Opening Reflection on Story and Beliefs

So right now, if I could reframe everything, like if I were to take this book and rewrite it and put a new title, it would be, what's your story? Because we are all living a story, and it's usually not ours.

It's usually our parents and their parents and their parents. It's very generational. So you will become whatever your beliefs are. Your beliefs are your story, and your story is what directs yourselves.

And obviously your cells is what creates this body and obviously the life that we live. But it would be, what's your story? And why do you believe that?

And let's go deeper with that. So that's, I really had to understand what my story was. And most importantly, I needed to know who the writer was. This is Doctor Talks, real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most.

Welcome to the To Curious MD podcast where medicine meets meaning. I'm your host, Dr. Alia Ahmed, and with Dr. Saraya Rehman, we are integrative physicians and psychedelic assisted therapy providers and lifelong learners.

And on this podcast, we get curious about the human experience from mental health to the mindset, biology to behavior, and how to heal and grow and live more embodied lives.

Today's guest is someone whose mission and message has continues, I would say, to inspire millions.

Introducing Maria Kang and Her Journey

You may know her as the no excuse mom, but Maria Kang is a lot more. She is a fitness advocate and author. She has non-profit and a mother of three, and she's also speaking to her story through her body image and discipline in her family life and her recent diagnosis of stage four colon cancer.

And I'd like to invite her, this circle today, to really reflect on Kobayashi Narrative Medicine and hear more about your journey in your life as it is right now, as well as in your journey more recently with your diagnosis and what you have learned about yourself through that.

She's also a patient here and then ketamine treatments as well and speaks about that. So let's dive into the conversation with you, Maria, learning about your personal transformation.

I'd love to hear how you speak to your work as a woman, as a woman with multiple interests and advocacy for women as well, and your voice in fitness and discipline.

So welcome. Thank you. Thank you for having me. Excited to be here. So my first question is to do with the word no excuse mom. You just mentioned that you had written this book 10 years ago and this one right there.

What does no excuse mom mean to you today after a decade? You know, what's interesting is that it was such a powerful movement when it came out. I had a very viral image in 2013 with me and my three sons.

And it said, what's your excuse on the top? And it created a global movement of mothers. We had over 500 leaders at one point who wanted to create communities of just mothers who work out and commune together just in the spirit of prioritizing themselves.

It was really motivated by my mother who passed away a few years ago. And she was 60. She just never really

prioritized her physical health and mental and emotional spiritual health as well.

From No Excuse Mom to What's Your Reason

And so no excuse mom was really born on the idea and the premise that not that there is no excuses, but that we should try very, very hard to not make any excuses for not prioritizing.

our temple, ourselves, because, you know, you really cannot care for others if you're not caring for the one person that takes care of the entire house, right?

So what's interesting is that I was really just not drawn to that word for a while in the last five years, I'd say. I just felt really disconnected with the word excuse for whatever reason.

And, and so I am thinking of rebranding all the time, you know, but right now in the past, it meant tried to make yourself a priority. Today, it means something a little bit more different.

Would you be able to describe that now? What's different about Excuse Now for you? So, you know, I actually recaptioned that photo with, you know, an updated, you know, with my children, like maybe 10, I don't know, five years ago.

And I said, what's your, I believe it was, what's your reason? Because once you figure out you have an excuse, like for example, your excuse is you don't have time.

Okay, so we know there's no time, there's no money, there's no gym, whatever, maybe no support. That's fine. It's not enough to know what happened. We know this as you're obviously, you're doctors, you work with people all the time.

It's not enough to know what happened in your past. It's why it happened. You know, what's your reason? Because if you get, can you get to the root, then you can really pull the weed from where it's at.

So that's why I really struggled with the word excuse because it was really superficial. We're not digging deep enough here. What's your reason? And so when you started to pull at those roots, what did you find?

So right now, if I could reframe everything, like if I were to take this book and rewrite it and put a new title, it would be, what's your story? Because we are all living a story, and it's usually not ours.

It's usually our parents and their parents and their parents. It's very generational. So you will become whatever your beliefs are. Your beliefs are your story, and your story is what directs yourselves.

And obviously your cells is what creates this body and obviously the life that we live. But it would be, what's your story? And why do you believe that?

And let's go deeper with that. So I really had to understand what my story was. And most importantly, I needed to know who the writer was. And until I understood that I was the writer, that I was the author, and I was the creator of this entire life movie that I was living, I could not take radical, action towards whatever I want it to heal or do or become.

Absolutely. You write yourself into being and Dr. Alia, you were mentioning that one of the things we want to touch up on is that writing process. So maybe we segue into that.

Would you like to ask a question about the writing process? Because I know you're involved in some of your own writing process right now. So I'm interested to hear that.

Well, you mentioned, you know, Our stories is also our stories of our generational past and our aspirations, I would imagine as well, but also the generational past, the stories that we carry in our bodies.

What would be the story for you that you carry in your body? That's a great question. And I know you may know Louise Hayes, right? She's, she wrote a book, you know, how to heal your body.

I love it. Actually don't have the book, but I've Googled it. I understand it. It's one of those things that when you become a certain at a certain awareness, you already understand things before you even have to read it, right?

So I knew that the cancer sitting in my colon was really representative of many things. Number one, it's in the lower chakra. It's just there. It's survival.

It's about empowerment and security. This is my stakeholders, right? And so, no, it's more like my solar plexus, somewhere around there, because I had colorectal cancer.

But I also knew that I was, while I'm very expressive, I've been a writer since I was young. Obviously people know I'm very outspoken. This is what I understood and this is what I had to, you know, it was like an ego death.

It was understanding it was not what I was saying that really mattered.

Reframing the Story as the Writer

It's what I was not saying. It was what I was suppressing. It's what I was holding back. It's the old shit that I kept holding onto, you know, literally old shit in my colon.

And I was not becoming, you know, it was festering in me. And so that was a big, there was, there's so much that I learned in this year and a half. Like I felt like I was talking to my pain still, cause I'm still in pain from the ostomy reversal just a couple months ago.

But in talking to my pain, I learned so much about myself, but The colon is a place where you process the things from the outside world. And I was not very good at processing after my whole world felt like it fell apart, seemingly at once.

You know, my mother passed, you know, I went through a divorce, you know, there's a lot of other things that just kept just piling one after the other.

But what I've also learned is that that's how life is. It works like that. It comes in stages, but it also comes really fast and really hard, like Murky's Law, you know?

So. I'm, as a writer and putting this into words, as you're more recently doing in your new book that's going to be released, tell us about that. And I know it's been, you've taken a hiatus from, you can't work to write this book.

What has that process been like for you as you write this story? You know, what's interesting is that I've written, you know, I've had a blog since 2005. So I've been consistently writing since then online.

And then I've also had a diary since fourth grade. And then I have my notes on my phone. I have another journal I carry everywhere. Like I've been writing for a very long time and I meditate a lot, which I highly recommend everyone to meditate, get into that stillness.

But I knew that I was going to create a book. I could feel it. You know you just know certain things and i also knew that i wasn't going to force myself either to write when i wasn't ready to write cuz i'm from long people told me.

I should write another book it's been ten years since i released my original one i didn't feel called to do it. Until i became truly aligned in a line did i talk about this in my book.

Alignment is so important when it comes to healing. The reason why you're unhealed is because you aren't aligned. You know, mind, body, and spirit. You know, your heart, your mind, and your actions all have to be in coherence.

And so when I felt aligned and I knew it was time, I just started writing and I didn't stop for two weeks. And after two weeks, I had 14 chapters and 60,000 words.

But that's how the divine works. That's how in the divine meaning, that's how God and that's how you work because we're all made in God's image. So when things happen, when things When a seed germinates in the ground and it starts to sprout, people think, wow, this 60,000 words came out in just two weeks.

No, it's been, it's been germinating for about 10 years now. And when it was ready to come out, it comes out quick and it comes out miraculously. Cause that's how, that's how life actually does work is through miracles, through just a process that is very unique to you.

You know, it doesn't, you don't compare yourself to whatever other people do. You're very different. I've learned that in my cancer journey. I've learned that as a mother.

I've learned that as turning 45 this year. I know that I will never look or be or seem like anyone that is like me. I just do things differently. I don't live by roles.

And I think it's important that people don't because that's called a limitation. And oh my gosh, don't give me a limitation. I just want to break it immediately, you know?

I love that, I love that. I'm seeing this process that you just described of this two weeks of writing almost like a birth giving process, right? It's been germinating, it's been gestating in there and through all the writing you've done, it's arrived at a place where it was ready to kind of appear.

And that can feel like the muse, right? Like that's what writers, you know, for time immemorial have talked about being visited by the muse. You know, that moment where it just kind of flows so automatically and you're so in the moment with it.

So what did that moment, those two weeks, I'm so curious about what those two weeks were like for you. What was happening at that time? What's the setting?

What's the story around it? Thank you for asking. You know, what's interesting is that We always forget, and I talk about this in the book. It's one of my chapters about stoneness and solitude.

It wasn't something I planned on doing, you know, one week offline ended up being two weeks and three weeks and four weeks. The people are calling people to see if I'm okay, you know, but it was just so quiet.

It was extremely quiet because it was really important that I hear my own voice. And I was just in my own world, like completely without noise, without any external energy.

Cancer, Suppression, and the Body's Message

And so I started, I knew I had, I wanted to be with the nature. So I went to Nevada city, which is like 45 minutes from here. And I was just in the small cabin in the woods just for the first three days.

And I was still in recovery. So I wasn't a lot of pain, but I knew that this was, it was time. I just get to feel it. And as I did that, I just started to write.

And there would be times I'd be stuck. And when I was stuck, I wouldn't judge my stuckness. That's really important. I trusted that when I was ready to flow again, it would flow.

So the writing was very cathartic. I just meditated a lot. And actually, you know what? I take that back. I did not meditate a lot. I would say in those two weeks, because I'm so used to just meditating and kind of just journaling.

I wasn't really allowed to do that. I didn't journal and I didn't meditate. I just wrote. It was almost like just releasing

for two weeks, just releasing.

And we all know this because I believe you're a mother too, right? I'm not sure. OK, I didn't want to say. So we're all mothers here. you know when you're as a mother you are you know you have your baby it's it's growing in your womb for like nine months it takes you know sometimes you know a few hours to a few days actually it's a few days when you go into labor people think oh it's an instant when you start diet no it's actually a bigger process than that and just like anything that's people don't realize what the process is even you know, menopause, you just don't stop having your period.

It's like a whole 10 years prior, you know, pre menopause or your your body's getting ready. So when you're ready, there really is no stopping it once it flows.

And so I was really that in order to be in that process, you really have to be like in your zone. Remember, when you're in labor, you just have to be in your zone, you have to breathe, you have to manage the pain, you have to have full trust.

Because I said this recently on my Instagram stories, which is if you know the purpose behind your pain, are you really in pain, right? So here I am. We are working on purpose.

This writing process can be painful at certain times, especially in the very beginning. But once it starts to, once you're up to seven years, it gets to four and then to six, and then all of a sudden it's just coming out of you, you know what I mean?

So that's exactly the same process. Whatever the process is in getting birth, it's the exact process. It is in any part of life. You can replicate it anyway, because if it's all fragmented, right, we're all fragments.

It's the same thing. it's going to get released naturally. And there's a trust and there's a knowing and there's a magic behind it. And then when you hit that circle, you know, that ring, when the ring of fire, when the baby's head starts to pop out, that's, once you hit that pain threshold and it hurts, all of a sudden everything numbs out.

And now you've got that dopamine and then that, you know, whatever else is released, right? All the chemicals, same process. And then you're like, wow, this is amazing.

Because it really is amazing. This book is divinely guided. I give all glory to the divine, to God. Because I'm just the vessel just like I give as as mothers we give birth to these children but I did we create these children now we get we give it all up to the miraculous divine you know we're just the portal.

And that's what it once we understand that we are just the portal then we can truly surrender to the power of ourselves and to manifestation of the world around us.

I love that. Thank you. What would be some of the stories that you said unfolded or emerged through this process or even was birthed through this process?

What would this baby look like to you now after its birth? Tell us a little bit about the stories that emerged. Yeah, it's interesting is a lot of my followers are excited to read the book and she said, I can't wait to read your book.

And I said, this isn't my book. I said, this is your book. You know, this isn't a story about me. This is a story about us. And that's why I know it's powerful, because it's not my story.

It's the same labor story that we've all been through, but we're not really talking about, and we don't know how to put it together, because we're all given different spiritual gifts.

I've always been really good at kind of finding the beginning and the end and telling people the process that happens in the middle. Because we see how people become, we don't know how they did, and they don't know how they did either, you know?

And so to be able to articulate it is so powerful. You know, for me, it was the unbecoming. That's the biggest thing. It's the unbecoming that had to happen in order for you to truly find who you are, truly find what you are becoming.

I'll go back to the, you know, obviously the fact that I went through stage four cancer, you know, something created it, you know, and I had to uncrate what created it while simultaneously creating what I was supposed to become, right?

And so I was I was running from death, but also running towards life at the same time. That's what people don't realize is that you are doing both things at once.

You know, I wasn't just leaving my Catholic faith, which, you know, I hate saying faith. It's not. It's not the Catholic faith I left. It's the Catholic church.

It's this organized religion. I wasn't leading them. I was, I was, I was leading them by simultaneously, you know, walking towards myself to, you know, a faith within me, you know, a faith that I, that feels more natural.

And so the stories that I tell are so many. I mean, it's so interesting because I really tapped into a lot of my life experiences and I couldn't believe what I've experienced.

I mean, I've been on a reality TV show. You know, I filmed four episodes of Family Feud. You know, my mother passed away. Two years later, my brother passed away.

I mean, even throughout cancer, there's some crazy stories that I experienced working with doctors.

Writing the Book Through Stillness and Flow

who told me that I'll never have no evidence of disease. Like, who says that? That is so mean. You know, another doctor said there's no such thing as miracles.

Another doctor said, do you want to live for your kids? Like, why would any man ever ask any woman if she wants to live for her kids? I was just so astonished at the audacity of the unawakened people out there who try to keep you in a box and believes so that you can believe what they believe Because if you don't, then you're going to ruin their beliefs, right?

So it's interesting. I absolutely connect with that from a personal story of just a friend of mine who went through a similar journey. And it is so much about the story you get to tell.

And I love the unbecoming and the becoming that you're mentioning. Because just yesterday, we were talking about the liminal inside of a cocoon. As the caterpillar is turning into the butterfly, there are liminal cells.

that are actually doing that. And I feel like you are talking about that liminality, where as you're running away from death, but towards life, that is what creates the difference.

I can really feel that in your voice. I can see it in your demeanor. Hear that conviction that goes straight through your body. I can really just sense that this is where it comes down to for you.

is a moment by moment place. So thank you for describing that so beautifully. You know, it's interesting as I talk about this in the book too, talking about, there's just, for me, and Dr.

Amman knows this because she's worked with me a lot. Like I would just take a phrase or an experience and I would just grow with it, you know? And so I was playing, you know, with my godson who's, you know, in college and talking about, you know, what comes first, the chicken or the egg.

And I started going to this egg analogy, you know, cracking from the inside versus cracking from the outside, you know? Surely you need a little bit of both, right?

But when you crack from the inside, which is what everyone needs to do as they rebirth themselves. It's going to require you to be cocooned, to be in the dark, to be alone, to know that you are transforming.

And when you're ready and you'll know when you're ready, because that's when your, your wings start to get stronger. That's when your, your heart starts to feel like it's time to move, you know, just like the crab shell seeking a new shell.

You know, you, it's time to move. You're outgrowing the shell now. That's when it's time to, for me to start posting online again and start, you know, and start in birth this book or whatever, you know, So anyways, I totally understand exactly what you mean.

I went through it. In fact, I see people all the time, especially online, and I'm seeing it more now. I know why I'm seeing it's because I see with different eyes.

I've ascended so much in my awareness that there's people who have been have been taught things like doctors and i'm not saying you too because i believe you're much more advanced than many and not just doctors but anybody who reads a book i know people who read books especially quote-unquote spiritual teachers who can repeat like attachment styles or whatever but they but they're still but they still have attachment issues you know so it's different like you said in the very beginning to embody wisdom versus to just retell it, right?

So you can retell truth, you know, you can have an experience and experience truth, but it's different when you actually apply it and able to embody it and then therefore really become it.

And in that becoming of it, you're in allowing other people to become as well. That's the difference between, you know, knowing something versus being something.

Absolutely. Well, I'm really at all with what you're saying about women and that birthing process and the emergence of something greater than ourselves.

And this is a story that many women tell, but aren't really able to express or experience it. It's such a sacral process, right, from that one cell that becomes, you know, a multi-dimensional being, right, within you and your body while it's happening.

And you know that, right, you can feel the baby, you can feel the growth, you can, the kicks and the hunger and the, you know, even the personality of that baby.

And as before you're able to witness and the dreams, you know, we could talk a little bit about When you're pregnant, the dreams that you have, the connections that you get, the messages that you get are so powerful, so telling.

And then when the baby's born, there's an immediate connection to that baby. And lifelong that stays, because you have to have that history together. So I love that you're bringing this up.

And I think it's very important to bring this up, especially in the world that we live in, because it's so ignored. Women's health is ignored. Women's care is ignored.

I mean, the birthing process is very much taken away from all of that. You're put into a gurney and you're put into the position that you're unable, you have to do it this way because it's a risk.

There's all these fears that are put into that process when it doesn't have to be so. And I know this is kind of a little off topic, but I think it's just very important to highlight that what you're representing, what you speak to, not just from, I mean, I'm sure your mother's story carries into your story, and I'm sure that that story carries into, your story carries into so many other people's story and that connection it makes to you in your illness.

I'm very, very fascinated by why women aren't able to speak to that and how they are told to live in this fear. So I

love what you just said because that is, I remember a doctor saying to me, we hope you'll do what we think is best for you.

Birth, Cocooning, and Transformation

Just that phrase. And remember, it opens up my brain when I hear things. I'm like, why wouldn't I do what's best for me? Like, with the person that's dealing with a life or death like a gun to my head, you know what I mean?

Our instincts will always tell the truth. It knows how to survive. We will know as a mother bear, you know, as a mother with our, like when we, even in the Catholic Christian faith, we say, you know, God knew you in your womb, you know, like we just spoke, we know our child.

And when we meet our child, our goal as parents is not to control them, but to protect their soul. That's what our goal is. But it's very instinctual.

They've taken away our instincts. They made us think that they gave birth to the child and that we didn't, that they know better. When we know best, that's why women and all women out there, and I know this, all of us, we're all together on this.

We're raising and awakening the woman. because they've taken away our power. We know what brings life, and we know what brings death, and we already know the fact that we've been led, and I'm gonna just be, and this is not political, this is just truth.

There's been, we've been led by men. and ego and money and power and control for so long and that is not life-giving and we know this but we've allowed them to because they've taught us that we don't know what the heck we're talking about we're too emotional you know we're doing this or that we're the lesser sex whatever we're not even in the bible like really even the mother mary is the only creator in the nativity scene it's just interesting to me how much they disempowered women But you are absolutely correct in terms of, I wish I meditated a lot, you know, when my sons were in me.

I was not as enlightened then. You know, I was just trying to survive, just like most people. And so, but yes, I know them. I know who they are. I know their souls.

And that is our role as mothers, is to protect their souls and to also be aware of our own. But that's the biggest thing. We cannot protect what we don't even know exists.

Would you be able to tell us a little bit more about where this voice came from when it first showed up? What was that experience like for you? This idea, was it something that emerged more recently or is it something that you've always carried within you?

What voice? This voice of a woman, the power of women, the spirituality women carry, the history of women's experience that you embody and demonstrate.

Is this something you've always known? No, I'll go in. I go deeper in my book. You know, I've done a lot of things. I've enjoyed being a woman. I've enjoyed being a woman at various stages of my life.

You know, as a cheerleader, you know, I was a beauty pageant queen. I, you know, it was a fitness model to a certain degree. You know, I like I followed all of the things that they told me to be as a woman.

And I did not feel that I was truly what I was supposed to be, you know, I even got breast implants because I wanted to look more like a quote unquote woman, you know, and it just when I what I understood as I truly it was the cancer.

the cancer woke me up. Something will wake you up in your life. Disease, divorce, death, you know, are the big three. That'll wake somebody up and be like, this is not, this is not the jam.

I don't know who I am anymore. And it's only in that death of yourself that you're going to find that when you're going to start listening, because we hear this often, and I go back to the Christian faith because that's my background, you have to surrender.

You have to hit rock bottom. It's only when you hit rock bottom when you start to ask, because only when you ask is when you will receive. But before then, you think you know.

Not only do you not think you know, you already know you don't, but you're asking the wrong people for the answers. That's the problem. They're telling you who to be.

They're telling you what to think. And you're just listening to them, just like I was when I was first diagnosed, as if they know how to kill cancer, when in fact they don't.

And they know they don't, you know? But here I am, listening to them as if they know more about something that's inside my own body. And so it wasn't until I got cancer when I was called to really identify, what is this?

Why is this happening? And I had to start asking the big girl questions. And it was quite annoying, to be honest, because again, I did everything to not get cancer, you know, I was extremely healthy.

I meditated, I teach breathwork classes, you know, I mean, out of my whole family who are very unhealthy, it happened to me and I'm actually a really, really good person.

I mean, at least I thought I was. And so I really had to address the big elephant in the room, which is why is this happening? And the reason why this is happening is because I allowed it, and that was the biggest like wake up call, is to take radical ownership over things that you really don't want to take ownership of.

expression when it comes to something like cancer. Thank you for for explaining that so beautifully because I think there's like a part here that's also I'm hearing some intergenerational stuff as you said like why me in the system of my family why did my body you know choose to express it and why did my body give permission unbeknownst to me I did wait there's a process here that I can kind of get in the middle of and that that potential exists and that's kind of what we're talking about here.

Did you have, as you were doing some of that early work in engaging with all of these healing modalities and watching the energy move, like was there an element where you understood that story as it was relating to your body and your ancestors?

Women, Shame, and Reclaiming Intuition

Like was there a story there that was being expressed that you felt needed to be told or was kind of you know as you said releasing the shit like what is what is the stuff that was not able to be told you know what was too shameful it was too you know locked into the body there's so it's it's so much you know when you read the book it's gonna you're gonna read it really fast because it's it's those page turning type things But I will say that I had a meditation and I've had many, but one meditation I asked, you know, how do you cure cancer?

And then I heard, you don't, cancer cures you. And I was like, interesting. That makes so much sense, cause that's true. Because we will all die, but we won't all live.

And when you are giving a timeframe, a limited timeframe that you could die, You are aware of life every day. You wake up and you're grateful. You smell the roses, you taste the coffee, you know, all of the things.

And you start to find joy again. Like if this is my last 24 hours of last year, I don't want to do anything I don't truly, authentically love doing. And as you start to do, you start to be, because you're like, oh, I didn't know I like to lay around in my bed all day.

I'm such a productive person. Now you get to be all the things, because now you really don't care what other

people think. It's kind of like as you get older, especially for a woman, in the past, you really cared a lot about what other people thought.

And then as you turn 40, something changes, and 45, then 50, and now you really don't give a shit, you know? If that's exactly how it was. And so I, the biggest thing I will say that I learned in the process of becoming more of a woman is understanding the shame of being a woman.

The shame that I didn't even know I had, whether it was my sexuality, whether it was my, my spirituality is a big one. just my intuition, you know, shaming my intuition.

And just because if you can't measure it, it's not real, right? That's what they say in science. You know, if you can't measure it, then it's not fact.

But the fact is, is that grief and love and joy can create, can kill somebody. Stress kills people. You know, love can just, you know, we all know what love does.

It's amazing. It's the best drug in the world. And the heart can break. Do you know about that? Where there's like an actual broken heart syndrome where after a loved one has passed away, a person's heart can just kind of like get out.

There's an actual condition. Well, yeah, I mean, I experienced that. I had, you know, my mother passed away in 2021 and I experienced a really strong spiritual connection in 2022. And that, that, when that happened and I lost, I lost a lot of love in my life.

My body just went in just decline mode, like really fast. I was in so much grief. I felt my heart break and I couldn't unescape my heart from breaking.

And my body went into shutdown mode, like game over, like she doesn't want to live anymore. And that's exactly how it accelerated. No doubt. So your body will listen to your emotions and, and your and it'll manifest and however it will.

So the biggest thing I learned, you know, and there's a whole, you know, lessons that I've had in the last year and a half, but as women, we need to know who we are.

We need to remove the shame, number one, being a woman, because they taught us that. At least that's what I especially learned in my Catholic faith. You know, unfortunately, there really isn't a lot of There is a gospel of Mary Magdalene, which is not in the Bible.

And she is very different the way she writes her gospel. I don't know if you've ever read it, but she talks about the kingdom being in you, which I believe that is exactly what Jesus believed as well.

They just changed the story because they wanted to control us. I mean, not that I'm a conspiracy person at all. I'm actually a big truth teller, and I know that to be the truth.

because I can go too deep on this stuff. Let me bring you back. Do you remember when the DaVinci Code was written and how the sales just went through the roof because it challenged this dogma and people were reading this in church circles?

Right. Let me tell you about the, and I talk about it in my book too. Oh wow. I actually wrote a book when I was in seventh, my very first book was in eighth grade, was eighth grade, I remember it.

It was probably, it was a short story, it was maybe like 40 pages. And it was about a girl who had a key her whole life and she didn't know what it was for.

And then she found a door in her closet. I used to cry in my closet all the time because I was bullied often. She

found a door and she used that key to open it and she found herself at the Last Supper.

The whole gist of my book was that a woman was there. That was the secret. I get chills saying it right now. I'm getting chills just hearing you. So here I am.

This is 1993 probably, somewhere around there, years before the didn't you code. But you know, when things are out in the ether, anyone who grabs, I grabbed my book and I'm, you know, other people are feeling the way I'm feeling.

I just wrote it in a book, just like Dawn Brown did. But I knew, at least I thought it was my imagination. I was just, you know, writing my imagination and I actually sent it out to editors.

Like, how old was I, probably 13? Like, that's how audacious I was at that age, but that was my story. I thought, this is such a good story. There's a woman, this and that.

And then when the Da Vinci Code came out, I was just like, oh, that sounds so familiar. I don't know why. And then I remembered, yes. And that's again, this life, they often say that life is a process of remembering.

Because we know we just have to just take away everything that is not us. We are love. That's the biggest thing. Because what I understand is we are all in fear.

We grew up being in fear of whatever, you know, in control. People are trying to control things. But truly, in our essence, we are love because love is God and God is life.

And so once we remove everything that isn't us, that's how we become. But you have to know you are love first. You have to love yourself first. That is the journey of every woman is to love herself and it requires us to remember who we are as creators.

Beautifully said. Beautifully said. You're a mother of three boys, and I'm sure you've raised them very well. What would you want to teach them? And what would you hope that they would say about you?

You know, I tried my very best. You know, every mother just tries their best. And it's really important. I believe it was Rumi that said, you know, your children come from you, but they are not you.

And it's really important to release that. I don't want them to become like me, right? but they are like me, they are me, they're half me, genetically, energetically, spiritually, they receive a lot.

And I love it because I know that they love and they see me because I love and I see them. I obviously in this cancer journey wanted to make sure that they're gonna be okay, should I die?

And there was no doubt from the very beginning that they were gonna be okay. And this goes back to my relationship with their father, it hasn't been easy.

But then I also know he's a great man. And I had to believe in that. Because whatever you believe, they'll become too. Whatever you evoke out of a person is really what your expectation is of that person.

Motherhood, Sons, and Protecting the Soul

And so I really see the beauty of both their father and myself and these children. And it's very hard to raise a child, but it's also very easy. We always think it's so hard.

But the easy part is just letting them bloom. Just letting them bloom. You know, I talked about this recently in my stories where my son, who you know, Dr.

Ahmad, because I talked about this, he was bullied in school. He ended up getting into a fight with a bully, broke

his nose, fractured it. Just a fracture is probably a hairline.

But it wasn't told because they don't believe in snitching in school. So a couple days after that, I'm in the hospital when this is happening. I come home, you know, he gets in a fight on Monday.

I come home on Tuesday on Wednesday. My son comes home. He's beat up. He's been jumped by three people. Two of them are adults and they are related to the bully.

My son ends up getting expelled from school. The bully gets to stay because those are the roles because, you know, he He had to go to the ER or whatever, but it was just such a traumatic experience because like it just doesn't make much ethical sense.

I even met with the mother of the bully and they didn't care. They don't care about anything. They just care about shuffling paper. And so recently my son who had such a.

hard year he said mom it was the hardest year was my the hardest and longest and fastest year of my life and he said but i was at it was the last week of school last week and there was a kid that was at the pool with him and he said man i wish i had your body you know because he likes to box a lot and he said you know i'm addicted to marijuana right now you know and i and i got to a couple fights in school and he's just telling my son but he's listening and he says to him dude you're just a a side character in people's life.

Nobody cares about the fight. No one's going to care next year. No one's thinking about it now, only you. And in a hundred years, it's really not going to matter.

He's like, I was skinny two years ago and I just kept boxing every day, did what I loved. And I just, my body just became like, you have to just do something that you enjoy doing and have a goal and know how to do it.

And he's just telling this kid, like giving him advice and this guy's like taking it. And like, my son's telling me this and like a few days later, the guy, this, this is a new friend of his.

He just met him there. He's called him and said, Hey man, you know, I quit marijuana and I'm working out now. I want to thank you for all that you've said because it really influenced me and motivated me.

And I said, how do you feel? Does that feel good? And my son was like, that feels great. He could feel it, because that's what wisdom embodied is. That's why you go through experiences.

I knew, because I am him. I experienced bullying, too. We all know. Maybe you want to experience bullying, but you're going to experience rejection. You're gonna experience feeling lost or not accepted by your peers.

But we know that our children are going to have this beautiful experience called life, where it's up and down, it's dualistic. If you know love, you're gonna know hate.

If you know joy, you're gonna know grief. If there's gonna be sadness, you won't know it unless you knew happiness, you know, that's the duality. And so as mothers, not only is it our goal to protect our child's soul, it's not so much protected, it's also for them to know it.

So I knew that he was just like in my baby. They're in my house. He's in my womb still. I don't care if you're walking around doing whatever. You are still processing in my wound, in my house, and I'm telling you, it's going to be okay.

I'm not going to make it worse for you. I'm not going, yes, I grounded him, but I also made him go to meditation retreats and journal and meditate with me.

I'm going to help you process this. I'm here with you and, and I'm going to hold your becoming. That's what we do still. We think that just because we gave birth, that's it.

No, we're still, we're still birthing these kids up until we're not here anymore. Whether it's our kid or somebody else's kid, because I've gone into other kids' lives too where I've just stepped in because that's our role.

Every child is our child. Every grandparent is our grandparent. And so I could see my son in that moment becoming just like my other son, you know, he's got stories too.

I've got like a little notes pads of all their quotes of what they say. And I love how they honor me. My son would always say, have you been raised by Maria King?

You know, like, this is how, you know, you do things. It was, it's so sweet how they honor me. And I love that. So they, as they see me and that's, that's, that's the greatest thing is to see that they see me, but only because I see myself.

Cause if I don't see myself, then anytime, if an unseen mom might look at their child who's kicked out of school and seeing and think, You're making you're embarrassing me.

You're making me feel like I'm a bad mom You know like so they're going to take what happens to other people Especially their children and say how it affects them and that's very unhealed to do So I think they're going to be amazing.

They're destined to be amazing. I know that. They're already on their way. And what wisdom you bring, because I can really tell that that's a hard-won lesson, but also I love this.

constant awareness of running towards life, of letting life express herself, itself, the blooming of children. I really connect with that because I really go back to like, we're here because generations upon generations of mothers were able to trust that exact same instinct that you're talking about and rely on it and and find that it had so much depth there.

And I think as pediatricians, I've definitely been in the office looking at a mom who hasn't quite stepped into that power and really that reassurance that, no, it's there for you.

You don't have to be anybody else. You have everything you need. It's such a beautiful kind of reflection to hold up to the world really as you're doing.

So thank you for doing that work for you. You know, one of the first movies, the first movie I watched in the theater after my tumor removed the surgery was Mufasa.

I encourage you to watch it. And I love it because Mufasa in the movie was raised by a female and not his mother, but like his adoptee mother. And she would just teach him like the winds, the energy.

He was very instinctual, so he was able to marry his masculinity with his femininity, because we have both in us. It's not one or the other. We have both.

And when you can marry and respect both of your masculine traits and your feminine traits, that's a big journey for me, because I was very in my masculine.

And most women, to a certain degree, have been in the last 50 years. And so when I was able to just love my feminine side again, to see her and to just embrace her, it shifted.

And for my sons to be able to have that wisdom as well, it was incredible to watch that movie and to see how it plays out in our lives. Yeah. That's beautiful.

Motherhood and leadership. We could have a summit on that. You know, growing our leaders, our next generation of leaders in some ways. Because self-leadership is really at the root of all leadership, right?

Oh, absolutely. Only thing that leadership is actually, we think leadership is about control, but it's actually leadership is about being your It's just like self, it's just like love.

If you want love, you have to love yourself. Because in doing so, it's just an allowance of everyone to love themselves. In leading yourself, people are able to just lead just in your example.

Absolutely. I have to bring it back to Dr. Alia because this is something she and I have talked about in creating the Shaw Minds Healing Center and creating that team that Maria, you have been involved in.

It is about leadership. And I think that's what I've seen reflected is exactly what you're talking about, is that because you're a self-leader, you're so good at leading yourself that others feel inspired.

to lead themselves and that's a ripple effect, right? I just love seeing that happen in action. Yeah, and Aisha Mines was birthed not as a clinic, it's a healing center.

Healing Spaces, Safety, and Empowerment

And people call it a clinic. I said, it's not a clinic, it's a healing center. And it's a place where even staff, employees, patients are witnessing and growing and changing and evolving.

But even for my staff, my employees work for me, and I'm sure you represent that as an entrepreneur as well. supporting women. I have single moms that work for me that recently birthed children and also women who are in the last phase of their work experience and careers.

And coming together and supporting that whole environment in a space that's healing can be, again, there's that transformation that we witness as an organization.

And I really want to speak to that because I think it's important that every organization, all the work that we do as healers, and I know you're a healer too, Maria, bringing that forward, not just in our own little microcosm, but bringing it forward outside of us and really emulating what that looks like.

What does it really look like? It's not easy. We could have all these rules that we have in HR and things like that, but we have to be always mindful of that person who's a human being and what's their experience like as they come to work, as patients come for healing and vice versa.

And how does that move forward from that story outside into the greater world? Because that's the purpose of our work. It's not just here, but it's everywhere.

Go ahead. And I want to bring that back full circle to what Maria said about fear that comes up when we do have a healthcare situation happen where we have to go into the healthcare system.

We have to put ourselves in these positions, right? And Alia, what you're describing is that when it's a healing center and when everybody else around you can create that sense of safety.

I'm really talking about fear and safety, right? We're talking about really healing this idea of what the healthcare system needs to be like to actually create real healing.

And so you can even contrast those two experiences and say, what does it take? So what's interesting is that when I was diagnosed, I wrote a blog. At the end of the blog, when I announced my cancer, I said, I just know that love is going to heal me.

Because love is the only thing that exists spiritually. I understand this concept very deeply. And when I walk into Shawmines, for example, you feel like you're held, just like in a cocoon, just like in your mother's womb.

You need to know that you're able to be vulnerable. Because when you unpack some trauma, trauma hurts. When

you become vulnerable in that hurt, you need to know that you're not going to get attacked.

And I can tell you, and Dr. Ahmad knows this, I got attacked so badly during this journey. I was shocked by my own environment. But it was this environment, this fishbowl that I was in.

And they're very unconscious to it. That's where forgiveness and grace comes in. But it wasn't until I was able to protect myself. I had to learn to protect myself after I was around the people that were lovingly you know, allowing me to take space.

They were holding space as I was healing, but eventually I had to be strong enough to protect myself. That's how I really came out of my shell and truly became and wrote the book.

But in order to heal, you have to be vulnerable. You have to feel in order to heal, but you don't want to feel if you're going to get attacked immediately.

And that's the problem. is that you go into the hospital and they're attacking you. You're talking to your family and you don't know it, but they're attacking you and they don't even know it either.

But you have to be able to feel and be vulnerable. You cannot be that. You cannot take off your shell and move to the bigger shell and be facing the elements.

if it's an unsafe situation. Safety is so key, and that is why love is so important. That's why as healers, holding space is so important. So yes, there is actually no healing when it comes to fear at all.

And that's why our healthcare system is gonna change. I already know it has to change. It's not even a question anymore. It's a knowing. That's where I'm at in my life.

There's just certain things that I know it's gonna change. And we're part of that change. We're changing in the midst of change. And I love how you described that, the cocoon that's required to be vulnerable for true transformation.

Absolutely. Thank you for bringing that in. Go ahead, Adya. We are the change. We are the change, and we just don't know it, but we are. And every woman who stands, who comes, or even man, I mean, every person who is willing to be vulnerable, who is willing to kind of see the bear right in front of them, and it's not easy by any means.

And I've witnessed so many stories every day. And I'm really intrigued by how that story really helps people really become who they are, right? And they already know themselves.

And I tell every patient, you already know why you're here. You already know what you need. You just need some space to do it. You just need the space to see it, and it'll be there.

It's there. I love that. What I love about what you said is that it's you empowered them. That's the one thing that most doctors don't do, you know, is empower their, I mean, even if they said, you can take this pill or this pill, I'll give you the choice.

Like, they don't even do that. It's like, no, you're taking this pill. I mean, whatever you decide, I just feel like we don't, we do that with our children too, like you don't know.

It's, oh, you do know, how do you feel it? You know, what do you feel? And that's what I teach my children. I teach them how to ground themselves and how to know what yeses feel like in our body and how nos, like just the very basic.

Most people have never done it. I didn't do it until I was 42. So once you instinctually know like yourself, then you can start to lead yourself. but we don't even know the very basics.

We gotta get back to the basics. But when you said, you know, wow, really? I do that to people too. I have actually

told people, no one who walks into my house is allowed to say, I don't know.

Stop saying, I don't know. Why would you affirm being lost? Why would you affirm not knowing something?

Closing Advice on Trust, Change, and Becoming

We do, you do know. You know, let's begin there. Now we can begin, you know? Well, thank you for sharing to this and your story. We're excited to… When is that book going to be out?

What does it look like? What's the next phase of… That book is because I've meditated on whether I want to self-publish or work with a publisher. If I work with a publisher, it's going to take longer.

That's just… It's the journey. So I, and then of course me, I can, I'm very impatient. I can be that way. And, but every, it's just, it's, I'm editing it and I keep living life and I just can't stop.

And I just needed to be like, okay, Maria, that's going to be second book. Stop it. Like no more. But it's really complete right now. And so now I have to go through the process.

So I would say it's going to be out definitely by the end of the year. And if it was me, it was out yesterday, but that's not how God works. I'm just, I'm really just flowing with it.

whatever happens, but it's definitely going to be for the end of the year. Okay. Well, I'm sure you'll know when it's ready to be released out to the world.

So we'll be the first one to read that book. I can't wait to read it. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. Anything you'd like to share with our audience, to women out there, to mothers of sons or boys or men, something you're curious about to us, if any questions you have.

I love it when you say this at the end of our sessions. Billy, if I were to say anything to women out there, I just say, number one, I'm just so proud of you.

We've made it this far. Everything that we experienced prior was supposed to happen because this moment was supposed to happen. And this moment's the only thing that's real.

And once you become awakened, It's just, you gotta get ready for the ride because it's ups and downs for the rest of your life. But this is where everyone needs to close their eyes, take a deep breath and tell me, do you know you're gonna be okay?

And you know you're gonna be okay. So if you know that, put up your hands and let's go on the roller coaster. Because it's going to be a ride. It's going to go up and down, around, around.

But it's going to be so much fun. And embrace it, because that's what life is about. You're supposed to have fun. You're supposed to dance. You're supposed to cry.

You're supposed to get mad. And then as you're experiencing all these emotions, just know it's just an experience, and it's going to pass. Cancer was never something to attack me never something to kill me.

It was something I was like, oh, that's interesting That's an interest. This will be an interesting experience. So just treat life like that Don't treat it like it's permanent.

Nothing's permanent. Nothing's constant but change so just just Go back to your knowing, get ready to know, to really discover who you are. Let's break some generational trauma and step into our power.

I mean, it's a very exciting time. If you're listening to this, if you're reading my book, this is the best time to be a woman is right now. And you chose to be here.

That's the best part too. Like your soul said, I want to come to earth at this junction at this time, because It is time and we are all here for it. Oh, I felt that.

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