Discover Why Your Mindset is Crucial Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome, everybody, to another amazing episode of breast cancer breakthroughs. I am Dr. Véronique Desaulniers, better known as Dr. V, and today I have a beautiful and lovely breast cancer thriver slash conqueror.

This is Bethany Webb. She's a mindset coach. A stage four breast cancer thriver and author of one of my favorite books, My Guru Cancer and the reason I love this book is because it's so much about the mindset and the joy and how you look at your healing journey.

So, Bethany, thank you so much for taking the time to share your story and insights on your healing journey. Thank you for the invitation for creating this amazing and powering event.

Yes, we're excited. We're really excited to share this and to encourage and empower all these women that are on a healing journey. All right. So let's start off.

Let's hear your pain to passion story. How were you diagnosed and what was your journey like? Yeah, we were just chatting before this that it's amazing.

I'm about to enter eight years having journeyed in some form of cancer land. So in 2015 is when I had a diagnosis of late stage two or early three ER positive breast cancer.

And at that time I had just turned 34. I felt really healthy, you know, I ate organic, exercised I wellness for a living. Have no family history of breast cancer.

So it was really not on my radar at all as something that I would possibly be going through. So but was really neat. As a few months before that diagnosis, I was certified in a mindfulness practice called The Work of Byron Katie That is all about, you know, inviting stressful emotions, thoughts into your life and then questioning them and finding a healing mindset, you know, and any kind of life challenge which, as we know, life is full of many challenges.

So cancer certainly wasn't something I was expecting to deal with, yet it ended up being this absolutely amazing, incredibly eye opening and heart opening experience.

Initial Diagnosis and First Treatment Journey

And so I use that practice and I'll share a little bit more about the specifics of it. But I use that practice throughout a very rigorous treatment plan of about two years.

I embrace and integrative approach of healing, combining the natural world and also conventional medicine, and had an incredible experience going through that and was pronounced physically cancer free in 2016.

And I'm within I know within that time period, like, it's it was really interesting to see, you know, the thoughts that can arise when you are stated, oh, yeah, you're physically cancer free, you're all good.

And then the mind, of course, it wasn't quite cancer free, but for me I was full of a little bit of anxiety worries that it would come back, that it would have to pivot and change my life again.

And so within that time period, I worked on a lot of those fears and then made some really amazing, beautiful changes in my life and moved to Colorado from Texas.

I absolutely love it here. It's full of more nature and adventure and community. And I left a relationship that wasn't

working for me anymore and fell in love with with a new partner out here and just started giving myself all the things in life that I've been craving.

Instead of waiting for something outside of me to to line up. And that was just such a beautiful thing. I published this book, Baby, in that time period, too.

And then in 2021, in the middle of COVID, I ended up having having my recurrence of stage four breast cancer. Wow. That was low back pain was really what what started that adventure.

And I started experiencing it asking my doctors, hey, I've got this low back pain that hasn't really gone away. And I've been doing yoga and chiropractic and I'm not quite sure what this is.

Do you think I need a scan? And, you know, I was told no, but lots of people have low back pain. And so it was about an eight month journey of advocating finding a doctor that would finally scan me.

And then once they said yes to ordering a scan, I then ran into insurance, not wanting to cover it. And I kept advocating, Hey, I'm a cancer survivor.

Like, I did not really think that was cancer, but I wanted to rule it out and also just find out what was happening because at that point it was getting difficult to walk.

Some days I had a. I very much was impacting my adventurous life and spirit in Colorado, where I want to be skiing and hiking. And it was hard. And I'm like, I know what this is, but I need to I need to find out.

And so when I finally had a little back MRI and got insurance to cover it, 2 hours later, the doctor called and he said, Are you are you sitting down?

And I'm like, okay, I am now. I was at home and myself and and he told me that there are lesions all over my spine and that I need to call my oncologist right away.

This this looks like metastatic breast cancer. And then further testing revealed that it had come back in my liver as well as some lymph nodes in my stomach.

So that was two and a half years ago at this point. And, you know, I am someone who I am trained in stress. I am trained to find beauty and, you know, love and things.

I, I love focusing on mindset, you know, and I also commission to fall apart. That moment was definitely one of the most devastating couple of weeks of my life, because your mind is just full of so many scary thoughts, like, my life is over, I can't get through this and my body will never heal.

Cancer is just, you know, envisioned it just it's only going downhill from here. And I want to really let myself feel feel those emotions and work through them.

And then I finally brought some of those thoughts to this this process, this mindset practice called the work of iron and and gosh, I just it was an amazing to see how quickly my mind opened and my heart opened to the other possibilities of this journey.

Like I can't know for sure that my life is over. You know what? What if just like in that first journey and diagnosis, what if my life is just beginning, you know, in a new way and in a deeper way? And.

And what is cancer here to teach me? You know, I don't resonate with battling cancer or fighting it. I very much, you know, I want to invite it.

Recurrence, Advocacy, and Mindset Shift

And as a wise teacher, as a friend, as a companion and be in harmony, you know, with with things that are in my body and in my life, and that feels much more peaceful, much more curious.

And what ended up happening is within just a few weeks, I went from terrified, fearful, you know, consumed with suffering to feeling excited and inspired and it's when I renamed my diagnosis as live the F Out of Life that was like, you know what?

That's maybe what this is about. Let's truly live life now in every way possible. And since then, I have been doing exactly that. I am again in integrative treatment.

And in the past two years, you know, my my cancer has disappeared. It does not show up on scans. They have said it's no active or I'm not typically cancer-ing And your language. No no amazing.

Any active cancer growing in my body I am I feel great. I am skiing I am hiking. I we just talked about a fun mindfulness retreat. I get to lead, you know, in a few months.

And I'm doing the things I love, I'm doing the work I love. And I just, you know, I wish I could have had that glimpse of course, two and a half years ago.

But I just didn't think a beautiful life like this was was possible with a stage four diagnosis. And so for me, like the most pivotal, crucial part is, is just this mindset and in keeping the mind and our thoughts, you know, in check, you know, we often talks about nourishing our bodies with foods and supplements and, you know, all these different things, which I do.

And nourishing our mind, both with our thoughts, are it's so important because it can the mind is powerful and it has this opportunity to make this journey, which can be really hard.

It can make it even harder and more difficult and full of suffering, or the mind can be used to make it more peaceful and joyful and playful and, you know, full of love and gratitude.

And I love that they prefer that way. So love it. And that's what really attracted me to your book. First of all, the title, My Guru Cancer. Right. What is what is this cancer teaching you and your subtitle?

You don't have to fight to find your freedom from the C word because we know the pink movement, conventional treatments, right? You got to fight this cancer.

And that brings up the adrenaline fight or flight. But mind set, you know, in my system, essential number four is to heal the emotional wounds. And part of that is really adapting that mindset that your you are going to heal.

And this is a healing journey. You're going to eventually figure out what the gift is. Like you said, it's not always easy, but when you can look back, you can see that this really was a blessing in many, many ways.

Now, I do want to ask you, when you look back on this journey, what do you think the root cause of this cancer showing up in your life was? Yeah, I can tell you, my mind has gone to every possible theory and explanation and there are two things.

The truth is, I don't know for sure. I don't have a solid like this is definitely why I got cancer. This is absolute why it's happening. You know, I have different theories and a lot of the theories for me personally lead to a lot of of shame and guilt.

And I see that a lot in the cancer world in general. A lot of, you know, if only you did this or that, you could have prevented cancer. If only you healed your emotional wounds this way, you wouldn't have gotten cancer.

And and for me, it's like I just don't know for sure if if that is true. And it helped and it really made me feel honestly, I turned on myself and and it made my journey a lot harder.

Then, on the other hand, there are these whys. Why, why, why is this happening? And how could this be happening for me? And so to me. And from there I have extracted some amazing, amazing reasons that give me such a heartfelt sense of joy and comfort in this journey and some of those reasons are so I can truly practice what I preach.

You know, I preach that with the right mindset. Like you can enjoy anything in life, you can face any challenge. And this is absolutely been the ultimate invitation to truly live that.

And, you know, this opportunity to share a different perspective of cancer where, you know, to me it's not that that battle, that war, it's about love, it's about gratitude and the learning and self-growth and the amazing people it's connected me to.

I mean, the fact that we're having this conversation right now, it would not have happened, had had either of us had a cancer diagnosis. And this book, baby. And she came out of me.

I was an advocate for cancer. I loved writing. I absolutely loved it. But I had no idea there was a book inside of me that needed to come out. And so, like the amazing humans and community that I had met with, like, gives me like, why, you know, and, and why I'm here, why I'm meant to be in this journey.

Now, if I the clarification for me personally, if I would have learned all those things or loved myself more, would I have gotten cancer? I don't know.

I really don't know. I can't I can't really prove that theory to anyone. But I can tell you, I'm I'm very much enriched by looking at it this way right now.

Beautiful, beautiful now. And you mentioned something about advocating for yourself. And I just want to touch on that, because I think that so many women hear those three words, you have breast cancer.

And right away they they kind of like deer in headlights and they forget to advocate for themselves. And even though they don't feel comfortable with their doctor, they're afraid to change or insurance is covering this guy, but not that guy.

Embracing Western Medicine and Integrative Care

So how you know, let's talk a little bit about really advocating for yourself and how important that is in your healing journey. And my gosh, it is so important and I have run into a lot of different lessons in that where it has, you know, to get to know yourself and your own personality.

I am more of a type-A, linear person and I enjoy someone sitting with me, looking me in the eyes and having compassion. You know, as a doctor, that's important to me.

And sometimes you need to date a few doctors to find the one that you feel connected with. I have shifted my medical team when things don't feel right.

I've gotten second or third opinions when I'm not a solid yes to something a doctor is suggesting. And I also, you know, I go into those appointments with an open mind to because I am not an expert in how cancer cells grow and multiply like I am not.

And so I welcome my expertize with theirs and I see us all as a healing team together. I was not pro western medicine in any way before cancer, and so a lot of my beliefs and inner work were around making friends with medicine and learning to see it also as a spiritual path, you know, also as something that could open my heart and find peace.

And I have met amazing doctors like amazing. And that really like has opened my eyes to a lot of different things. And seeing actual medicine as I'm instead of seeing it as, as poisons, seeing it as something that's healing my

body, it's supporting this healing cleanse.

And then all the complementary things I'm doing are helping me with side effects. So that kind of sort of collaborative mindset going into those meetings is really helpful.

And if something's not working for me, I speak up about it now like I am very, very clear. Hey, I hear you. Thank you. And I need to let you know that this is what brings me most peace of mind.

You know, I'd like to hear from someone tomorrow. I need more information about this before I am I? Yes. I need to understand why you're recommending what you're recommending.

I need to hear your direct experience with your patients, their quality of life. That is much more my priority than quantity. You know, if I'm here, I want to be doing things I love with the people I love.

And so I think having that like that clarity within yourself and knowing that like you can be a difficult patient, whatever. I don't I don't care if they see me as, like, an annoying person asking a million questions. Great.

That's fine. That's their business. That's to take care of myself. And it's going to be this and the little list of questions you know as well. Hey, have you heard about this? What about that?

And, you know, as we've discussed before, not all Western doctors know now, most of them don't know lots of other ways of healing. And so I am met with often, you know, when I'm hey, how about this?

What about this supplement? Do you know anything about this? And I met with I don't know. It's not my wheelhouse often, and that's okay for me. It's like, okay, it's not your wheelhouse.

I'll find someone whose wheelhouse it is or I'll make it my wheelhouse, you know, about this stuff. But again, that sort of collaborative nature is really supportive to me personally, and seeing it all is like always healing all part of my journey, you know, I don't want to I don't fight cancer.

I want to go into fighting doctors either. But I do want to make sure I'm very clear and and taking care of myself. That's the priority. Yeah, very good.

And remember that they are working for you, right? You get to choose if it's a good fit for you or not. And I oh, my gosh. Stress how important it is to to have someone you trust.

And if you're not feeling it and you're you're advocating, you're saying all the things that's that could be a closing of a relationship and and find a new one.

Right. An opportunity for a much better one. Yeah. So how did you learn to embrace Western medicine? I know that many women in our community, you know, they all start off, you know, heal breast cancer naturally, that's their goal.

And for some women, it works. However, for whatever reason, sometimes, you know, they need more support and it's you know, it's very difficult for some women to make that transition.

So how did you learn to embrace that Western medicine mentality? And, you know, to get through that? Yeah. So leading up to my journey, I feel like I had a lot of training in what I say this.

I had just some experiences close to right before my diagnosis where I, you know, I had lived a healthy life. Was it perfect? Was it following every pillar?

No, it wasn't. But I ate organic. You know, I exercised, moved. I took care of my mind, emotions. I had a career I loved. I mean, there were a lot of things that I felt like I was really, really following, you know, a natural lifestyle.

I wasn't into going to doctors or medicine. And so the fact that I tried those things and still managed to grow, so cancer was information for me. It was like, okay, well, maybe this isn't the only way.

And I had some beliefs about medicine and that's really what I went into identifying. One medicine is bad for me. That was a belief that I brought to inquiry.

You know, medicine is poison. Doctors don't care about me and my health. They're only in it for profit. Those are like some kind of core beliefs about medicine that I realized they had and they were very much shaping my ability to even make an appointment, you know, and to sit and listen with an open mind.

I was in, I came in with a lot of preconceived notions, and it's really hard to hear the information in front of you and see clearly when you have all of these beliefs walking into that appointment, right?

So through this practice of, of inquiry, which I brought, some of those beliefs like medicine is bad for me. For example, I brought that to a process of inquiry, like, is it true?

So the first question, can I, can I know for sure that it's true that medicine is bad for me, you know, and especially when they're recommending chemotherapy and like can I know for sure?

And I'm like, well, you know, I don't know. I don't know for sure. My body hasn't experienced this medicine yet. You know, I haven't given it a chance.

I don't know. So I, I can land in a no, I don't know. I don't know. And then I notice, you know, on the third question, how do you react? What happens when you believe medicine is bad?

For me? Well, I'm freaking out. I'm down. I don't want I want to just go in the appointment like this and not hear anything. I'm I'm seeing the movies, you know, the Hollywood movies of people in treatment and bloody noses and gray skin and frail.

And I'm just like, I'm an absolute panic mode and incapable of hearing any more information. And the fourth question I love and this inquiry process is who would you be without the thought?

Medicine is God for me. And it takes a meditation some time to sit in that space. And I notice, you know, when I dropped that thought and walked into an appointment, like, I'm available, I'm present, I'm hearing what my doctor is me instead of, you know, these other stories and that I heard about other bodies or movies, you know, it's like, Oh, I'm with my real doctor and my real body and I'm also missing or I'm hearing the word therapy after chemo, you know, it's like, Oh, okay, therapy.

And what is the point of this? Oh, it's actually healing. Like, this is one way of many ways to heal. And so that started shifting. My perception medicine is bad for me, it's good for me, you know, and it very well could be.

I'm like, you know, I don't know. I think I'm going to give it a chance and try it out.

Breakthrough Lessons and Closing Encouragement

And I decided to nickname Chemo, See Love. That just worked for me. I thought it just made it more fun. And I went in there and I, you know, I'm hooked up to my meds and I'm envisioning it as this healing cleanse and I'm thankful for it.

You know, I'm I'm grateful that this medicine exists. I envision it healing my body, allowing cancer to disappear, my healthy cells are protected. And I found, you know, what are the good parts of because there are some side effects.

I did not experience the level of side effects that that I've heard about. I never threw up once. I thought that was amazing. It was one of the most aggressive chemo regimens you could have.

I never threw up. I never had a day. I couldn't get out of bed. And so I but I started to notice things like, you know, fatigue. And there was a little bit of nausea sometimes, or I just felt crummy some days and and I would look at even how I was this serving me.

You know what is this teaching me? Just like cancer. And it's helping me slow down. Yeah. You cannot do that crazy fast pace American life now. It does not serve my body.

I slow down, I. I listen, you know? Hey, baby, like, what do you mean? What do we need? Do we want it? You know, we want a juice. Do we want a nap? Do we want to call the doctor?

Do you know it helps me ask for help and be vulnerable and not this independent driven. I can do everything person. And so it's all like this fertile learning ground of of life.

And so from that perspective, I went into that medicine with more ease. My body's calmer, I'm breathing more fully. I am I am full of gratitude and love with it.

And I have to tell you, my experiences with chemotherapy, they have shrunk cancer like magic. They have been. It's been incredible. And I was lucky enough to receive chemotherapy first as the first part of that first journey, because I still had the alongside a huge lump in my breast.

It was also my in my lymphatic system, my lymph nodes. And I could physically feel it shrinking every week. And I love that affirmation. You know, it wasn't just for guessing if this is working, I could actually really feel it.

So that was that was a lovely reinforcement as well. But it's like, yeah, whatever medicine I'm taking, whether it's western medicine or sipping a green juice or, you know, going on a vacation, it's like, I see it as healing my body and that just feels more peaceful, kind and and honestly, honest, truthful to me.

Yeah, that's so good. That's so empowering. It really is. Yeah. So if you were to share some parting words of encouragement, this is a breast cancer breakthrough summit.

What would those parting words of encouragement be to anybody who's listening out there who is in the middle of a healing journey? Absolutely. So the word breakthrough, I just love and you know, we have lots of different ideas of what breakthroughs are.

You know, there's breakthroughs in science and studies and medicine and here. But my focus of breakthrough is, is breaking through the B. S., the belief systems of cancer.

And, you know, when you are in fear or anxiety, which is just natural, we're going to obviously experience those emotions to pause and notice what you're thinking and believing.

You know what thought snuck in there that is causing this this disharmony you know, in the mind, emotions and body. And then to question those beliefs, you know, things like my life is over, you know, could it be true or that it's that it's just beginning and an even better life, something that's, you know, richer and and gratitude and love and embracing the present moment.

There's nothing like an invitation to embrace the present moment. You know, when you're told your life may not have as long as other people's, which I don't necessarily believe, but those those words are powerful.

So breaking through the belief systems that are limiting you and making you feel crummy would be my my biggest invitation so that you can free your mind and heart to do this journey in the way that nourishes you the most.

And that might not look like my journey or your journey. You know, you get to find your own perfect way to navigate this. And there is just so much support out there.

This event is absolutely one of them. And you can, you know, just find all the little things like I love this about that

healing and this and that and just create this beautiful little perfect mesh of whatever your personal healing journey is.

And so no matter what this mindset work is, it goes with all of it. And so I personally just could not speak highly enough of taking care of your thoughts and emotions as a primary focus.

It'll make all the rest of this journey a lot easier. That is so true. Very well spoken, wise words of wisdom from somebody who's walked the journey and you're still doing so.

So, Bethany, thank you so much for all that you do. I know that you are supporting other cancer thrivers with your experience, and I appreciate you taking the time to to share your wisdom with our audience as well.

Absolutely. Thank you so much.