brings me to my point of why we need curiosity. Yes, it's very. LCT, which is kind of what I'm hearing in your story, is that this element of I couldn't learn more.

I've got to figure this out. I've got to understand it. Okay. I hate that phrase. Curiosity killed the cat. Yes. What are we teaching people not to be curious.

It's ridiculous. I never use that phrase. Yes. I'm so glad you do. Yeah, that we were called to curious. And we really? Yeah. That's perfect. That's a good thing to do. Curious? Yeah. Oh.

What? Oh, yeah. Full curious. Right. Which is that's how. That's how you learn. And it opens up a neoplastic window. Change happens in curious, but you have to be able to tolerate that change.

And then tolerate uncertainty in your life. And I imagine when you're doing that it be on a weekly basis. And weekly basis. Yeah, whatever I do, I still take out that hour every week for therapy.

Yeah, it's funny, some of the therapist shuts up and lets me talk and she's like, you know, you could do this, but I need someone like you who's not me, because even I can judge myself, probably, you know, I can't therapy.

I can't do therapy yourself. Yeah. Look in the mirror and say, oh, no, it doesn't work. Well, that's what that's what psychedelics, I think do. And when we do treatments into it, ketamine that self reflection I call it you're really accessing your inner healer.

You're in a healer is which you're going to connect to that part of you. You're going to see yourself in a great different way with a lot of compassion.

You know, putting that mirror and looking at it with compassion is a very different lens than the self critic and the judger. And I know it's really good for PTSD.

Also. Yes. Yeah. Before I even knew about you guys had read about that. They were doing research the government was on and people in the military and they were having changes that couldn't happen within two years were happening within 1 or 2 sessions.

So when I heard you were doing the cycle, you're the perfect person. God bless. Thank you. Yeah, MDMA, PTSD, just, you know, clears it. But it does require work.

I mean, I would say these just like any medication because ketamine is a medicine. It is a medicine. I say this to patients in medicine, but it's the key.

It's just the thing that's going to open a door. You have to walk in through that door. Yes. Yes. So it's not it's not it's not a magic pill and a I think medicine is prescription eyes.

You know, it's like you go to the doctor and it's right away, pull out your prescription pad. It's like this. There's almost an urge. It is or tells you to eat better. Exercise.

It's throwing a pill. Yeah, yeah. So you're. Depressed? No side effects. What? That rest you here's an anti is antidepressant. You're anxious to suppress that.

Suppress that anxiety. Let's treat the symptom not the cause. Right. And if you have to look back now on your health, I imagine the question I would have for you is what? Thomas.

Tell me more about what that grudge and that anger and that pain. How did that manifest in your body? It manifested like right here. Like it was like a deep, heavy feeling.

You know, I didn't want that anymore. Like I tell people like, I don't believe in competition. I think competition is like they say, money is the root of all evil.

I disagree because if you make a lot of money, you can help a lot of people. I think competition is a relief. I always give this example like I was talking to a friend of mine, I go, you know this guy, he's makes money by nefarious means.

Let's just say, you know, he got this car. What do you think of that car? Oh, that car. Who cares about that car? Yeah, he does this and does that. I go, how do you feel when you say that?

Even though it's the truth. How's your heart feel? You know, it feels kind of bad, to be honest with you. I go, okay, now I want you to. Even though it's not the truth, I want you to say, you know what?

I love that car, and he's a hardworking guy. Just say, just lie to yourself. He doesn't go. How do you feel? Like they

don't have to have a feeling, you see.

And even though you might think you're not competing with that person, if you didn't have that fancy car, you wouldn't have cared. So even though it's not apparent, your subconscious was competing with the guy.

So I always tell people I'm not happy with anybody. Any other life coach, any other nutrition coach. I'm competing with yesterday's version of Shoot Your Back.

Can I beat that guy? And I'm constantly trying to beat the guy from yesterday. As long as they do that, I'll be happy and fine. Wonderful. Wow, what a message that you really represent and embody.

I would say you not only speak through your own trauma trial on pain, but you really represented and embody it in such a powerful way. I wanted to highlight the word you said in creditable how you chose that word.

Very. It's a very select word. You did not want to be uncomfortable. Yeah. Why? And this is when you talked about your cancer. But like I said, you know, like people like, for example, for last five weeks I cut out sugar totally.

And I hope to this rest of my life like people asking, why are you doing this? Why are you like, you're you're enough. I go, look, I know I'm enough, but I want to be an example for everybody.

Because to me, like I said, like I talked about like so a lot of people for example, like their problem isn't eating, the problem is boredom. Or maybe they deal with their stress by eating.

So we have to change their. I can get them to quit eating food for like six months a year, but they'll go back to it. If I can change their identity, how they feel about themselves and everything takes care of itself.

So I've been able to work really hard, you know, I'm 51 years old now. I've worked really, really hard on building my identity. So everything is easy.

Everything is exactly I think, I think I certainly, like I said, imagine if you start thinking nothing bad ever happens to you. You might think that already, but a lot of people don't.

Everything happens. So no matter what happens, the worst thing could happen. Your child get deathly sick and you're not upset. I mean, you care, you can do any of you can, but you're not.

You're not cursing the world. You know there is a reason for everything, even though you might not know it at the time. So I want to be that example, and I enjoy being the example.

I enjoy what I do, I enjoy reading, I enjoy trying to be yesterday's version of Shaquille because you know what the first 40 years of my life were where I say wasted.

You know, I think, you know. Do you know the philosopher noble? No. Come to Google for he says he said, the worst thing is the worst thing out there is a lazy man, one who's not contributing society.

And I'm glad you brought this up. So about my father, right when my daughter was born, right? I was like, okay, how do I live up to my father? He was a big guy, like socially, right?

Everybody knew who he was. He was a nice guy. He used to show up in people's hospital beds who he didn't know and pray for them. He would go to funerals of people he didn't know.

I'm like, he had a purpose, right? What is your purpose? Making people laugh like you kind of the cool guy. I go, I got to find a purpose. And you know, when my daughter was born, you know, a lot of times the child is the perfect purpose for people.

But that kind of got me into my nutrition, my health. And now it's like, okay, I know my purpose is just to help

people. Like when people message me from wherever, like, oh, you help me, okay, I found my purpose and I didn't have a purpose until then.

I was just kind of aimlessly going through life like most people do. I feel so sorry for them, you know? And luckily, I found my purpose. And what I found my purpose, I'm like, I'm just to go with it, you know, I have all these grand plans of doing this and doing that.

And people are like, you know what? If you pass away before before you hit those plants, you reach those plants. I could doesn't matter. So as long as I'm going towards it, I'm successful.

Like when you have a goal, whatever your goal is, you know, become a doctor or become a whatever, you know, if you don't enjoy the process, you're never going to get there.

And when I say it doesn't mean you love the process, it might be difficult, but you don't have a passion for that process. You're never going to get there.

So I have enjoyed the process of growth, of helping people, of trying to better myself so I can help other people. So look, if God takes me home tomorrow, I don't I'm not happy.

If I have two small children, it's okay. I died doing what I was doing, what I wanted to do. I think that's important. That is why you are called the inspire coach.

You inspire. I could listen for hours your stories here again and things that you really speak to. You are really powerful and very, very nuanced. You know, you kind of somebody, you could have taken a path this way or that way.

You chose this way. You know, there was a there's a lot of action to what you describe. You know, when you talk about intention is action. And then there's either passion or purpose that the fun is better.

They say purpose is better because passion, you can have one that's complete drive. It further takes it to purpose is where you really, like you said, take it on a journey.

You don't care about the outcome. And so then when you ask, you know what is what are the subjects we can talk about? I tell you I'm open book because what is the point of having knowledge if you can't give it to people, if you can't give it to the next generation, if you can't give it away, what is the point of even having it?

I want to give away everything I have so I can help people. You know, like people say, what? What do you want people to say when you die? Help me with this one thing.

If anyone people to say he help people or I'm happy, that's all I need. You can never be. That's why I always say people try to compete on money. You can never be the richest person.

You can never, you know, be the best looking person. But you can always contribute whatever you have to society and humanity and that will always be remembered.

The lessons people learn. Well, thank you for sharing that.

Empathy, Love, and Final Reflections

I'd like to this ask you last or last question until we close this, this beautiful conversation, what is something that you think is needed in our society more than anything?

Maybe the South Asian culture, or even to our Muslim heritage, beliefs in our practice, or even to the larger audiences we're living now in this kind of turmoil.

You know, the world. What would you say to what would be your message? I think we need more to give more love. We need to give more empathy. And if you can't directly affect something, I don't think you can control your life.

You know, there are people like, look, there's a lot of terrible things going in the world, especially in Palestine, and do what you can, you know, pray for these people, like if you if you have any way of actually like making a difference, make a difference.

But if you just sit here and get depressed about it, you're not doing anybody any good. You really art. So a lot of times I tell people be like, watch less news because the news is so negative.

Yeah, there's no love. There's no love. And that goes for everything. There's no love, there's no empathy. It's like you see what these politicians do, okay?

You see how they allow, you know, children to get murdered for $1 million donation? Is it really that much money for you to kind of like, I'm I'm a noble, I am, and nothing you could offer me $100 million and I wouldn't.

And a camera is not on people out here. There's no love, there's no empathy. It's all about me, me, me, me, me. And that goes for humanity. And that goes for like they have this, this all this migrant crisis.

You were born in America. Did you do something before you're born to have that right? No. If you had empathy, you'd understand that not everyone is lucky enough to be born in a country like America or Great Britain or someplace like that.

Some people are born in war torn countries. If they want to come here and you have room. And, you know, it's funny when they come in doorways, contributing members of society more than people actually are born here.

Like, why wouldn't you allow them to? You know why? Because you have no empathy. You're not giving love out style beam. I think you need more empathy and more love and more understanding.

I don't think enough people have this. People live in their their cocoons. And yeah, it's I think that's much needed. It's correct. That's because that's really quite accurate.

Right. Love connection, empathy and witnessing I would say, you know, being able to witness somebody else's pain or somebody else's process. And that's something that's very missing.

Even though we witness so many things, which is kind of immune to it, witnessing the kind of just witnessing so much. But we really are immune to the actual witnessing of something.

And I wish more people just wanted to wish the best for everybody and people who don't know, just wish the best for them. You know, like I said, being negative, it hurts your soul.

And like I said, even if you're Pollyanna and you're always happy and you're always wishing people the best, it's better if your heart feels much better being like that.

I'd rather be that way than the other. Sorry. Thank you. Well, we'll close here. And thank you for being our guest. And thank you for having me. I care. I'm honored if.

Somebody had to contact you or to reach out to you, what would be their way of communicating? Sure. Easiest. Where's my Instagram? Which is at the Inspire coach.

I also have a podcast with my co-host. We have an Instagram also. It's at chasing 100 now and these are both Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.